

**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 16 DECEMBER 2020 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.40 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Simon Weeks (Chairman), Chris Bowring (Vice-Chairman), Stephen Conway, Gary Cowan, Carl Doran, Pauline Jorgensen, Abdul Loyes, Andrew Mickleburgh, Malcolm Richards, Angus Ross and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Councillors Present and Speaking

Councillors: Stuart Munro and Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

Officers Present

Madeleine Shopland
Connor Corrigan
Judy Kelly
Mary Severin
Justin Turvey
Catherine Brimble

Case Officers Present

Nick Chancellor
Mark Croucher
Jeanette Davey
Graham Vaughan

42. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

43. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

44. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

There were no applications to be deferred or withdrawn.

45. APPLICATION NO.201515 - ASHRIDGE FARM, WARREN HOUSE ROAD, WOKINGHAM, RG40 5QB

Proposal: Full application for the erection of 153 dwellings comprising a mix of 1,2,3 & 4 beds with associated landscaping, parking, open space, drainage; construction of a new access onto Warren House Road and Bell Foundry Lane; provision of an area of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and all other associated development works (including demolition of existing buildings and provision of temporary site sales).

Applicant: Barratt David Wilson Homes

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application as set out in agenda pages 5 to 74.

The Committee was advised that the Members' Update included the following:

- Amendment of the cited Heads of Terms on Pages 8 and 25;
- Amendment of condition 2, to include the list of drawings to be approved;

- Amendment of condition 25 regarding stream alignment;
- Amendment of condition 37 regarding odour mitigation measures;
- Additional conditions 45 and 46;
- Clarification regarding parking space number and parking ratio;
- Additional consultation responses;
- Clarification regarding the installation of acoustic screens around the Odour Control Unit in order to address the noise issues associated with this, in order for it to commence use again.

Abby Tebboth, Wokingham Town Council, spoke in objection to the application. She stated that the Town Council was concerned about the odour levels coming from the sewage works. The odour contouring had been noted but the Odour Impact Assessment still predicted that odour exposures across the site would potentially be two or three times the level at which odour became a nuisance, which would have a significant impact on residents' use of their homes, gardens and the amenity space. Abby Tebboth went on to state that the proximity of the housing to Ashridge Stream presented a considerable flood risk even if the diversion works were completed. An area of the development was in the high level of flood risk, which was not in line with the Core Strategy. She added that there was an increased risk of flooding to the existing houses in the area. Abby Tebboth indicated that residents had concerns around the safety of the access to Warren House Road, to the playpark and the SANG, to existing houses. Increased pressure on local infrastructure was also potentially an issue. Abby Tebboth went on to state the application would develop some of the only remaining green space in Norreys.

Jessica Sparkes, spoke in favour of the application, on behalf of the Applicant. She commented that the proposals had been shaped following extensive discussions with officers and consultees. The number of dwellings now aligned with the emerging Local Plan, landscaping and open space were now increased and overall density on a par with other developments in the Strategic Development Location. Jessica Sparkes indicated that the application would allow for the completion of the Northern Distributor Road and that additional SANG and public open space would also be provided, which would complement the existing SANG across the north of Wokingham. The proposals also offered policy compliant affordable housing all of which would be provided within the development. Jessica Sparkes commented that the proposals gave regard to the water treatment works to the north and Listed Building to the south. She highlighted that Thames Water had not raised an objection to the proposals, had confirmed that the layout accorded with the recent odour report and that no further works were required from their perspective. In addition, Historic England had not submitted an objection and the applicant had sought to enhance the views that would be possible from the new public open space to the listed building by providing wide open space at the centre of the site for the veteran trees, a planted orchard and by retaining a granary building which would enhance the character of the open space at the centre of the site.

Malcolm Richards commented that the application would enable the completion of the Northern Distributor Road, which was positive.

Malcolm Richards questioned whether there was a Construction Management Plan. Judy Kelly confirmed that there would.

Malcolm Richards commented that there were three entry points to the development, but the plans suggested that the development was in two separate halves. He asked whether the roads allowed travel from one side of the development to the other. He went on to ask

about the internal road width and if they would be sufficiently wide for the predicted volume of traffic. In addition, Malcolm Richards asked if there would be pavements or shared spaces throughout the development. Connor Corrigan confirmed that there were two halves to the development with a linkage road through the middle. Judy Kelly added that the linkage road was more an emergency link and that there would be bollards in place and would be pedestrian and cycle only. The site accesses had been subject to road safety audits and no particular issues had been identified. With regards to road widths, Judy Kelly indicated that they would vary, but would generally be between 5-6m. A swept path exercise had been successfully carried out using a Council refuse vehicle. Judy Kelly added that there would be some shared spaces, such as at the end of cul-de-sacs, otherwise footpaths would be on one or both sides of the roads.

Malcolm Richards queried what percentage of the development was at high risk of flooding. Connor Corrigan stated that land to the south of the NDR was in Zones 1 and 2 and the realignment of the stream would create betterment and would put the development in Zone 1, which was acceptable. North of the NDR would flood but was open space, which was again considered acceptable. He informed Members that the Environment Agency had a standing objection to the timing of the development. They had wanted the flood modelling to be undertaken after the alignment of the stream. However, following discussions, the Environment Agency was satisfied with revised condition 25.

Malcolm Richards asked about the odour control system and potential noise and odour resulting from it. Connor Corrigan commented that Officers had relied on Thames Water and Environmental Health to look at the odour report. A detailed Odour Modelling Assessment had been produced by an independent consultant appointed by Thames Water. The odour control system had reduced the amount of odour on site. Noise mitigation and screening would be put in to mitigate against any noise issues.

In response to a question from Malcolm Richards, Judy Kelly stated that there would be 238 allocated parking spaces and 60 unallocated or visitor spaces.

Simon Weeks sought clarification on the safety of the access points. Judy Kelly confirmed that they had been subject to a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit.

Stephen Conway noted that some of the public open space was within Zone 3 of the odour contour map, and questioned whether there was a risk of the public open space becoming unusable on some occasions. He also queried potential odour nuisance beyond Zone 3. Simon Weeks commented that approximately 75% of the time the prevailing wind was from the south west to the north east. Connor Corrigan added that the odour contour mapping was based on the level of complaints received. The number of dwellings proposed had responded to the odour contour mapping zone. There was enough open space to ensure that people did not have stand in an area on occasions when it was particularly odorous. Stephen Conway added that sewage treatment works were usually situated away from housing developments. As development in the area increased so would the pressure on the sewage treatment system.

Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey questioned whether prospective residents would be informed of the sewage treatment works prior to purchase. Connor Corrigan commented that anyone visiting the development would be able to see the site.

Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey sought clarification as to how bad flooding would potentially be and how flooding control on the site would work. Connor Corrigan indicated that the site

was designed with SUDS in place. It was for the applicant to decide how they were managed but they could decide to hand it over to the Council to manage should they wish. The drainage system would be improved by the betterment of the stream.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey asked whether there would be crossings on the NDR to enable crossing to Cantley. Connor Corrigan stated that there were two crossings and that Cantley was a key destination. A Walking and Cycling Strategy condition sought a new pedestrian crossing to Cantley, which would also benefit the residents of the Kentwood Development. There would be cycleways and footpaths and Cantley would have a new cycleway. A S106 contribution was in place to improve pedestrian and cycleway connectivity. Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey queried if the cycleway would be shared or separate and was informed that it would be shared.

Carl Doran welcomed the provision of 35% affordable housing on site. He went on to question the tenure split (50% social rent, 20% affordable rent and 30% shared ownership) and if it was strictly policy compliant. Connor Corrigan stated that the tenure split had been worked up with the Affordable Housing team based on local need. There was a good mixture of provision across North Wokingham. Carl Doran felt that there should be more 1 and 2 bedroom homes.

With regards to odour, Carl Doran queried whether there had been changes to the sewage treatment centre over the last ten years. He pointed out that the North Wokingham SDL Supplementary Planning Document said that the sewage treatment works may exclude residential development in the Ashridge Farm area, due to odours, and that rigorous testing would be required. He questioned whether this testing had been carried out. Connor Corrigan indicated that the sewage works had had a major upgrade. The SDL originally did not include the site as it was seen as a constraint. However, when sites were allocated, it was done on a high-level basis. Industry standard testing had been carried out by an independent contractor with regards to odour.

Carl Doran continued to raise concerns regarding potential odour. He commented that the highest exposure levels were in the south of the site where the preliminary and primary effluent treatment took place. The odour control unit did not cover this area. Connor Corrigan responded that Environmental Health and Thames Water had not objected to the application. Environmental Health had received two complaints regarding odour in 2015 and one in 2019.

Andrew Mickleburgh asked what the minimum road width was in the development and if it was adequate to ensure that there was no parking on verges and pavements. Judy Kelly stated the minimum road width was generally 5m although there was a very small section of private road that would be 4.5m. She did not envisage issues with parking.

Andrew Mickleburgh went on to ask about flooding in the SANG and how often it was anticipated that the SANG would flood and require closure. Connor Corrigan confirmed that there would be a degree of flooding. The waster course fed into the Emm Brook. However, there was sufficient space to ensure that the SANG would not become unusable.

Andrew Mickleburgh referred to air quality and air pollution. He expressed concern regarding the cumulative impact of increased vehicle movements along Warren House Road and Wiltshire Road. Connor Corrigan indicated that the NDR would actually take traffic off the current route.

Pauline Jorgensen asked whether the estate to the left by the lagoon had experienced issues with odour. Connor Corrigan clarified that no complaints had been received from the new developments.

Pauline Jorgensen queried whether the roads would be built to adoptable standards. Judy Kelly stated that they would. An obligation was being secured in the Heads of Terms for the Section 106, for the developer to either complete a Section 38 Highways Adoption Agreement, or enter into a separate private roads Section 106 Agreement prior to commencement of development.

Pauline Jorgensen commented that the standards for cycleways were changing and that there was now a presumption in favour of separate cycleways. She questioned if there could be a condition that where appropriate, cycleways be separate. Judy Kelly suggested that condition 29 be refined to reflect this.

Pauline Jorgensen went on to ask if there would be hedgerow replacement. She was informed that there would be re-provision of the hedgerows to link in the SANGs.

Simon Weeks commented that to the north of the NDR was the proposed SANG, linking to SANGs in the east and west. Beyond that between the SANG and the proposed route of the NDR was additional recreational ground. He sought clarification as to why this recreation ground had not been included. Connor Corrigan reminded the Committee that only a certain amount of SANG was required to meet policy requirements. Any greater would incur greater maintenance costs. Pauline Jorgensen questioned whether it would be protected from future development, and was informed that it would be.

Chris Bowring commented that the odour report was a technical document and should be taken into account as such.

RESOLVED: That application 201515 be approved subject to the completion of a S106 agreement inclusive of the following Heads of Terms set out on page 8 of the agenda, conditions and informatives as set out in pages 8 to 25 of the agenda, amended condition 29, and the additional conditions and amended conditions as detailed within the Members' Update.

46. APPLICATION NO. 201573 - BOUNDOAK INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, WOKINGHAM LANE, ARBORFIELD, RG2 9PN

Proposal: Full application for the erection of 4 No buildings for B1c, B2 and B8 industrial and commercial use with the addition of a sui generis Energy Centre comprising a Combined Heat and Power facility and a Lithium Ion Battery store in Unit 1 to include landscaping and access works, following demolition of the existing buildings.

Applicant: Musketeer Properties Ltd

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application as set out in agenda pages 75 to 120.

The Committee was advised that the Members' Update included the following:

- Amendment to condition 4 in order to allow up to two units to be occupied by the same tenant;

- Amendment to condition 16 around walking and cycling.

Douglas Bond, agent, spoke in support of the application. He stated that the site was currently an unattractive, poor quality estate which needed development. The application would result in an improvement for tenants and employees. Amended plans had been submitted to allay the concerns of residents. The proposed layout was sensitive to surroundings and allowed important trees to be retained, in addition to opportunities for new native planting. The Countryside Officer had concluded that the application would result in a minor beneficial effect to the wildlife. Douglas Bond also commented that there would be sufficient onsite parking. He went on to refer to improved sustainability features. He emphasised that the proposals also included provision for an energy centre, which enhanced the scheme's sustainability credentials.

In response to a question from Gary Cowan, Judy Kelly explained that there was a pelican crossing for pedestrians on the A327M, the main strategic road to the east of the site. There was also a bridleway (Pegasus crossing). There was bridleway that came down to the north and to the west of the site there was a byway that continued on. Residents had expressed concern that the uncontrolled pedestrian crossing was not well constructed. A condition sought to improve this and a dropped kerb crossing with tactile paving would be put in place, with a continuous footway leading into the site.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried the number of parking spaces, including for trucks. Judy Kelly indicated that the site usage would be a mixture of B1, C, B2 and B8 which had different parking standards. However, parking standards would be met. There were no specific parking places for trucks on site.

With regards to control of noise, Angus Ross questioned whether conditions were strong enough to control any future occupants and usages. Jeanette Davey indicated that usage should not exceed prevailing background noise at the nearest residential property or noise sensitive property.

Malcolm Richards queried the machinery operating times beginning at 7am. Jeanette Davey commented that the applicant had originally requested longer working hours. Condition 21 covered the adjoining residents.

Malcolm Richards stated that the lithium-ion battery store would be vulnerable to fire risk. Jeanette Davey emphasised that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service had indicated that the relevant fire legislation would need to be complied with in order for a Fire Safety Order to be achieved.

Simon Weeks commented that there was currently encroachment on the wildlife as a result of the tipping of waste. Douglas Bond confirmed that this would be addressed.

RESOLVED: That application 201573 be approved subject to completion of a legal agreement and conditions and informatives as set out in pages 76 to 89, and revised conditions 4 and 16 as detailed in the Members' Update.

At this point in the meeting, 9.45pm, Gary Cowan left the meeting.

47. APPLICATION NO.200700 - 1, BARKHAM ROAD, WOKINGHAM, RG41 2XR

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 14 flats, 6 no. one bedroom flats, 8 no. two bedroom flats, car parking and landscaping, following the demolition of existing buildings.

Applicant: Cleanslate Ltd

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application as set out in agenda pages 121 to 156.

The Committee was advised that the Members' Update included the following:

- Additional condition around hours of work.

A statement was read out on behalf of Brian Norton, applicant, in support of the application. The applicant had held a Pre-Application process and met with Planning Officers and Landscaping Officers. They had had a constructive dialogue which had resulted in a number of modifications to the proposals; namely reducing its scale, improving external design features to meet the local vernacular and bolstering landscaping given its location on a Green Route. In addition, plants that bolstered biodiversity, had been selected. Although the Heritage Officer had, early in the process, expressed concern around the existing building's history, very little of the original features remained and redevelopment was the only practical option. There were some significant viability challenges due to technical requirements for remediation and poor ground conditions leading to a potential need for piling. Despite these challenges several shared ownership flats were offered as part of the development.

Imogen Shepherd-DuBey, Ward Member, spoke in objection to the application. She commented that on the whole she welcomed the application. However, she felt that the inclusion of a lift would make the building more accessible for all. Imogen Shepherd-DuBey questioned why solar panels were not part of the application. In addition, she felt that more visitor parking was required and that at least one more flat should be affordable housing.

Pauline Jorgensen sought clarification regarding the private open space in front of the flats and queried whether the landscaping was adequate. Janette Davey indicated that originally it had been proposed that the space in front of the flats would be communal open space. It was now private space for five of the flats. There was a proposal for a brick wall and planting against the brick wall which would offer a degree of privacy. Officers were keen that the proposals complied with the government's provisions for building a healthy life, seeking to achieve outdoor space in some form for as many residents as possible. This had been achieved in eleven of the fourteen dwellings. With regards to the private garden space, Officers had felt it appropriate in the location.

Malcolm Richards asked whether there was sufficient space for refuse vehicles to access. Judy Kelly indicated that larger vehicles would reverse in and then come back out on to the road in a forward manner.

Malcolm Richards commented that a lift would be useful. Janette Davey clarified that this was not something which could be required under planning legislation. Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey questioned there could be an informative regarding encouraging the inclusion of a lift.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey asked how the contaminated land would be treated and was informed that this was addressed in conditions five to eight.

Stephen Conway commented that there was a lack of amenity space and that the majority of amenity space was provided as balconies. Jeanette Davey stated that eleven out of fourteen dwellings had some form of outside space. There was also nearby outdoor space in the form of allotments, a play park and Elms Field.

A number of Members were of the opinion that the affordable homes provision was insufficient. The requirement for the location was 20%, however only two dwellings would be affordable housing. It was noted that the viability study had indicated that two as opposed to three was acceptable.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried how density compared to other developments. Jeanette Davey confirmed that the application complied with policy requirements.

Andrew Mickleburgh expressed concern regarding parking and questioned the impact on the surrounding area. Judy Kelly responded that the parking would be unallocated. There was a requirement for thirteen spaces and the applicant would be providing fourteen parking spaces. The area in the vicinity had heavy parking restrictions so she would not anticipate overspill into these areas. Visitors could make use of nearby car parks such as at the station.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried the access point on to the already congested Barkham Road and questioned whether access on to Oxford Road would be more appropriate. He was informed that there was existing access on to Barkham Road and the application would actually reduce the intensification of access. There were one-way restrictions on Oxford Road which may have made it less desirable to the applicant and future residents.

Abdul Loyes asked what the minimum requirements for the gross internal area were. Janette Davey commented that policy TBO7 had standards for one-bedroom flats occupied by two people and two-bedroom flats occupied by three people. A one-bedroom flat should be a minimum 50m² and a two bedroom flat, a minimum of 61m².

RESOLVED: That application 200700 be approved subject to the completion of a legal agreement pursuant to section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to secure provision of affordable housing and an Employment Skills Plan, conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 122 to 129, the proposed additional condition set out in the Members' Update and the additional informative discussed at the meeting.

48. CONTINUATION OF MEETING

At this point in the meeting 10.25pm, in accordance with Procedure Rule 8.2.9, the Committee considered a Motion to continue the meeting beyond 10.30pm, up to no later than 11pm, to enable further business on the Agenda to be transacted. This was proposed by Chris Bowring and seconded by Simon Weeks.

RESOLVED That the meeting be extended past 10.30pm, up to no later than 11pm, to enable further business on the Agenda to be transacted.

49. APPLICATION NO.192884 - LAND AT STANBURY HOUSE, BASINGSTOKE ROAD, SPENCERS WOOD

Proposal: Full application for the proposed change of use of agricultural land to recreational use (D2 Use class) (to provide a Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space) with associated access, car park, footpaths and landscaping works.

Applicant: Cooper Estates Strategic Land Limited

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application as set out in agenda pages 157 to 182.

The Committee was advised that the Members' Update included the following:

- Additional consultation response from WBC Green Infrastructure;
- Additional condition around hours of work.

In response to question from Angus Ross, Graham Vaughn confirmed that condition 10 referred to the provision of a footpath link between the footpath network within the site and Shinfield Byway 25, Woodcock Lane.

RESOLVED: That application 192884 be approved subject to completion of a legal agreement to secure ownership of the land for recreational use as a SANG; its maintenance in perpetuity by the Local Authority; and, a commuted sum towards maintenance, conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 158 to 163, and additional condition as set out in the Members' Update.

50. APPLICATION NO 200711 BARTLETTS FARM, SWALLOWFIELD ROAD, ARBORFIELD

Carl Doran did not participate in discussions or vote on the application, having not been present at the previous Committee meeting where the item had been previously discussed.

This application was considered first during the meeting.

Proposal: Full planning application for Installation of a Solar park to include 40000 solar photovoltaic panels, 11 inverter/transformer cabins, a single control building and associated works to include vehicle access and fencing with Environmental Statement.

Applicant: Wessex Solar Energy

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application as set out in agenda pages 5 to 74 of the Supplementary Agenda.

Harry Cannon, resident, spoke in objection the application. He commented that with regards to alternative sites, he heard that the Council was giving notice to tenant farmers to vacate land for the purposes of using it for solar. This suggested that Bartletts Farm was not the only site available. Harry Cannon stated that additional drawings and information provided did not show an elevation from the north, which would be 50ft tall and difficult to screen. He felt that this would have a negative visual impact.

Richard Wearmouth, Applicant, spoke in support of the application. He commented that their Landscape Architect and the Council's Landscape Officer had agreed that the application had no unacceptable impacts. Once existing screening by vegetation and topography was considered, views from the surrounding area, were limited. There would

be additional buffer zones, new hedgerows, trees, and planting. With regards to land quality, Natural England as a statutory consultee, had not raised any concerns. The landowner had reported low crop yields despite the application of lime and fertiliser. During the life of the solar farm the land would not be lost, and the quality of the land would be improved as more intensive agricultural practices were temporarily moved away from and regenerative farming practices were introduced. He reminded Members that the land would eventually return to its current use. Richard Wearmouth asked that the application be considered on its own merits. A Site Alternative Assessment had been provided in the application, which had set out the applicant's systematic approach to site identification. Richard Wearmouth added that solar parks needed to be able to connect to the Grid, to be accessible from the road network and for a landowner to be willing to accommodate it on their land. This site met these requirements. The site was free from National and Policy designations and Rights of Way, had an onsite Grid connection and had been made available by the landowner for use.

Stuart Munro, adjoining Ward Member spoke in objection to the application. He commented that the solar farm at Sheepbridge Court had been in place for six years and that the hedging provided, provided insufficient screening.

Gary Cowan questioned whether the site was the most appropriate location. He commented that it was one of the first times the Council had dealt with an application of that size and that it was a learning curve for Members and Officers. He noted that other Councils, such as Renfrewshire, had professional standards, and that the Council did not appear to have these. Mark Croucher responded that the Council did have a policy regarding renewal energy provision, CCA5, which the application accorded with. He went on to highlight a solar farm application which had been granted at Committee stage in 2014.

Gary Cowan expressed concern around the lack of drawings or photos of potential before and after, and site elevations and on-site vertical structures. Mark Croucher commented that Members had been on a site visit to visualise how it may look, and that the applicant had submitted further information to assist. A Landscape Visual Impact Assessment had been submitted by the applicant. Catherine Brimble, Landscape Officer, believed whilst there would be some limited harm, it would not be unacceptable.

Gary Cowan commented that BRE provided guidance on the development of large-scale ground mounted solar and PV systems. He asked whether this guidance had been followed. The preference was for land used to be either 3B, 4 or 5, which was not the case in this application. Mark Croucher indicated that Officers had looked at Planning Practice guidance in detail.

Gary Cowan queried the potential impact of glare from the solar panels. He expressed concern regarding the fact that the Aviation Authority had not been consulted given the proximity of Heathrow Airports, Blackbushe and Farnborough Airports. Mark Croucher indicated that the site was not within an aerodrome safeguarding zone and therefore there was no requirement to consult.

Gary Cowan commented that the Ministry of Housing, Communication and Local Government policies on light pollution and low carbon energy 2015 stated that Councils should develop a renewable and low carbon energy policy. However, this had not been the case.

In response to a question from Andrew Mickleburgh regarding alternative sites, Mark Croucher commented that the applicant had provided significant information as to how the site had been selected. There were several factors to be considered such as land quality, willingness of the landowner and access to the Grid. Twenty landowners had been contacted and only two had responded. Officers felt that the application accorded with the Development Plan and should be approved on its own merits.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried the height of the solar panels. He questioned whether the hedgerows would be able to ensure full screening from all distant locations, and if not, how many locations would be able to easily see the panels. Mark Croucher confirmed that the panels would be 2.43m high. With regards to visibility, Catherine Brimble stated that the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment submitted with the application was very thorough. From long distance and medium distance views, there would not be views of the site because of the topography surrounding the site and the vegetation cover. Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether all statutory consultees had responded and at what stage in the process had residents of Farley Hill been informed of the public consultation. Simon Weeks stated that 89 letters of objection had been received, which suggested that the application had been known about. Mark Croucher commented that the statutory consultees had all been consulted but he was unsure as to whether they had all responded. With regards to the public consultation there was only the obligation to consult the immediate properties. However, a second round of wider consultation had been carried out. Residents would have had approximately five months in which to submit a consultation response.

Andrew Mickleburgh asked about the restoration of the land to its existing condition after 40 years, and examples of this being done elsewhere to prove that it was possible. Mark Croucher stated that solar energy was relatively new so there were few examples of decommissioning.

In response to a question from Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey, Mark Croucher confirmed that having a view was not a right of ownership.

Stephen Conway commented that he and many other Members had voted in favour of the Climate Emergency Action Plan, but that he was unsure whether the proposed site was suitable and sustainable. He still had concerns regarding the harm to the landscape and felt that renewable energy sources should not damage the landscape.

Abdul Loyes asked whether 33KvA was the highest capacity and was informed that it was the minimum that could be tapped into.

Angus Ross commented that he still regretted the loss of agricultural land.

Gary Cowan proposed that the application be refused on the grounds of inadequate plans and drawings. This proposal was not supported.

RESOLVED: That application 200711 be approved subject to prior completion of a legal agreement pursuant to section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to secure an Employment Skills Plan, and conditions and informatives as set in pages 3 to 8 of the Supplementary Agenda.