

Consultee Comments for Planning Application 22/00319/FUL

Application Summary

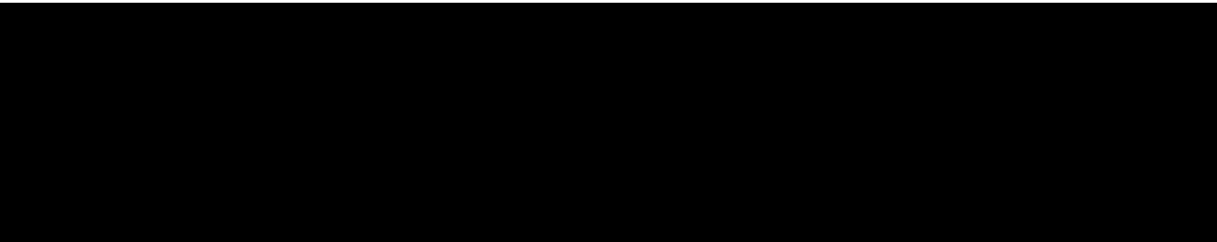
Application Number: 22/00319/FUL

Address: Land To The West Of Wood Lane And Stocking Lane Kingston Estate Gotham Nottinghamshire NG11 0LF

Proposal: Installation of renewable energy generating solar farm comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays, together with substation, inverter stations, security measures, site access, internal access tracks and other ancillary infrastructure, including landscaping and biodiversity enhancements

Case Officer: Craig Miles

Consultee Details



Comments

The applicant is under a duty to demonstrate that very special circumstances exist to justify what would be inappropriate development in the greenbelt.

Further, the harm must be shown to be clearly outweighed by other considerations. The inclusion of the word 'clearly' is significant and demonstrates that this is more than simply weighting the benefit and harm.

It is not enough to simply rely upon the implicit wider environmental benefits of generating energy from renewable sources as a silver bullet.

In assessing the current application, I have been most acutely aware of Policy 16 of Rushcliffe's Local Plan Part 2 that states renewable energy schemes should be acceptable in terms of:

- a) compliance with Green Belt policy....
- l) cumulative impact with existing and proposed development.

I am satisfied that the harm on the green belt of this proposal is lower, relative to other existing and proposed development in the area. This arises from the siting of the development which is a reasonable distance from existing dwellings and on the whole, well screened. It follows that the 'other considerations' needed to outweigh such harm are not as significant as would be required were the harm to be greater.

The need to provide energy from renewable sources must be given significant weight. I note the comments of the Rights of Way (No Objections development has maintained RoW in current

location to acceptable terms.) & Ecology (The development provides opportunities for ecological enhancement. The favourable conservation status of Protected Species is unlikely to be impacted by this development) Officers. Suggest that there additional observations are included in planning conditions.

On balance I am satisfied that very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development are present, with harm not being clearly outweighed.

It is also necessary to consider the cumulative impact of the proposed development within the local context.

This is of acute interest given the development at Fairham, Barton Sand/Gravel, Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station, possible sites identified at growth options stage of GNSP, and other solar farm proposals at varying stages of development.

Together these pose an existential threat to the purposes of the green belt in the vicinity. It is impossible for all the proposals to be developed and the purposes of the green belt be retained.

Whilst it is acknowledged that after the operational period of the farm, the land will revert to greenfield, a 40 year period is significant and goes against the permanence of the green belt. This particular site is relatively well-screened and less obtrusive than other proposed developments.

Were the proposal to be given permission, this would significantly contribute to the cumulative impact of development in the area. On balance I am satisfied that this proposed development will not result in an unacceptable impact when viewed cumulatively.