

<b>Planning Committee Report</b>	
<b>Planning Ref:</b>	PL/2025/0001922/FULM
<b>Site:</b>	Land Southeast of Shilton Lane, South and Southeast of Lentons Lane, Coventry.
<b>Ward:</b>	Longford and Henley
<b>Proposal:</b>	Solar farm development including solar arrays, control buildings and associated infrastructure, internal access roads, landscaping and associated development.
<b>Case Officer:</b>	Liam D'Onofrio

## SUMMARY

The application proposes a solar farm development, including solar arrays, control buildings and associated infrastructure, internal access roads and landscaping. This is a cross-boundary application and whilst the site falls predominantly within the Coventry City boundary there are two fields to the east that fall within the Rugby Borough boundary and will be determined by Rugby Borough Council accordingly.

## BACKGROUND

Members previously considered a similar scheme at Planning Committee on 29/02/2024 under planning application PL/2023/0001062/FULM. This application was refused for the following reasons:

1. The proposal represents inappropriate development within the Green Belt and results in harm to the openness of the Green Belt and very special circumstances have not been provided or are evident which either singularly or cumulatively overcome the harm identified to the Green Belt. The proposal is therefore contrary to the aims of Coventry Local Plan Policy GB1 and the NPPF.
2. The proposed development, by reason of the siting, overall size, proximity of the proposed structures and buildings to existing residential properties, the associated infrastructure and the increased intensity of use would lead to unacceptable loss of residential amenity via loss of outlook for neighbouring residents, resulting in an unacceptable degree of urbanisation. The proposal is therefore contrary to Local Plan Policy DE1 and the NPPF.
3. The impact of the proposal will result in significant personal hardship to the existing tenant farmer, who would lose his livelihood as a direct result.

The current application must successfully overcome these previous refusal reasons.

## KEY FACTS

<b>Reason for report to committee:</b>	Over five objections contrary to the Officer's recommendation.
<b>Current use of site:</b>	Agricultural land
<b>Proposed use of site:</b>	Solar Farm

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Planning Committee are recommended to grant planning permission for the part of the scheme within Coventry's administrative boundary, subject to conditions.

## **REASON FOR DECISION**

- The proposal overcomes the previous reasons for refusal.
- The proposal is acceptable in principle. The public and other benefits arising from the scheme are considered sufficient to outweigh any harm to the Green Belt, landscape, visual amenity and the less than substantial harm arising to the heritage assets.
- The proposal will not adversely impact upon highway safety.
- The proposal will not adversely impact upon the amenity of neighbours.
- The proposal accords with Policies: DS1, DS3, DS4, GB1, GB2, GE1, GE2, GE3, GE4, DE1, HE2, AC1, AC2, AC3, AC4, EM3, EM4, EM7 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan, together with the aims of the NPPF.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The application site comprises 51 hectares (ha) of primarily agricultural land, bisected by the Oxford Canal. It is bound by the settlement of Alderman's Green to the north, the M6 and Coventry Cruising Club to the south, Lenton's Lane Cemetery and Sowe Common to the east and Alderman's Green Road to the west.

The site slopes downwards from roughly north to south, from Lenton's Lane towards the M6 motorway. It is crossed by several overhead electricity and telecoms cables, pylons, and poles.

The proposal is a cross-boundary application with the western area of the site being located within the Coventry City Council's administrative boundary off Lenton's Lane and the eastern area of the site (beyond Lenton's Lane Cemetery and Sowe Common) located within Rugby Borough Council's administrative area.

The application site is located within Green Belt.

## **APPLICATION PROPOSAL**

Planning permission is sought for a 25 Megawatt (MW) solar farm development including solar arrays, control buildings and associated infrastructure, internal access roads, landscaping and associated development. The Proposed Development will comprise the following elements:

- Approximately 44,000 ground mounted solar panels, arranged into arrays and laid out across the development areas. The panels will be mounted on aluminium (or similar) frames embedded into the ground or on moveable concrete footings (where panels are above underground service wayleaves);
- 6 Inverter containers located at strategic locations arranged around the site;
- A small-scale control and grid connection building approximately 15m in length, 4m in width and no greater than 3m in height;

- Internal site electrical connections, to be made underground;
- 4m wide access tracks providing access from existing public roads to the development parcels;
- Temporary construction access junction on Lenton's Lane, to be decommissioned and fully restored following the completion of construction activities;
- Security fencing no greater than 2m in height around the solar arrays;
- Security cameras located at strategic points, facing into the site;
- A temporary construction compound of circa 15m x 65m to enable the safe and efficient servicing of the site during construction and to be removed post construction works; and
- Localised access and environmental enhancements and measures to offset environmental, visual and glint / glare impacts.

The Applicant has comprehensively reviewed the reasons for refusal under the previous application PL/2023/0001062/FULM and refined the scheme in order to address previous concerns. The current scheme has:

- An overall reduction in the number of solar panels by approximately one-third (from 60,180 panels down to some 44,000 panels);
- Removal of solar panels from the field adjoining Lenton's Lane, increasing the distance between operational infrastructure and surrounding residential properties and reducing impacts on such properties as a result;
- Associated introduction of landscaping buffer of trees, hedgerows and wildflowers;
- Layout alterations to minimise impacts on established public access routes;
- Relocation of control building to minimise visibility from nearby residential properties; and
- Provision of alternative construction access.

The proposed solar farm has an operational lifespan of approximately 40 years and after this period, it will be dismantled and the site returned to its previous condition for continued agricultural use.

The applicant E.ON is a leading developer and operator of renewable energy projects, committed to driving the transition toward a sustainable energy future. E.ON and Coventry City Council have established a strategic energy partnership aimed at accelerating the city's transition to a low-carbon future. The collaboration focuses on delivering sustainable energy solutions that improve efficiency, reduce emissions, and support the city's net-zero ambitions. By combining E.ON's expertise in clean energy technologies with the Council's commitment to community-focused development, the partnership seeks to create long-term environmental, social, and economic benefits.

## PLANNING HISTORY

There have been a number of historic planning applications on this site; the following are the most recent/relevant:

Application Number	Description of Development	Decision and Date
PL/2025/0001768/SCR	Request for EIA Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town & Country Planning (Environmental	EIA Not Required 30/09/25

	Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 for a proposed solar farm	
PL/2023/0001062/FULM	Full planning application for solar farm development, including solar arrays, control buildings and associated infrastructure, internal access roads, landscaping, and associated development.	Refused 21/03/24
PL/2023/0000513/SCR	Request for EIA Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 for a proposed solar farm	EIA Not Required 15/03/2023

<b>Associated Rugby Borough Council Applications</b>		
R25/0883	Solar Farm Development including solar arrays, control buildings and associated infrastructure, internal access roads including landscaping and associated development	Concurrent application
R23/0316	EIA screening opinion for proposed solar farm	Issued 15/03/2023
R23/0672	Construction and operation of a solar farm, including solar arrays, control buildings and associated infrastructure, internal access roads, landscaping and associated development.	Withdrawn 20/03/24

<b>Nuneaton and Bedworth BC Solar applications</b>		
039235	Installation of a ground mounted solar photovoltaic PV development of approximately 25 megawatts MW, associated electrical and access infrastructure and landscaping on land at Tolldish Farm.	Granted 31/08/2023
040703	Construction and operation of a solar PV farm and associated equipment and infrastructure, including landscaping and biodiversity enhancements on land at Hollyhurst Farm Mile Tree Lane. [25.65MW].	Pending

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## **POLICY**

### **National Policy Guidance**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. The NPPF increases the focus on achieving high quality design and states that it is "fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve".

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) adds further context to the NPPF and it is intended that the two documents are read together.

### **Local Policy Guidance**

The current local policy is provided within the Coventry Local Plan 2017, which was adopted by Coventry City Council on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017. Relevant policy relating to this application is:

Policy DS1: Overall Development Needs  
 Policy DS3: Sustainable Development Policy  
 Policy GB1: Green Belt and Local Green Space  
 Policy GE1 Green Infrastructure  
 Policy GE2: Green Space  
 Policy GE3: Biodiversity, Geological, Landscape and Archaeological Conservation  
 Policy GE4: Tree Protection  
 Policy DE1 Ensuring High Quality Design  
 Policy HE2: Conservation and Heritage Assets  
 Policy AC1: Accessible Transport Network  
 Policy AC2: Road Network  
 Policy AC3: Demand Management  
 Policy AC4: Walking and Cycling  
 Policy EM1: Planning for Climate Change Adaptation  
 Policy EM3 Renewable Energy Generation  
 Policy EM4 Flood Risk Management  
 Policy EM5 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)  
 Policy EM7 Air Quality

### **Emerging Local Policy Guidance – Local Plan Review submitted to Planning Inspectorate for examination on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

Local Plan review is currently at Examination. Relevant emerging policy relating to this application is:

Policy DS1: Overall Development Needs  
 Policy DS3: Sustainable Development Policy  
 Policy GB1: Green Belt and Local Green Space  
 Policy GE1 Green and Blue Infrastructure  
 Policy GE2: Green Space  
 Policy GE3: Biodiversity, Geological and Landscape Conservation  
 Policy GE4: Tree Protection

Policy DE1 Ensuring High Quality Design  
Policy HE2: Conservation and Heritage Assets  
Policy AC1: Accessible Transport Network  
Policy AC2: Road Network  
Policy AC3: Demand Management  
Policy AC4: Active Transport Provision including Walking, Cycling & Micro Mobility  
Policy EM1: Planning for Climate Change Adaptation  
Policy EM4 Flood Risk Management  
Policy EM5 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)  
Policy EM7 Air Quality  
Policy EM15: Noise

**Supplementary Planning Guidance/ Documents (SPG/ SPD):**

SPD Energy  
SPD Coventry Connected  
SPD Air Quality

**Other Policy**

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Green Belt  
Department for Energy Security & Net Zero National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3)

**CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

No Objections received from:

- National Highways
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- Rugby BC
- Natural England
- The Coal Authority
- West Midlands Fire Service

No objections subject to conditions/informatives have been received from:

- Highways
- Drainage - LLFA
- Environmental Protection
- Archaeology
- Public Rights of Way Officer
- Tree Officer
- Warwickshire Wildlife Trust
- West Midlands Police
- Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) have requested that the decision be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and that consideration be given to highway safety, landscape character, bio-diversity net gain (BNG), public rights of way, amenity, heritage assets and cumulative impacts.

Objections have been received from:

- Cadent (Gas) Holding Objection
- Grand Union Canal Transfer (GUCT)

Further information has been requested by:

- Canal and River Trust

At the time of writing the report comments have not been received from:

- CAA Airspace Regulation
- Environment Agency
- Central Networks
- National Grid
- Western Power

### **Neighbour consultation**

Immediate neighbours and local councillors have been notified; site notices were posted around the site on 10/10/25. A press notice was displayed in the Coventry Telegraph on 16/10/25.

86 letters of objection have been received, raising the following material planning considerations:

- a) Loss of Green Belt /what are the very special circumstances? / Precedent will result in more loss of green belt / natural land
- b) No very special circumstances appear to be adequately demonstrated to justify overriding the presumption against inappropriate development. The requirement to maintain openness is a core function of the Green Belt designation.
- c) Site currently provides an attractive rural setting and acts as a valuable green buffer between Coventry and surrounding villages
- d) Irreversible loss of countryside and rural character.
- e) Loss of agricultural land / productive farmland / food security
- f) Visual impact of scheme
- g) Environmental harm to wildlife, trees and bio-diversity
- h) There is an active ecosystem and hedgerows and wildlife will be destroyed
- i) There are better alternatives. Brownfield sites / industrial buildings / less sensitive areas should be considered first
- j) Location of inverters not shown on plans
- k) Noise pollution and disruption during construction / Highway safety and construction traffic concerns
- l) Scheme is too close to homes / There is no buffer zone for 215 Lentons Lane, the farmhouse and farm track to the canal.
- m) This scheme benefits EON and Coventry Council financially with none / little community benefit / lack of transparency
- n) No meaningful consultation has been held with local residents, farmers, or landowners affected
- o) While renewable energy is critical, this project appears to be a case of “greenwashing” – exploiting green credentials to push through an industrial development with questionable community benefit.

- p) Detrimental impact to residents mental and physical health.
- q) Risk of the destruction of medieval ridge and furrow
- r) Risk of fire / Solar inverters for solar farms pose a fire risk due to potential electrical malfunctions.
- s) Question of need / other local solar farms will overload system / cumulative impact of solar in area / The grid is not fit for purpose in this area.
- t) Concern regarding the Photovoltaic Heat Island (PVHI) effect; a rise in ambient temperatures in areas surrounding photovoltaic (PV) sites.
- u) Lasting damage caused by solar farms / Irreversible harm from solar panels causing soil pollution / Health concerns from radiation
- v) Fear of crime / vandalism (metals & panels are easily saleable)
- w) Light pollution from security lights, fencing and cameras
- x) Potential glare and reflections from solar panels
- y) Increased flood risk
- z) Cumulative impacts with other development in neighbouring authorities and need for comprehensive assessment

Two letters of support have been received, raising the following material planning considerations:

- aa) The solar farm application is fully supported, great to use green energy. Well done Coventry City Council.
- bb) The Coventry Society are pleased that the current proposal makes changes, and the scheme can now be supported. Key changes noted as: Significantly increased distance between the solar farm and houses on Lenton's Lane; Moving the site control cabin away from the Lenton's Lane frontage to a less visible and intrusive location; Slightly smaller overall site footprint. Suggest conditions which ensure that the site will be developed / constructed in such a way that the facilities and infrastructure can be removed at the end of their working life, leaving the site in a condition which will enable it to be returned to agricultural or other agreed positive uses.

Councillor Ruane has raised the following objections:

- The Flood Risk assessment is incomplete and inaccurate. The quality of the Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment is poor and heavily desktop based. The last Site walkover was undertaken on 28/07/22. Why has a more recent site walkover not been undertaken?
- No mention at all has been made about the frequency that Lenton's Lane cemetery has flooded and continues to flood. This report has made no reference or consideration of how it will mitigate against flood risks upon Lenton's Lane cemetery.
- As the runoff water from solar panels will all be facing in one direction, this will add to the levels of surface water and increased risk of flash flooding, and the provision of one swale won't mitigate against the flood risks at all.
- No S106 or community grant or figure has been provided by EON as part of this consultation. The onus is on EON to put forward a lump sum in writing, which is attached to this planning application. If not, CCC run the risk of delivering no community benefit or very minimal.
- Why have EON not been requested by CCC to put forward a community grant. EON will know how much percentage profit they stand to make from this scheme



and the level of impact this will have on the local community. Why can't a percentage of the profit from this scheme by EON be provided in a lump community sum? EON refuse to put forward a lump sum in a community grant to mitigate and offset the community impact. Why has no community impact assessment been undertaken?

- Green Belt Protection Is National Policy: The proposed site lies on green belt land, which is protected under national and local planning policy to prevent urban sprawl, preserve the countryside, and maintain the character of rural communities.
- This is the last remaining section of green belt land in the Henley ward. Losing it would permanently remove an essential natural buffer between urban and rural areas. Government guidance is clear: "Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances." A solar farm is not a "very special circumstance" when brownfield sites and rooftops on public buildings are underused, and new build homes still have no solar panels as standard.
- The land is actively used for livestock farming (sheep and cattle), which supports the rural economy, food production, and heritage.
- The UK needs to retain and support local food security, not diminish it by industrialising farmland.
- This land is not barren or derelict – it is an active ecosystem with hedgerows, wildlife, and open grazing. Solar panels and associated fencing, roads, and transformers cause habitat fragmentation, heat islands, and can displace or endanger local flora and fauna.
- Agricultural land is a carbon sink, and its conversion to solar farms may result in net negative environmental impact depending on soil disturbance and land management changes.
- There Are Better Alternatives – Use Brownfield First. The region contains ample brownfield sites, industrial rooftops, and underused public buildings that could host solar infrastructure without harming the green belt. Local and national planning policy encourages prioritising non-agricultural, non-green belt sites.
- A more innovative, community-led, and sustainable renewable plan would prioritise warehouse rooftops, all public buildings and all new houses as standard first.

Councillor Gardiner has raised the following objections

- The loss of good agricultural land / in a strategic location close to the city.
- The loss of a viable dairy farm
- Unnecessary adverse impact on designated greenbelt and likely prejudice to the long-term continuity for land as green belt.
- The safety issues related to gathering/storing energy so close to residential properties at a distance considered unsafe by other countries.
- Loss of residential amenity and adverse visual impact.
- Potential for distraction for drivers on the M6 motorway
- The increasingly debateable value of net zero as a goal does not justify the harms that come with this development.
- The Council's own relationship with Eon also does not override the demonstrable harm of this proposed development.
- Traffic and safety risks associated with construction access via roads with a history of serious accidents.

- The scale and proximity of the development to residential properties.
- Environmental, visual, and cumulative impacts on the character of the ward.

Councillor Lapsa has raised the following objections:

- The permanent loss of productive agricultural land and rural character of the. The open landscape currently contributes to the local identity and visual appeal, which would be diminished by large-scale industrial infrastructure.
- The site supports a range of wildlife, including birds, pollinators, and small mammals, which are likely to be disturbed or displaced. The ecological mitigation measures appear limited and insufficient to prevent habitat loss.
- The panels are likely to cause glint and glare that may affect nearby homes, public rights of way, and drivers. The visual impact will also erode the natural and rural appearance of the countryside.
- While renewable energy is important, this proposal provides minimal benefit to the local community compared to the disruption it will bring. A Community Benefit Fund should be created and locally managed to support community-led projects such as home energy grants, small solar schemes, cultural events, and social initiatives that strengthen the local area.
- While I support the transition to renewable energy, I believe this proposal in its current form is inappropriate for this location. Should the council decide to approve it, I urge the inclusion of strong community benefit measures to ensure that local residents share in the positive outcomes of the development.

Any further comments received will be reported within late representations.

## **APPRAISAL**

The main issues in determining this application are principle of development, the impact upon visual amenity / landscape, glint and glare, impact upon residential amenity, heritage assets, highway considerations, flood risk, land contaminated and constraints, air quality, ecology, infrastructure and other matters.

### **Principle of development**

The National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) states the Government has committed to sustained growth in solar capacity to ensure that the country is on a pathway that allows net zero emissions to be met by 2050. As such, solar is a key part of the government's strategy for low-cost decarbonisation of the energy sector.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has at its core the need for the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. NPPF Paragraph 8 identifies three overarching and interdependent objectives to sustainable development. These are economic, social and environmental. Of particular relevance to this application is the environmental objective which seeks to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

Chapter 14 of the NPPF relates to meeting the challenge of climate change stating that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future. NPPF Paragraph 161 states that the planning system should support the transition to net zero by 2050 and take full account of all climate impacts. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

NPPF Paragraph 168 states that when determining planning applications for all forms of renewable and low carbon energy developments and their associated infrastructure, local planning authorities should, amongst other things: not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and give *significant weight* to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and the proposal's contribution to a net zero future.

The emerging Local Plan highlights Coventry City Council's One Coventry Plan (2022-2030), which sets out a vision for the city which includes three delivery priorities, one of which is tackling the causes and consequences of climate change. This is supported by the Council's draft Climate Change Strategy, which details the Council's ambitious commitments to transition to net zero by 2050 and become a leading city for the green industrial revolution.

The emerging Local Plan states that without comprehensive action, climate change will severely limit economic growth. However, the approaches now required present a significant opportunity to deliver a decarbonised and resilient economy that supports job creation.

There is a positive emphasis on the provision of renewable and low carbon energy solutions, such as solar, and the scheme accords with aims and objectives of both local and national policy in terms of meeting net zero targets. Whilst the scheme is acceptable in principle the site is located on agricultural land within the Green Belt and the section below considers these matters in further detail.

### Green Belt Policy

The site is within the Green Belt. Local Plan GB1 reflects NPPF Paragraph 153, which states: When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in *very special circumstances*. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The proposed development is not considered to fall within any of the exemptions to inappropriate development set out in NPPF Paragraph 154. Following the previous application a new concept of 'grey belt' has been introduced within the NPPF. Grey belt is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; (b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging

into one another; or (d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; in Paragraph 143.

The applicant considers that the site does not strongly contribute to any of Green Belt purposes (a), (b) or (d) and the proposed development would not conflict within any of the wider NPPF policy aspirations. The applicant suggests that the site can therefore be considered grey belt land. The Local Planning Authority are not seeking to support the argument that the site is grey belt and for the assessment of this application the application site is considered to be green belt.

The scheme presents inappropriate development within the Green Belt and very special circumstances must be identified to demonstrate that the potential harm to the Green Belt is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

NPPF Paragraph 160 states that: When located in the Green Belt, elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development. In such cases developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances if projects are to proceed. Such very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources.

#### Harm to openness

The Green Belt PPG advises that assessing the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt requires a judgement based on the circumstances of the case. By way of example, the courts have identified a number of matters which may need to be taken into account in making this assessment. These include, but are not limited to:

- (a) openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume;
- (b) the duration of the development, and its remediability – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness; and
- (c) the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation.

The proposed development is primarily rows of solar panels, with associated development such as inverter cabinets, a control building, associated security fencing and access tracks. When compared to undeveloped fields the scheme will clearly reduce openness; however, it is recognised that given the low-rise nature of the solar arrays the structures will not be dominant within the landscape. The site adjoins the M6 Motorway, which forms a major infrastructure feature within the immediate landscape.

The scheme is significantly reduced compared to the previous scheme with an overall reduction in the number of solar panels by approximately one-third (from 60,180 panels down to some 44,000 panels) and much larger buffer zones to nearby residential properties.

The landscape and visual impact assessment prepared in support of the application identifies that the visual effects of the proposal are localised to the area within the site and its immediate surroundings and will not result in any significant effects. It finds that there will be some loss of views across the site; however, views of the solar farm will be

partially filtered and minimised by existing hedgerows and vegetation and by proposed new tree planting and landscaping as it establishes.

Officers are mindful that solar farms are well established within both the green belt and open countryside across the country. Objectors have described the scheme as 'industrial development'; however, solar farms are easily recognisable by members of the public and, in the same way as the much larger wind turbines, are not generally viewed as being out-of-context with the rural environment and can therefore assimilate well into the rural landscape.

The applicant confirms that the proposed solar farm has an operational lifespan of approximately 40 years and after this period, it will be dismantled and the site returned to its previous condition for continued agricultural use. The proposals are therefore temporary and reversible in nature and will not lead to a permanent loss of openness.

The proposed solar farm, once operational, will result in minimal traffic movements.

The harm to openness is therefore limited by the nature of the development and mitigated by proposed new soft landscaping.

#### Very special circumstances

In order to further support the scheme following the previous refusal, a Sequential Assessment has been undertaken, which has considered available sites within a 2.5km radius of the application site. The Assessment concludes that given the availability of a grid connection and the absence of suitable/viable alternatives in the vicinity of that grid connection this site is uniquely placed to deliver solar PV. There are no suitable derelict sites or other urban site which would facilitate a connection to the electricity grid in preference over the application site.

The grid connection is at the National Grid Coventry Substation, which lies in close proximity to the application site off Parrotts Grove. National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) recognises that the distance from the solar farm to the existing network can have a significant effect on the commercial feasibility of a development proposal.

NPPF Paragraph 160 recognises that very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources. The scheme will undoubtedly provide significant benefits to renewable energy with the generation of 25 MW of renewable energy and an annual carbon saving of 7,080 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> compared to traditional power generation.

NPPF Paragraph 168(a) states that when determining planning applications for all forms of renewable and low carbon energy developments and their associated infrastructure, local planning authorities should not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and give significant weight to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and the proposal's contribution to a net zero future.

The scheme represents inappropriate development within the Green Belt; however, the level of harm to the openness of the Green Belt is limited and soft landscaping will also

assist to mitigate visual impact and help the development assimilate into the rural landscape. In terms of *very special circumstances*, Officers are satisfied that any harm identified is clearly outweighed by the substantial benefits of renewable energy generation and the associated reduction in carbon emissions and UK energy security that the solar farm development will provide. These benefits are fully supported by local and national policy, as set out above.

The additional supporting information and Sequential Assessment is considered to also successfully overcome the previous refusal reason No.1.

#### Impact upon agricultural land

The National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) states that poorer quality land should be preferred to higher quality land avoiding the use of “Best and Most Versatile” agricultural land where possible. ‘Best and Most Versatile’ agricultural land is defined as land in Grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

The application is supported by an Agricultural Land Classification Report. The development will not result in the loss of Grade 1 or 2 agricultural land. Grade 3 constitutes about half of the agricultural land in England and Wales is divided into subgrades designated 3a and 3b. The application site is a mix of Grade 3a (32%), Grade 3b (41.5%) and Grade 4 (26.5%) agricultural land.

Less than one third of the solar farm is located on Grade 3a land. Furthermore, the agricultural land does not appear to have been used in recent times for arable farming, and the land is currently used for animal grazing. The applicant has confirmed that there is the potential for agricultural land use in the form of sheep grazing to continue in tandem with solar energy generation. This dual renewable energy/agricultural use has been successfully adopted for numerous solar schemes and allows the land to remain in agricultural production throughout the life of the development.

Natural England have no objections to the proposals and note that the proposals would not appear to lead to the long term loss of best and most versatile land as the panel arrays would be fixed with limited soil disturbance being secured through pins in to the ground every few metres and could be removed when planning permission expired with no likely loss of agricultural land quality. Natural England go onto note that whilst soil would be disturbed in some parts of the site through the construction of the switch station and access tracks and installing of buried cables this amounts to a relatively small area and much of the soil disturbance may be reversible during decommissioning.

At the end of its 40-year lifespan a condition will be imposed to ensure that the site is properly decommissioned and restored to its former condition.

Although the loss of agricultural land (Grade 3a) was not a previous refusal reason the supporting Sequential Assessment adds further weight to locating the solar farm on this site. The Sequential Assessment concludes that given the availability of a grid connection and the absence of suitable/viable alternatives in the vicinity of that grid connection this site is uniquely placed to deliver solar PV.

Officers note a recent study (Ground Mounted Solar Farms and Agricultural Land: The Facts published by Solar UK Ltd in December 2022) shows that solar development can have a positive influence on food production through a number of ways, including, by addressing climate change, which is the single biggest threat to food security, by cutting costs which in turn keeps farmers in business, by preserving agricultural land and supporting soil recovery, and by delivering a variety of ecological enhancements.

#### Tenant Farmer

The previous refusal reason No.3 read: *The impact of the proposal will result in significant personal hardship to the existing tenant farmer, who would lose his livelihood as a direct result.*

The applicant notes that case law has determined that financial impacts on individuals is not a material planning consideration. As such, refusal reason 3 relates to an issue which is not a material consideration in planning terms. Officers agree with this statement and, as such, consider that refusal reason 3 cannot be robustly defended.

Nevertheless, following the previous refusal the tenant farmer has been offered a compensation package by the applicant to assist in mitigating this impact.

#### Other local solar farm development

A solar farm development is located approximately 1km to the northwest of the application site, known as Tolldish Hall Farm, Parrotts Grove. The proposed 25MW development is located in neighbouring Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council area (planning application reference 039235) and was granted approval in 2023.

There is a second solar farm development at Hollyhurst Farm, which is also within Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council area (planning application reference 040703), which will sit next to the Tolldish Hall Farm site. A decision for this 25.65MW development is currently pending at the time of writing this report.

From 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025, the threshold for referring applications to the Secretary of State will be for over 100MW generating capacity. In the event that all three sites are brought forward they would be less than 75.65MW overall. However, they are individual sites with the nearest being just under 1km to the application site.

#### Wider benefits

The Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero notes that solar offers huge potential to boost the UK's energy independence, bring down bills and tackle the climate crisis. It also presents a significant economy and industrial opportunity. It is estimated that the solar sector could support around 35,000 jobs by 2030, double the number it supports today.

The scheme supports both national and local policies and provides economic-environmental benefits. The solar PV is not only a tool for decarbonization and reduced dependency on fossil fuels, but also driver of innovation, energy resilience, and sustainable growth.

Some objections have raised concern that there is little community benefit for those living nearby to the solar farm. E-On have committed to the following:

- A Neighbour Fund – For residents closest to the development offering subsidised energy solutions;
- A Discounted Tariff Fund – Energy savings offered (discounted tariff) for those in the surrounding area to the development; and
- Community Based Projects – For wider initiatives that deliver long-term social or environmental value across the community.

The above community benefits are considered in greater detail in the 'Developer Contributions' section of this report.

### Planning Balance

Overall, it is considered that the proposed solar farm would result in a substantial benefit in terms of sustainable energy production.

The Climate Change Act 2008, as amended, sets a legally binding target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

There is also a need to reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels in the interests of energy security and to ensure less volatile energy prices for UK consumers. The British Energy Security Strategy (2022) sets out the strategy to achieve this. It notes the expectation of increasing solar power fivefold by 2035. It also sets out the support for solar co-located with other functions such as battery storage to maximise the efficiency of land use. Solar is a key part of the Government's strategy for low-cost decarbonisation of the energy sector. It also has an important role in delivering the Government's goals for greater energy independence.

In terms of very special circumstances, Officers are satisfied that any identified harm to the green belt is clearly outweighed by the substantial benefits of renewable energy generation and the associated reduction in carbon emissions and UK energy security that the solar farm development will provide. These benefits are fully supported by local and national policy. Any adverse impacts which would arise as a result of approving the scheme are considered to be largely minor and would be outweighed by the very significant benefits.

As such, based on a balancing exercise of positive benefits against the harms identified, it is considered that very special circumstances to justify the solar farm development exist and the scheme is acceptable and would represent sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF and the Council's Local Plan.

### **Impact on visual amenity / Landscape**

Policy DE1 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure high quality design and development proposals must respect and enhance their surroundings and positively contribute towards the local identity and character of an area.

Local Plan Policy EM3 Renewable Energy Generation states that proposals for the installation of renewable and low carbon energy technologies, including both building-integrated and standalone schemes will be promoted and encouraged, provided that:

- a) any significant adverse impacts can be mitigated;



- b) where biofuels are to be utilised, they should be obtained from sustainable sources and transportation distances are minimised;
- c) any energy centre is suitably located and designed to a high quality such that it is sympathetically integrated with its surroundings; and
- d) all proposals are consistent with any relevant Policies in this Plan.

The application site is formed by fields separated by hedgerows and trees and sits on the urban-rural fringe. The local landscape comprises various land uses that reflect the transition between urban and rural landscapes. The application site is dissected by the Oxford Canal, pylons and associated powerlines cross over the site and the M6 motorway adjoins the southern boundary. Built form of primarily residential dwellinghouses are located to the north on Lentons Lane and to the northwest on Alderman's Green Road.

The application is supported by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA), which has considered the effects of the development on landscape character and visual amenity during construction, at completion taken as year one and 15-years following completion when new planting would have matured.

In terms of landscape character, the LVA notes that within the site, effects on the Lentons Lane Farmland are assessed as major during construction, in year one of operation, and at year 15. This reflects the loss of open farmland (together with some limited hedgerow removal to accommodate tracks) and the introduction of solar panels and related infrastructure. However, the introduction of a significant buffer strip to the north of the site, adjacent to Lentons Lane will maintain the landscape connectivity and landscape integration with the fields and public open space to the west [Hawkesbury Village Green].

Beyond the site boundary, moderate effects on landscape character are anticipated during construction and in year one of operation in parts of the Lentons Lane Farmland (fields between the site and Lentons Lane). By year 15 of operation, these effects are expected to lessen to minor, as the proposed boundary planting matures and reduces intervisibility. This will be further facilitated by the buffer strip to the north of the site, adjacent to Lentons Lane which will maintain the landscape connectivity and landscape integration with the fields and public open space to the west.

Effects on other landscape areas are predicted to be limited, primarily due to restricted intervisibility. This applies to all areas south of the M6 corridor and those to the west of Alderman's Green Road.

In terms of views and visual amenity the LVA advises that major effects will be experienced by visual receptors in residential properties along Lentons Lane, during construction and in year one of operation. By year 15, proposed planting along the northern boundary and within the proposed buffer strip along Lentons Lane will soften and filter views into the site, reducing effects to moderate.

Residents at Lentons Lane Farm, which will be surrounded by the proposed development, will continue to experience major effects during construction and at years one and 15. Major effects will also occur for recreational receptors using the Oxford Canal and Oxford Canal Walk during construction and at year one of operation. While existing vegetation screens much of the canal corridor, there are several stretches with direct and open views into the site. By year 15, mitigation planting will mature, reducing effects to

moderate by filtering views of the development, although this will also remove some longer-distance views.

For road users along Lentons Lane, moderate effects are expected during construction, caused by direct views of construction works, particularly at site access points. Effects will remain moderate in year one prior to mitigation taking effect but are predicted to reduce to minor by year 15, once the existing hedgerow along the southern roadside and proposed additional tree planting within the proposed buffer strip provide effective screening.

Visitors to Lentons Lane Cemetery are predicted to experience minor effects during construction and in year 1, as occasional open views into the site are available through gaps in boundary vegetation. By year 15, new boundary planting will have matured, reducing effects to negligible.

Recreational receptors at Hawkesbury Village Green will experience minor effects during construction and throughout years one and 15 of operation, as views are already largely contained by surrounding vegetation.

The impacts upon the landscape character, views and visual amenity have been considered in the submitted LVA and reviewed by Officers. The proposal would result in landscape harm, which would be partially filtered and minimised by existing hedgerows and vegetation and mitigated further by proposed additional tree planting and landscaping planting.

The solar farm will undoubtedly change the landscape character from open fields; however, given the low-rise nature of the solar arrays, the structures will not be dominant within the wider landscape, which includes major infrastructure features such as powerlines, pylons and the M6 Motorway. As previously noted in the 'Harm to Openness' section of this report, solar farms are also easily recognisable by members of the public and are not generally viewed as being out-of-context with the rural environment and can therefore assimilate well into the rural landscape.

Furthermore, the current scheme is significantly reduced compared to the previous scheme with an overall reduction in the number of solar panels by approximately one-third (from 60,180 panels down to some 44,000 panels) and much larger buffer zones, which has mitigated any harm further.

Any landscape harm arising as a result of the scheme should be weighed in the planning balance. The proposed development and associated elements such as the proposed control buildings, transformer stations, inverter units and security fences are considered to be of an acceptable scale. A condition is suggested to secure appropriate colour coating and materials to aid assimilation. When balancing all of the above and considering the proposed mitigation measures, Officers are of the view that the development would not have a harmful visual impact, as to justify a refusal of planning permission.

### **Glint and Glare**

A Glint and Glare Assessment (GGA) has been submitted to support the application.

### Dwellinghouses

A total of 160 dwelling receptors has been assessed which provide a representative sample of receptors in all directions within a 1 km buffer of the proposed development. Solar reflections are not geometrically possible at 96 receptors and there are no predicted impacts at 53 receptors due to adequate screening from vegetation.

There are 11 receptors where a low impact is anticipated due to solar reflections being predicted for more than one hour a day for more than 3 months a year with only partial screening found, and as such no mitigation measures are required for these receptors.

### Roads

Key considerations for quantifying impact significance on road users are: whether a solar reflection is predicted in practice; the significance of the road; and the location of the reflecting panel relative to the road user's direction of travel.

After detailed topographical analysis with high resolution terrain data and additional screening features along with the assessment methodology, a total of 8 road receptors were determined in which the magnitude of impact is moderate and therefore mitigation is required. In this instance mitigation in the form of screening near the relevant solar panel areas is proposed. The proposed mitigation measures include either close boarded fencing, or a combination of new screening, in-fill screening and vegetation management up to a minimum height of 3 m.

Once adequate screening is in place, the magnitude of impact due to solar reflections at these receptors is reduced to no impact. A condition is recommended requiring the approval of a detailed screening assessment.

### Canal

The Oxford Canal runs through the proposed development. Coventry Cruising Club is located to the north-east of Wyken Basin and the M6 motorway. Several moorings have been identified within this area (although the status of these moorings as 'dwellings' has not been ascertained); however, a review of the existing topography and vegetation in the area has identified that there is no direct line of sight between the mooring locations and the proposed solar panels. Due to the slow-moving nature of canal boat travel an assessment in relation to safety for moving canal boats is not considered to be necessary.

The Canal and River Trust (CRT) have been consulted and consider it extremely disappointing that the Glint and Glare Assessment (GGA) dismisses potential impacts on the amenity of canal and towpath users because of the slow moving nature of canal boat travel. The CRT have asked that the GGA is revised and updated to include an assessment of the likely visual impact on canal users (both boaters and towpath users).

The applicant has provided an addendum to the GGA to address the CRT's comments. It notes that the majority of the canal is screened from the PV panels, with only a small section between 200-300 metres in length where no screening is in place. This is the section around the canal bridge, as noted by the CRT. Effects on users travelling along the canal (or path) would therefore be short term.

The speed limit on the Oxford Canal is 4mph. For road or other transport types, the issue is safety oriented, as glint can be distracting or dazzling when travelling at speed. The

GGA notes that due to the low speed of canal/PRoW users, there is minimal risk associated. It is also noted that the canal itself is a reflecting surface.

Whilst canal boats can informally moor along the canal, although unlike dwellinghouses they are not static receptors and mooring for a few days at a time would not approach any harm thresholds.

Through mitigation no glint and glare concerns are therefore raised. The CRT have been reconsulted but have not commented at the time of writing this report.

### **Impact on residential amenity**

The previous scheme was refused on the grounds of impact to neighbouring residents by reason of the siting, overall size, proximity of the proposed structures and buildings to existing residential properties (refusal reason 2).

The applicant has sought to directly address this refusal reason with specific amendments to remove solar panels from the northern part of the field adjoining the southern side of Lenton's Lane to create a much larger buffer to the adjacent properties on the northern side of Lenton's Lane. The previous distance between the solar arrays and the closest properties on Lenton's Lane was between 30 and 40 metres. The buffer area has significantly increased in the current scheme and the separation between the solar arrays and the closest properties on Lenton's Lane is doubled to between 84 and 90 metres.

For context, the minimum separation between built form (i.e. a two-storey house) would be 12 metres to provide an acceptable light and outlook to existing occupiers. In addition to this physical separation is a field boundary hedge that forms a robust barrier to the southern side of Lenton's Lane. This hedge will be maintained and allowed to grow to a minimum height of 3.2 metres to provide a visual landscaping buffer.

Furthermore, the increased buffer area and associated layout changes have also led to an overall reduction in the size of the solar farm when compared to the previous scheme. The control building has also been located from the northern part of the site further into the site away from Lenton's Lane to address previous neighbour concerns.

The farmhouse faces northwest and with the increased buffer and relocated control building this property will now have uninterrupted views looking back towards Lenton's Lane. There is a robust field boundary between the farmhouse and the field to the east, some 37 metres away. The control building has been relocated to the southwest of the farmhouse some 80 metres away and will be well screened from the farmhouse by existing farm buildings and soft landscaping. To the western part of the site the solar arrays must avoid an existing electricity pylon structure and the separation to properties on Alderman's Green is in excess of 60 metres.

Officers are therefore satisfied that the scheme will not result in any significant loss of light, outlook or amenity.

The scheme is therefore considered to have successfully overcome refusal reason 2 from the previous application.

### Health concerns

Solar panels produce low-level electro-magnetic fields (EMFs), but these are considered harmless and too weak to cause any harm to human health. No glint or glare issues have been identified to surrounding occupiers.

The proposed development will not create any significant negative impacts in respect of health and wellbeing.

### Noise

In respect of noise, the proposed control building and inverters are understood to generate a slight hum during operation; however, this would be contained within the site boundary. The solar panels themselves silently convert solar irradiation into electricity.

The proposal is not considered to create harmful levels of noise.

### CCTV

In relation to privacy the proposed CCTV cameras would be located mostly to the perimeter of the proposed site. It is not considered that the CCTV cameras would be capable of any substantive overlooking of neighbouring properties or private amenity spaces. Full details will be required and conditioned.

### **Heritage character of the area and Heritage Assets**

Any planning application for development which will affect a listed building or its setting must be assessed in accordance with the requirements of section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This requires a local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any feature of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

The NPPF states that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset and consider the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits that may arise.

Local Plan Policy HE2 reflects NPPF policy and states that development proposals involving heritage assets in general and listed buildings in particular, should acknowledge the significance of the existing building and the area by means of their siting, massing, form, scale, materials and detail.

### Locally listed buildings

There are two locally listed buildings No.181 and 183 Lentons Lane located to the north of the site. These are non-designated heritage assets understood to be from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

The solar farm development will be located within the setting of these locally listed buildings, although the buffer between the properties and the solar panels has greatly increased following the previous submission. NPPF Paragraph 216 states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or

indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

The benefits of the solar farm are clear and the development will have an indirect 'less than substantial' impact upon the setting of the locally listed buildings. It is considered that any harm would be no more than minor and certainly not of a scale to warrant refusal of the application.

### Archaeology

Within the site two Archaeological Constrain Areas are situated, DCT1167 Ridge and Furrow as well as DCT1168 Mine Working west of Oxford canal.

Following the previous refusal a geophysics survey has been undertaken, and the Council's Archaeologist has requested targeted trial trench evaluation based upon the geophysics. This can be secured by condition.

### **Highway considerations**

Policy AC1 'Accessible Transport Network' states that development proposals which are expected to generate additional trips on the transport network should: a) Integrate with existing transport networks including roads, public transport and walking and cycling routes to promote access by a choice of transport modes. b) Consider the transport and accessibility needs of everyone living, working or visiting the city. c) Support the delivery of new and improved high quality local transport networks which are closely integrated into the built form. d) Actively support the provision and integration of emerging and future intelligent mobility infrastructure.

The side runs next to the M6 Motorway and statutory consultee National Highways have been consulted accordingly. National Highways have reviewed all supporting documentation in respect of the new application, and their position remains one of no objection, as the solar farm is not considered to have any detrimental impact to the M6 Strategic Road Network.

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) have raised no objection to the scheme, subject to conditions. The LHA note that current proposals include the creation of a temporary vehicular access off Lentons Lane, which shall be used during the construction phase only. The temporary access will provide access to the western and central parcels of the proposed solar farm, with access to the eastern parcel (within Rugby's administrative area) taken from Woodway Lane. Once construction has been completed and the solar farm is operational, the temporary construction access will be closed and vehicles will access the western and central parcels via the existing access off Lentons Lane, which currently serves the existing farm and Cruising Club. The eastern parcel will continue to be accessed off Woodway Lane.

The main impact of the development will be during the construction phase of the development. Once operational, the development will likely generate approximately 4 two-way vehicle trips per week for the monitoring and review of the solar panels. A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) has been submitted in support of the proposals, which indicates that the construction phase is likely to last approximately 9 months.

The CTMP indicates that HGV's will travel to / from the site via M6 J2, through Ansty and Shilton, and then along Shilton Lane to access Lentons Lane and Woodway Lane. Vehicle tracking drawings have been included in the CTMP, which illustrate that an articulated vehicle can safely manoeuvre into / out of the Woodway Lane junction, and into / out of the proposed temporary access off Lentons Lane. Based on the geometry of the Shilton Lane / Lentons Lane junction the LHA is satisfied that HGVs / articulated vehicles would be able to safely manoeuvre within the junction.

Warwickshire County Council LHA have been consulted as part of the Rugby scheme and have raised no objections to the proposed development.

The Canal and River Trust (CRT) have commented that if planning permission is granted, submission of a construction method statement for works close to the canal should be secured via a planning condition to ensure that the development can be undertaken without creating instability likely to affect the nearby cutting and embankment slopes. It is important that the method statement identifies any measures necessary to ensure that these slopes remain stable both during and after completion of the works. This is a reasonable condition and has been suggested accordingly.

#### Public Rights of Way (PROW)

There are existing public footpaths within the site. A public right of way provides an access from Lentons Lane to Wyken Basin, via the Lentons Lane farm access road. A permissive footway connects Hawksbury Village Green (south of Lentons Lane) with the road leading to Wyken Basin. Furthermore, the Oxford canal passes through the development site and the tow path allows for recreational access along its southern bank.

The Public Rights of Way Officer has raised no objections to the scheme. Conditions are suggested in relation to an access management plan, the diversion of the public footpath from Lenton's Lane to the Cruising Club.

#### **Flood Risk**

Policy EM4 states that all major developments must be assessed in respect of the level of flood risk from all sources.

Policy EM5 of the Coventry Local Plan states all development must apply SuDS and should ensure that surface water runoff is managed as close to its source as possible.

Drainage officers have assessed the proposals. The construction of a solar farm is not in itself likely to increase surface runoff, the construction of access roads and maintenance tracks will involve the compaction of selected stone to create an all-weather running surface. This compacted stone, potentially blinded with fines, will inevitably create a near impermeable surface and will increase localized and channelled runoff routes into the narrow steep-sided swales on both sides. The management of these swales is important and during extreme weather surface water runoff could become significant and erosion could occur. The management of surface water around the control building and associated works is not an issue, this is well considered and acceptable for the development.

Drainage officers have no objections subject to conditions in relation to an intrusive ground investigation report, SUD's and a detailed drainage scheme.

In view of the above, Officers are satisfied that the development is acceptable in this regard, would not exacerbate flooding or drainage risks and is in accordance with Policies EM4 and EM5.

### **Land contamination and constraints**

The application is supported by a contaminated land preliminary risk assessment (PRA). There have been some historic mining operations in the locality and the assessment also identifies a high potential for unexploded ordnance on site. EP agree with the findings of the desk top study and the applications should proceed to an intrusive site investigation. A UXO risk assessment to CIRIA C681 methodology will also be required prior to any intrusive works.

Cadent (Gas) has submitted a holding objection whilst their engineering team check the proximity of gas assets in the locality. Cadent have asked the LPA to check on the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) advice web app to see if any gas assets are affected. This has been checked and the HSE confirm that the proposed development site does not currently lie within the consultation distance of a major hazard site or major accident hazard pipeline. Therefore, HSE does not need to be consulted on any developments on this site. Cadent have been advised of the HSE response and Cadent's response at the time of writing the report is awaited. It is noted that Cadent raised no objections to the previous scheme.

There are former coal workings across parts of the site. The Coal Authority have been notified as a statutory consultee. They note that parts of the application site do fall within the defined Development High Risk Area (DHRA); however, they confirm that the nature of development proposed in those areas is exempt from consultation and all aspects of non-exempt development are not located within the DHRA. As such The Coal Authority have raised no objections, but an informative is suggested to make the applicant aware of potential risks posed by unrecorded mine workings.

This section of the Oxford Canal has been identified as part of the route currently being developed for the Grand Union Canal Transfer Project (GUCT). This is a joint water transfer project between Severn Trent Water, Affinity Water and the Canal & River Trust to help transfer recycled water from the Midlands to the Southeast to supply those communities who have a deficit of water. As part of this project, it is likely that some bank raising will need to be undertaken, typically up to 300mm including towpath reconstruction.

The Grand Union Canal Transfer is a Development Consent Order (DCO) project and has raised concerns with project timing, cable routing and access. As the Grand Union Canal Transfer has yet to commence its statutory consultations, it has yet to receive any formal status in the planning system and as such GUCT comments are premature.

Nevertheless, the applicant notes that the solar farm development does not preclude access to the canal banks for the proposed works and an area for a site compound could be accommodated. The applicant has been put into contact with the GUCT team.

Plans show the proposed routing of the grid connection cable. A detailed routing plan will be secured via planning condition.



**Air quality**

Policy EM7 states that major development schemes should promote a shift to the use of sustainable low emission transport to minimise the impact of vehicle emissions on air quality.

Post construction traffic flows associated with the solar farm development would be minimal and owing to the sustainable nature of the development itself, air quality mitigation measures would not be necessary in this instance. A condition is suggested to control emissions into the air during the construction phase.

**Ecology**

Policy GE3 states that Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Ancient Woodlands, Local Wildlife and Geological Sites will be protected and enhanced.

Overall, the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) supports the principle of more sustainable energy production, however we have concerns regarding the impact on the ponds on the site, known to support Great Crested Newts, as well as the Local Wildlife Site the Oxford Canal which runs through the site. The application should include plans for how these would be appropriately buffered.

The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Ecological Impact Assessment, Protected Species Surveys and a Bio-diversity Net Gain Assessment. The Council's Ecologist has raised no objection to the scheme. The following elements of the scheme are noted:

Watercourse/ponds - Four ponds were noted within the western land parcel of the site. Pond 6 was dominated by bulrush and flag iris with abundant soft rush at the margins, and locally frequent cuckooflower and parrot's feather aquaticum was also noted. During the GCN surveys, there was evidence of management of Pond 6 with bulrush cut back. No signs of parrot's feather were recorded.

Bats - The majority of the Site was of low value to bats with intensively managed poor semi-improved grassland and arable fields offering limited foraging and roosting opportunities. However, opportunities for bats were recorded in the less intensively managed semi-improved grassland in the east of the site.

24 trees were considered to have moderate or high BRS and a further 22 were considered to have low bat roosting suitability. A transect survey was completed which showed common pips, and noctules commuting through the site.

The incorporation of bat boxes on nearby trees. This will provide new roosting opportunities for local bat populations, although it should be noted that these features should be in unlit areas, as this can reduce their suitability for these species. This has been placed in the form of a condition.

Badger - The Site was considered to support optimum badger habitat with poor semi-improved grassland, arable fields, scrub, tall ruderal, bare ground and a network of

supporting hedgerows and tree lines offering opportunities for foraging, dispersing and sett building.

A total of 11 badger setts were identified within the Site. Setts 1 -10 were in land Parcel A in the centre of the Site and Sett 11 being located in Land Parcel B in the north-west of the site located separated from Parcel A by the Oxford Canal.

A badger mitigation licence with a supporting method statement will be required to be submitted to Natural England in case the solar farm development cannot avoid the 30m buffer zones around setts. This has been placed in the form of a condition.

As two main badger setts were identified on site, it is likely that the site is used by different badger clans. In case the setts are impacted by the development, a badger bait marking survey will be required to understand the boundary limits of the clans to inform mitigation and the appropriate location for construction of new setts, if required. The ideal time to undertake a badger bait-marking survey is between late February and late April, and early September to mid-October. This has been placed in the form of a condition.

Birds – The site shows habitats suitable to support nesting bird species, included arable land, hedgerow, tree lines, scrub, and vegetated pond in the west. The wider area supported a network of agricultural land to the north and east interspersed with tree lines and hedgerows, as well as marshes, woodland and scrub. This surrounding habitat generally represented a landscape of significantly greater value for breeding birds than on Site.

The updated breeding bird survey in 2025 recorded a total of 32 species. Species confirmed as breeding on site in 2025 included blackbird and robin. Probable/possible breeding species included wren, chaffinch, blue tit, blackcap, carrion crow, long tailed tit, house sparrow, wood pigeon, magpie, and great tit. Non-breeding species included buzzard, common sandpiper, and herring gull. One skylark was identified as singing and displaying within the Site boundary, a further individual was identified in a field adjacent to the Site.

Reptiles - The majority of the site was considered unlikely to support reptiles with nearly all the grassland uniformly short due to intensive grazing or arable use. Opportunities for reptiles were limited to an area of rough neutral semi-improved grassland and strip of poor semi-improved with tall ruderal species in the eastern land parcel, and a small area of poor semi-improved grassland tall ruderal vegetation in the western land parcel. However, due to the high levels of grazing in the western land parcel of the Site the suitability of this habitat was considered reduced due to disturbance and grazing of the grassland.

No reptiles were recorded during the surveys of suitable habitats. Proposals have sought to retain habitats suitable for these species and therefore no further is required in relation to this species.

Amphibians - Updated surveys in 2025 confirmed the continued presence of a low population of Great Crested Newt (GCN) in relation to Ponds 6 and 17. Pond 7 returned a positive result for GCN from the eDNA survey; however, no individuals were recorded during the full GCN survey. This may indicate low use of the pond and/or that it is used

to disperse through to other ponds in the surrounding area, including Pond 17. A GCN mitigation licence will be required to be submitted to Natural England.

Otter - The Site itself presented limited opportunities for this species. However, the Oxford Canal adjacent to the Site was considered to provide suitable habitat for foraging and transient otters as it was stocked with fish and was connected to suitable habitat in the wider landscape. No evidence of otters was identified in the survey.

Water vole – The water vole survey found a single hollow was recorded on the northern bank along the Oxford Canal adjacent to the eastern land parcel. However, there were no signs of this species actively using the hollow, including feeding remains and latrines, which would be expected to be present alongside an active burrow and as such this hollow was not considered to be used by water vole. Overall, the site presents limited opportunities for this species.

Hedgehog - The Site provided suitable habitat for foraging, commuting and sheltering hedgehog, including poor semi-improved grassland, neutral semi-improved grassland, hedgerows, scrub and tall ruderal. However, due to the high level of badger activity within the Site and the openness of the arable and pasture habitat present, the suitability of this Site for hedgehog is considered to be limited.

A CEMP is required as appropriate mitigation measures are needed to avoid impacts on retained adjacent habitats will include the following best practice construction measures to avoid potential impacts such as contamination, encroachment and soil compaction. – This has been placed in the form of a condition.

Invasive species - Parrots feather was recorded in a pond 6 in the western land parcel of the Site. This is listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act in England and Wales therefore, it is also an offence to plant or otherwise cause this species to grow in the wild. This has been placed in the form of a condition.

#### Bio-diversity Net Gain (BNG)

The Ecologist states that the submitted BNG metric has been checked and the areas that have been calculated are accepted.

The BNG calculations indicate that the completed development will result in the net gain of 68.56% in Area Habitat Units, resulting in an increase of +79.46 in area biodiversity units, a net gain of 12.33% in Linear Hedgerow Units, resulting in an increase of +1.41 in linear hedgerow biodiversity units and a net gain of 11.67% in watercourse units, resulting in an increase of +1.32 in watercourse units.

An Implementation Plan is required that takes the design concepts into a position to be deliverable on the ground. An implementation plan should include drawings (e.g., detailed landscape planting schedules), management proposals, a construction handover checklist, and a timetable for implementation, and should specify those responsible for activities. The Implementation Plan should be closely aligned with the Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan (HMMP). This currently has not been provided within the BNG report. These requirements are stated in the best practice guidelines by CIEEM. The applicant has agreed this will be put in the HMMP, which has been conditioned accordingly.

## Trees

In terms of trees Policy GE4: Tree Protection states that development proposals will be positively considered provided: there is no unacceptable loss of, or damage to, existing trees, trees not to be retained as a result of the development are replaced with new trees as part of a well-designed landscape scheme; and existing trees worthy of retention are sympathetically incorporated into the overall design of the scheme.

The scheme is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment. The proposed development requires the partial removal of seven category B moderate quality groups of trees, two category C low quality groups of trees in their entirety and the partial removal of a category B moderate quality hedgerow. The tree groups to be removed in their entirety are small and low quality. However, the proposed layout will also require the partial removal of some moderate quality tree groups. These removals are proposed to facilitate the construction of proposed site roads.

The Tree Officer raises no objection to these works, subject to conditions to secure a detailed Arboricultural Method Statement and dimensioned Tree Protection Plan to ensure retained trees are protected during development.

## **Developer Contributions**

Policy IM1 'Developer Contributions for Infrastructure' states that development will be expected to provide or contribute towards provision of: a) Measures to directly mitigate its impact and make it acceptable in planning terms; and b) Physical, social and green infrastructure to support the needs associated with the development.

The solar farm development does not trigger any contributions or obligations.

As previously mentioned the applicant proposes to provide additional community benefits, which include: A Neighbour Fund – For residents closest to the development offering subsidised energy solutions; a Discounted Tariff Fund – Energy savings offered (discounted tariff) for those in the surrounding area to the development; and Community Based Projects – For wider initiatives that deliver long-term social or environmental value across the community.

Planning obligations may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission if they meet the statutory tests that they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. They must be:

- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- directly related to the development; and
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

The community benefits proposed do not meet the above tests and as such cannot reasonably be required by the local planning authority to make the application acceptable. Whilst these are a gesture of goodwill by the developer, officers have not afforded weight to these proposed benefits in the planning assessment.

## **Other matters**

The representations have raised several questions that are directly dealt with below:

#### Photovoltaic Heat Island effect

The Photovoltaic Heat Island (PVHI) effect has been raised as a concern. This is a rise in ambient temperatures in areas surrounding photovoltaic (PV) sites.

A separate but well-documented phenomenon is the urban heat island (UHI) effect where metropolitan areas become significantly warmer than their surrounding rural areas. This happens because urban structures like concrete and asphalt are able to absorb and retain more heat than natural landscapes, while the lack of vegetation reduces natural cooling processes.

Unlike the UHI effect, the applicant advises that there is no credible UK evidence base to prove or disprove the potential heat island effect for PV. Examples of studies on the subject relate to significantly larger PV sites in arid locations such as the USA and China.

It is noted that the application site will have a linear layout of solar panels and benefits from a high degree of natural vegetation and the cooling effect of the canal.

Whilst inconclusive, the applicant is willing to undertake a monitoring review of temperatures to provide an evidence base for future understanding. This monitoring review has therefore been included as a condition.

#### Fire risk

While fires can occur in solar installations due to electrical faults or poor maintenance, they are relatively rare. Solar panels are also common on residential and commercial buildings and do not pose any material safety risk. West Midlands's Fire Service have raised no objections to this scheme.

#### Grid capacity

The applicant confirms that the proposed development has been specifically designed to be accommodated at the grid connection point. There is grid capacity, and a grid connection offer has been made.

#### Ground Contamination from Panels

The applicant confirms that solar panels do not result in ground contamination and land can be returned to agricultural uses following the future decommissioning of the site.

#### Brownfield and roof top alternatives

As supported by the sequential assessment, there are no brownfield or roof areas of sufficient capacity that are located to a suitable grid connection point within an economic connection distance to the National Grid substation connection point at Alderman's Green, where connection capacity exists.

Officers note that the sustainably located brownfield land within the urban area would typically be allocated for urban regeneration schemes. Unlike rooftop panels, ground-mounted panels can also be more easily placed away from shade and can be tilted so they are at the right angle to harvest sunlight most efficiently throughout the day and the year.

#### No meaningful consultation

The applicant has undertaken a programme of community consultation on the updated proposals. The formal consultation period spanned over 9 weeks, running from 3 July to 8 September 2025, although the applicant has continued to engage on its proposals following this period.

The applicant issued a letter to 307 properties provided residents with information about the consultation, including the time, date and location of the public events, information about the public webinar and the applicant's contact details. Feedback was encouraged through a feedback station at the public event, as well as a dedicated form on the website, an email address and Freepost address.

A total of 59 people attended the public event and the applicant received 41 individual pieces of feedback by the close of the consultation period. These comments have been considered by the applicant prior to submitting the planning application.

The applicant confirms that they are committed to maintaining a constructive, two-way dialogue throughout the lifetime of the project.

### **Equality Implications**

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:-

(1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Officers have taken this into account and given due regard to this statutory duty, and the matters specified in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in the determination of this application.

There are no known equality implications arising directly from this development.

### **Conclusion**

The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in principle and the identified harm to the green belt has been clearly and demonstrably outweighed by the substantial identified benefits of the solar farm. Very special circumstances necessary to justify the development are therefore considered to exist. The scheme will not result in any significant impact upon neighbour amenity, highway safety, ecology or infrastructure, subject to relevant conditions. The reason for Coventry City Council granting planning permission is because the development is in accordance with: Policies DS3, DE1, HE2, GB1, GE3, GE4, AC1, AC2, AC3, AC4, EM1, EM2, EM3, EM4, EM5 and EM7 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan Policies together with the aims of the NPPF.

## CONDITIONS/REASONS

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.

**Reason** *To conform with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)*

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

- Drg No. 2881415EONB2B-ZZ-00-DWG-ELE-00 Rev Y,  
Transformer Stations Plan, TRK Rev L, TRK4 Rev J, TRK5 Rev G, TRK6 Rev E, TRK7 Rev E, TRK8 Rev F, Indicative Inverter Container, Indicative Solar Panels, Illustrative Cross Section View (Section D-D), Illustrative Cross Section View (Section E-E), Typical Track Construction, Illustrative Cross Section View (Section C-C), Indicative Control Station, Indicative-fence, Barton Hyett Associates Arboricultural Impact Assessment November 2025, Pell Frischmann Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Ref:10110399 PEF-XX-XX-T.TN-OE-000005\_P02 BNG, CFA Archaeology Graphical Survey Report No. 4743 and plans, Pell Frischmann Site Selection and Sequential Test September 2025, Pell Frischmann Preliminary risk assessment (PRA) Ref 106670-PEF-ZZ-XX-RP-GG-600001 P01 LCDS Lentons Lane.Docx, Pell Frischmann Flood Risk Assessment Ref: 106670-PFC-ZZ-XZ-RP-YE-000010-S0-P01\_FRDA, Pell Frischmann Construction Traffic Management Plan September 2025, Lentons Lane BNG Metric, Pell Frischmann Preliminary Ecological Appraisal September 2025, Pell Frischmann Technical Note 10110399 PEF-XX-XX-T.TN-OE-000003\_P01, Pell Frischmann Ecological Impact Assessment September 2025, Pell Frischmann Archaeological Mitigation Plan September 2025, FGP Agricultural Land Classification Report December 2022, tnei Glint and Glare Assessment 17372-001 30 September 2025, Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan V1 dated 29/05/2025, LUC Ecological Appraisal September 2025, Pell Frischmann Landscape and Visual Appraisal P01, Young Planning & Energy Consenting Planning Statement (including statement on Design & Access) September 2025.
- 2.

**Reason** *For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning*

3. The planning permission hereby granted shall be limited to a period of 40 years commencing from the date electricity generated by the solar panels is first exported to the National Grid. The operator shall notify the Local Planning Authority in writing within 10 working days of electricity generated from the development being first exported to the National Grid. At the end of this 40-year period, the development shall be removed, and the land restored to its previous agricultural use pursuant to a Decommissioning Method Statement as required by Condition 4 of this permission.

**Reason** *The Local Planning Authority considers that a permanent planning permission is not appropriate in this case because of the temporary nature of the use. In order to accord to Policy DE1 and GB1 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan, this permission is granted for a limited period only in the recognition of the particular circumstances of the proposal concerned.*

4. No later than six months prior to the expiry of the planning permission, or within six months of the cessation of electricity generation by this solar PV development, whichever is the sooner, a Decommissioning Method Statement setting out a detailed scheme of works for the removal of the development (excluding the approved landscaping and biodiversity works) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme of works shall include the following: a) a programme of works; b) a method statement for the decommissioning and dismantling of all equipment and surfacing on site; c) details of any items to be retained on site; d) a method statement for restoring the land to agriculture; e) timescales for the decommissioning, removal and reinstatement of the land; f) a method statement for the disposal/recycling of redundant equipment/structures. The decommissioning of the site shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved Decommissioning Method Statement. The operator shall notify the Local Planning Authority in writing within five working days following the cessation of electricity generation.

**Reason** *To safeguard the amenities of nearby occupiers, highway safety and to restore the site back to its former agricultural use in accordance with Policies DE1, GB1, AC1 and AC2 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.*

5. Notwithstanding the approved details, prior to their installation on site, details of the proposed materials and colour coating / finish of all solar panels, frames, ancillary buildings, containers, fencing, CCTV and enclosures shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall be installed only in full accordance with the approved details prior to the first occupation of the development and thereafter shall be retained and shall not be removed or altered in any way.

**Reason** *To ensure that the proposed development has a satisfactory external appearance in the interests of the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policy DE1 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.*

6. Notwithstanding the approved details, prior to their installation on site, details of the cabling routing plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include a cross section plan of the trench and describe the method by which the cable will be laid and covered. These details shall be installed only in full accordance with the approved details prior to the first occupation of the development and thereafter shall be retained and shall not be removed or altered in any way.

**Reason** *To ensure that the associated cabling is appropriately routed avoiding any tree roots and bio-diversity features in accordance with Policy DE1, GE3 and GE4 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.*

7. Prior to the commencement of development, a scheme to deal with the provision of temporary boundary fencing to address glint and glare where necessary shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The fencing as approved shall remain in place until the new planting



and any additional planting to enhance the existing established planting has reached a minimum height of 3 metres (or greater) and shall be thereafter removed. The Local Planning Authority shall be notified in writing a minimum of 10 working days prior to the removal of any temporary fencing.

**Reason** *In the interests of public safety and amenity in accordance with Policies DE1, DS3 and AC1 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.*

8. No works to construct the proposed access track within the application site shall take place until a Method Statement detailing the means of construction of the track, including any proposed earth moving or excavation works required in connection with its construction has first been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Method Statement shall identify and incorporate any measures required to avoid the risk of adversely affecting the stability of nearby embankment and cutting slopes associated with the Oxford Canal (such as vibration monitoring or establishment of stand-off distances for operating plant or machinery during construction work) or provide sufficient information to demonstrate that no risk to the stability of these structures will occur, both during construction operations and also during subsequent operational use of the track by vehicles. The development shall thereafter only be carried out in accordance with the agreed Method Statement.

**Reason** *In the interests of avoiding the risk of creating land instability arising from any impacts from works to construct the access track or subsequent use of the track which could adversely affect the stability of embankment and cutting slopes associated with the Oxford Canal in accordance with the advice and guidance on land stability contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and in the National Planning Practice Guidance.*

9. Prior to the commencement of development, a method statement detailing the control of emissions into the air during the demolition/construction phase should be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The method statement should accord with the Best Practice Guidance - 'The control of dust and emissions from construction and demolition' and include:- a) proposed hours of work; b) map with nearest receptors and distances for dust and noise; c) noise impact on nearest neighbours and control measures as required; d) monitoring methods and measurement locations for dust and noise recording details; e) dust mitigation measures; f) contact details for responsible persons and site personnel training; and g) information provision and liaison with local residents. The development shall only proceed in full accordance with the approved details.

**Reason** *The agreement of a method statement for air quality prior to the commencement of development is fundamental to ensure a satisfactory level of environmental protection and to minimise disturbance to local residents during the construction process in accordance with Policies EM7 and DS3 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.*

10. The temporary construction vehicular access off Lenton's Lane shall not be used until detailed engineering drawings, including visibility splays of 2.4m x 70m and vehicle tracking, have been submitted to and approved in writing by

the Local Planning Authority. The access shall be constructed in accordance with the approved drawings.

**Reason** *In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policies AC1 and AC2 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.*

11. Within 3 months of the site being operational, the temporary construction vehicular access off Lenton's Lane shall be closed to vehicles, and the public highway verge / hedgerow reinstated in accordance with details to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All details shall be carried out as approved.

**Reason** *In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policies AC1 and AC2 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.*

12. No development shall commence (including any demolition, site clearance or preparatory works) unless and until a delay survey of the highway adjacent to and the land within the red line boundary has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. A further delay survey shall be completed at the end of the construction works and any damage must be made good by the developer, in accordance with details to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason** *In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policies AC1 and AC2 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.*

13. No development shall commence (including any demolition, site clearance or preparatory works) unless and until details of temporary road signs and road markings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The signage and road markings shall be installed in full accordance with the approved details prior to commencement of construction of the development and thereafter retained until the construction of the development has been completed.

**Reason** *In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policies AC1 and AC2 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.*

14. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) prepared by Pell Frischmann dated September 2025 throughout the construction period.

**Reason** *To minimise disturbance to local residents and in the interests of highway safety during the construction process in accordance with Policies EM7, AC1 and AC2 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.*

15. The occupation of the development hereby permitted shall not begin until:  
a) the Local Planning Authority has approved in writing a full scheme of works of improvement to the Public Footpath from Lenton's Lane which connects to the public footpath to the Cruising Club; and  
b) the approved works have been completed in accordance with the local planning authority's written approval and have been certified in writing as complete on behalf of the local planning authority - unless alternative

arrangements to secure the specified works have been approved in writing by the local planning authority.

**Reason** *In the interests of public safety and amenity in accordance with Policies DE1, AC1 and AC4 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.*

16. No development (including any demolition or preparatory works) shall take place unless and until an Access Management Plan (AMP) has been submitted to approved in writing by the local planning authority. This shall include: (a) Details of any temporary or permanent diversion of public rights of way in the area; (b) Any signage required for temporary diversions; (c) Details of how public users of the public rights of way will be accommodated while the works are carried out; d) Full details of work being carried out on the public rights of way to accommodate access it the development site; and (e) Details of delay surveys. The development shall only proceed in full accordance with these approved details.

**Reason** *The agreement of a Access Management Plan prior to the commencement of development is fundamental to ensure to minimise disturbance to local residents using footpaths during the construction process in accordance with Policies AC2 and AC4 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.*

17. No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works, to be defined in a Written Scheme of Investigation that has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall include details of the following: - The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works; - The identification and assessment of the extent, character and significance of archaeological remains within the application area; - The assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the archaeological remains; - Measures to ensure the preservation in situ or by record of archaeological features of identified importance; - Methodologies for the recording and recovery of archaeological remains, including artefacts and ecofacts; - The programme for post-investigation assessment and subsequent analysis, publication & dissemination and deposition of resulting material - A timetable of works in relation to the proposed development; - A list of all staff involved in the implementation of the strategy, including sub- contractors and specialists, their responsibilities and qualifications

**Reason** *To comply with paragraphs 194 and 205 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy HE2 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan in order to ensure any remains of archaeological importance, which help to increase our understanding of the City's historical development are recorded, preserved and protected in the most appropriate manner, where applicable, before development commences. This may mean the preservation of archaeological evidence in situ or by means of a comprehensive record and the creation of a permanent archive, to advance public understanding.*

18. The development shall not be occupied until any archaeological mitigation investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the approved written scheme of investigation, and provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.

**Reason** *To comply with paragraphs 194 and 205 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy HE2 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan in order to ensure any remains of archaeological importance, which help to increase our understanding of the City's historical development are recorded, preserved and protected in the most appropriate manner, where applicable, before development commences. This may mean the preservation of archaeological evidence in situ or by means of a comprehensive record and the creation of a permanent archive, to advance public understanding.*

19. An investigation and risk assessment (in addition to any assessment provided with the planning application), must be completed in accordance with a scheme to assess the nature and extent of any contamination on the site; whether or not it originates on the site; and any report of the findings must be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to the commencement of development (including any demolition). The report of the findings, to be conducted in accordance with Environment Agency Guidance Land Contamination: Risk Management (2021) and must include (i) a survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination; (ii) an assessment of the potential risk to; human health, property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and service lines and pipes, adjoining land, groundwaters and surface waters, ecological systems, archaeological sites and ancient monuments; (iii) an appraisal of remedial options and proposal of the preferred option(s)

**Reason** *To safeguard health, safety and the environment in accordance with Policy EM6 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017, the emerging Local Plan and the aims and objectives of the NPPF*

20. The development shall only be undertaken in accordance with a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historical environment, which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme must include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, timetable of works and site management procedures. The scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.

**Reason** *To safeguard health, safety and the environment in accordance with Policy EM6 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017, the emerging Local Plan and the aims and objectives of the NPPF*

21. The approved remediation scheme must be carried out in accordance with its terms prior to the commencement of development other than that required to

carry out the remediation. The Local Planning Authority must be given two weeks written notification of commencement of the remediation scheme works.

**Reason** *To safeguard health, safety and the environment in accordance with Policy EM6 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017, the emerging Local Plan and the aims and objectives of the NPPF*

22. Prior to occupation of the development hereby permitted and following completion of the measures identified within the remediation scheme approved under condition No. 21, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced and submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing

**Reason** *To safeguard health, safety and the environment in accordance with Policy EM6 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017, the emerging Local Plan and the aims and objectives of the NPPF*

23. In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development, that was not previously identified, it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of condition No.19, and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared in accordance with the requirements of condition No.20, which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with condition No.21.

**Reason** *To safeguard health, safety and the environment in accordance with Policy EM6 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017, the emerging Local Plan and the aims and objectives of the NPPF*

24. The development hereby permitted shall not commence unless and until a Desk Study for Potential Unexploded Ordnance Contamination and a risk mitigation strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only proceed in strict accordance with the approved details.

**Reason** *To safeguard health, safety and the environment in accordance with Policy EM6 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017, the emerging Local Plan and the aims and objectives of the NPPF*

25. No lighting or illumination of any part of the site shall be installed or operated unless and until details of such measures have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and such works, and use of that lighting and/or illumination, shall be carried out and operated only in full accordance with those approved details.

**Reason** *To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining occupiers of the development and visual amenity in accordance with Policy DE1 and DS3 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.*

26. Before any development commences on site (including any demolition, site clearance or other preparatory works) the following shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority: (a) An Arboricultural Method Statement and (b) A Dimensioned Tree Protection Plan (to include protection measures during and after construction and any construction exclusion zones) (in accordance with 5.5/ Table B.1), site monitoring (6.3) of British Standard BS5837:2012 - Trees in relation to design demolition and construction - Recommendations, which shall also include any proposal for pruning or other preventative works.

The approved mitigation and / or protection measures shall be put into place prior to the commencement of any works and shall remain in place during all construction work.

**Reason** *To protect those trees which are of significant amenity value to the area and which would provide an enhanced standard of appearance to the development in accordance with Policy GE3 and GE4 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.*

27. Prior to energy generation at the solar farm hereby permitted, details of the CCTV cameras and their locations within the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CCTV cameras shall be installed in full accordance with the approved details prior to first energy generation at the development and thereafter shall be retained and shall not be removed or altered in any way.

**Reason** *To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining occupiers of the development in accordance with Policy DE1 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.*

28. Prior to their incorporation into the development details of anti-reflective panels for mitigation from glint and glare shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall be installed only in full accordance with the approved details prior to energy generation from the development and thereafter shall be retained and shall not be removed or altered in any way

**Reason** *To ensure that there is no detrimental impact from glint or glare to the neighbouring occupiers in accordance with Policies DE1 and EM3 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.*

29. Prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted the following drainage details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority: a) An appropriately scaled intrusive ground investigation report must be provided to establish the depth and type of strata, including percolation results in accordance with BRE 365 and identifying the presence and risk associated with migrant or soluble contaminants. Please provide evidence of existing groundwater levels and seasonal variation, in order to inform the drainage design. B) Full details and calculations of the open-air storage or attenuation in the form of a wet pond, dry basin, swale or other similar surface feature, aimed at managing water quantity, quality and introducing

biodiversity at the ground surface is required. C) The use of infiltration drainage either as above ground (open air) or below ground (buried) – to be accompanied by a full intrusive Geotechnical Site Investigation is required. A detailed strategy document must be submitted to for the long-term inspection and maintenance of the SuDS and other surface water drainage elements on site. It should also mention any notable Health and Safety or specialist training, and special equipment required as part of the routine maintenance. D) The stormwater discharge rates from the development shall be managed in order to reduce flood risk to surrounding sites, downstream areas or the wider environment by means of a flow control mechanism (or mechanisms) limiting the total site discharge offsite to Qbar greenfield rates or 5 l/s, whichever is greater. E) Provisions must be made for the drainage of the site to ensure there are no temporary increases in flood risk, on or off site, during the construction phase, particularly with respect to the planned demolition/construction works and the deposition of silts and cementitious materials. F) Evidence must be provided to show the management of overland flow routes in the event of exceedance or blockage of the drainage system. Details should include demonstration of how the building(s) will be protected in such an event. G) Where new or redevelopment site levels result in the severance, diversion or reception of natural (or engineered) land drainage flow, the developer shall maintain existing flow routes (where there are no flood risk or safety implications) or intercept these flows and discharge these by a method approved by the Local Planning Authority. H) A wayleave of at least 5m must be provided from the top bank of any Ordinary watercourse to the nearest structure. The drainage details shall be installed in full accordance with the approved documentation prior to occupation of the development and thereafter shall be maintained and shall not be removed or altered in any way.

*To ensure that adequate drainage facilities are available for the satisfactory and proper development of the site in accordance with policies EM1, EM4 and EM5 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.*

30. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, details of both hard and soft landscaping works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details of hard landscaping works shall include boundary treatment, including full details of the proposed boundary fence and gates to be erected, specifying colour coatings; and hard surfacing (which shall be made of porous materials or provision shall be made to direct run-off water from the hard surface to a permeable or porous area). The hard landscaping works shall be completed in strict accordance with the approved details within three months of the first energy generation at the solar farm hereby permitted; and all planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details within the first planting and seeding seasons following the first energy generation. Any tree(s) or shrub(s) which within a period of five years from the completion of the development dies, is removed or becomes; in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority; seriously damaged, defective or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with another of similar size and species. All hedging, tree(s) and shrub(s) shall be planted in accordance with British Standard BS 8545:2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape

- Recommendations and BS4428 - Code of Practice for General Landscape Operations.

**Reason** *To ensure a satisfactory standard of appearance of the development in the interests of the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policies GE1 and DE1 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.*

31. No development (including any demolition or preparatory works) shall commence unless and until a detailed badger survey, including timetabled mitigation measures where appropriate, has been carried out by a qualified badger consultant and has writing to the Local Planning Authority. Any approved mitigation measures shall be implemented in full accordance with the approved timetable of works and once provided shall not be removed or altered in any way.

**Reason** *To ensure that protected species are not harmed by the development in accordance with Policy GE3 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017, the emerging Local Plan and the advice contained within the NPPF.*

32. Within one month of the installation and carrying out of any approved badger mitigation and conservation measures submitted in accordance with condition No. 31, a qualified persons report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority to verify completion of the works.

**Reason** *To ensure that protected species are not harmed by the development in accordance with Policy GE3 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017, the emerging Local Plan and the advice contained within the NPPF.*

33. No development (including any demolition or preparatory works) shall commence unless and until details of measures to protect badgers from being trapped in open excavations and/or pipes and culverts have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The measures shall include: a) creation of sloping escape ramps for badgers which may be achieved by edge profiling of trenches/excavations or by using planks placed into them at the end of each working day; and b) blocking off open pipe-work larger than 150mm outside diameter at the end of each working day. All protection measures shall be implemented in strict accordance with the approved details and shall be retained accordingly whilst development works are undertaken.

**Reason** *To ensure that protected species are not harmed by the development in accordance with Policy GE3 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017, the emerging Local Plan and the advice contained within the NPPF.*

34. No development (including any demolition or preparatory works) shall commence unless and until a Biodiversity Method Statement for Great Crested Newts, including Reasonable Avoidance Measures, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only be carried out in strict accordance with the approved Biodiversity Method Statement.



*To ensure that protected species are not harmed by the development in accordance with Policy GE3 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017, the emerging Local Plan and the advice contained within the NPPF.*

35. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted details of a minimum of 10 bird and bat boxes, a minimum of 4 hibernacula features, and log piles, and depending on the outcome of the badger survey then replacement setts may be required, this shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These biodiversity features shall be fully installed in strict accordance with the approved details prior to the first occupation of the development.

*To ensure that protected species are not harmed by the development in accordance with Policy GE3 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017, the emerging Local Plan and the advice contained within the NPPF.*

36. No removal of trees / hedges / shrubs shall take place between 1st March and 31st August (inclusive) unless a survey to assess the nesting bird activity on the site during this period has been undertaken by a qualified surveyor, and a scheme to protect any nesting birds identified on the site has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No trees / hedges / shrubs shall be removed between 1st March and 31st August (inclusive) other than in strict accordance with the approved bird nesting protection scheme.

*To ensure that protected species are not harmed by the development in accordance with Policy GE3 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017, the emerging Local Plan and the advice contained within the NPPF.*

37. No development (including any demolition or preparatory works) shall commence unless and until an Invasive Non-Native Species Protocol (INNSP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The INNSP shall detail the timing and method of containment, control and removal of Parrots feather from the site. The development shall only proceed only in full accordance with the measures identified in the approved INNSP.

*To ensure that protected species are not harmed by the development in accordance with Policy GE3 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017, the emerging Local Plan and the advice contained within the NPPF.*

38. No development (including any demolition or preparatory works) shall commence unless and 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) a risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities;(b) identification of biodiversity protection zones (e.g. buffers to trees and hedges or to protected wildlife habitat); (c) practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices, such as protective fencing, exclusion barriers and warning signs) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (particularly in relation to works within canopy and root protection areas for hedgerows or protected trees); (d)

the location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features (in relation to breeding birds in particular); (e) the times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works (as required); (f) responsible persons and lines of communication; and (g) the role and responsibilities on site of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) or similarly competent person (as necessary). The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details.

**Reason** *In order to safeguard protected and/or priority species from undue disturbance and impacts, noting that initial preparatory works could have unacceptable impacts; and in order to secure an overall biodiversity gain in accordance with Policy GE3 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.*

39. No development (including any demolition or preparatory works) shall commence unless and until a scheme ('the offsetting scheme') for the offsetting of biodiversity impacts at the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The offsetting scheme shall include: a) a methodology for the identification of receptor site(s); b) the identification of receptor site(s); c) details of the offset requirements of the development (in accordance with the recognised offsetting metrics standard outlines in the Defra Metrics Guidance dated March 2012, or any document that may update or supersede that guidance). d) the provision of arrangements to secure the delivery of the offsetting measures (including a timetable for their delivery); and e) a management and monitoring plan (to include for the provision and maintenance of the offsetting measures in perpetuity). The offsetting scheme shall be implemented in strict accordance with the approved details within three months of the first occupation of the development hereby permitted and thereafter shall not be withdrawn or amended in any way.

**Reason** *In order to safeguard and enhance habitat and secure an overall biodiversity gain in accordance with Policy GE3 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.*

40. No development (including any demolition or preparatory works) shall commence unless and until a survey for the presence of bats has been carried out by a qualified surveyor and has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Should the presence of bats be found then no demolition or preparatory works shall take place until full details of measures for bat mitigation and conservation in accordance with good practice guidelines have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All works shall be implemented in strict accordance with the approved timings and details and once undertaken any mitigation works shall not be removed or altered in any way.

**Reason** *To ensure that protected species are not harmed by the development in accordance with Policy GE3 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017, the emerging Local Plan and the advice contained within the NPPF.*

41. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted a Habitat Management and Monitoring plan (HMMP) shall be submitted to and approved

in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The content of the HMMP 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, including mitigation and enhancement for species identified on site; d) Appropriate management option 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 ten-year period); g) Details of the body or organisation responsible for implementation of the plan, along with funding mechanism(s) for that body or organisation; h) Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures, including where monitoring shows that conservation aims and objectives of the HMMP are not being met; i) An Implementation Plan is required that takes the design concepts into a position to be deliverable on the ground. An implementation plan should include drawings (e.g., detailed landscape planting schedules), management proposals, a construction handover checklist, and a timetable for implementation, and should specify those responsible for activities. The Implementation Plan should be closely aligned with the HMMP. The HMMP plan shall be implemented in strict accordance with the approved details within three months of the first occupation of the development and thereafter shall not be withdrawn or amended in any way.

**Reason** *In order to safeguard and enhance habitat on or adjacent to the site in order to secure an overall biodiversity gain in accordance with Policy GE3 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.*

42. The development hereby permitted shall proceed in accordance with a scheme for monitoring any potential Photovoltaic Heat Island (PVHI) effect on site, which shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include: (i) the programme and methodology of temperature monitoring and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works; (ii) Temperature sensor type and location; and (iii) data collection timings (to include assessment of day/night and seasonal variations); and (iv) timescale for submission of data and analysis of findings. All details shall be carried out as approved.

**Reason** *A monitoring review of temperatures will provide an evidence base for future understanding of the PVHI effect in accordance with Policy DS3 and the emerging local plan.*