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Our Ref: 20/00574/F – 20/00632/SO

27 March 2020

Dear Mrs Lodge

Application Ref **20/00574/F – 20/000632/SO**

Location **Hill Farm, Hill Farm Lane, Dun Tew, OX25 6JJ**

Proposal **Screening Opinion – Installation of a standalone Solar PV array, associated infrastructure, grid connection, access and landscaping**

I write with regard to the above application, received on 26 February 2020.

This letter constitutes a Screening Opinion of the Local Planning Authority of the proposed development under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

Summary of Determination

The Local Planning Authority considers that the proposal is an 'Energy Industry' falling within Schedule 2, Section 3 (a) of the Regulations where the area of development exceeds 0.5 hectare, which is the applicable threshold for the purpose of classifying the development as Schedule 2 Development. For the development to be considered an EIA development, it would be likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location. In determining whether the proposals are likely to constitute EIA development, regard has been had to the criteria set out in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations 2017. Government guidance relating to EIA as set out in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) is also material and has been taken into account. The Local Planning Authority considers that the proposal is unlikely to have significant environmental effects for the purposes of the EIA Regulations and that the proposal **is not** EIA Development and does **not** require an Environmental Statement to be submitted for the reasons set out.

Reasons for Determination

Consideration of the proposal has been given to the selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 developments in Schedule 3 of the Regulations and the Planning Practice Guidance and its Annex: Indicative screening thresholds. This Annex states that an EIA is unlikely to be required unless there would be a thermal output of more than 50 MW. The annex also states that small stations using novel forms of generation should be considered carefully. Furthermore, the Annex indicates that in addition to this, key issues to consider include the level of emissions to air, arrangements for the transport of fuel and any visual impact.

The adjacent solar farm development was previously screened under reference 15/00004/SO, which determined that, whilst the development is listed within Schedule 2, it did not constitute EIA development.

The land is calculated as being approximately 13 hectares in area and is approximately 1.2km north of the Duns Tew and 1.4km south west of Deddington. The site is located within the bottom of a valley and the surrounding land is undulated. However, the site is not within close proximity to any SSSI sites. Given this along with the nature of the development being above ground, and not of a considerable height, as well as remaining to be of a temporary nature and not producing significant emissions, it is unlikely to give rise to complex, long term or irreversible impacts.

An assessment of the other planning constraints of the site has revealed that a BAP Priority Habitat (deciduous woodland) is situated along the northern boundary of the site. The site is within an area of archaeological potential and within potentially contaminated land. A Public Footpath (FP 195/7) would be within close proximity to the access to the site. The site is also within a Zone 2/Zone 3 Flood Plain and situated within 20 metres of a 'Main River'. Two barns within Hill Farm are Grade II listed.

Taking into account the characteristics of the development, the types of potential impact and the environmental sensitivity of the location of this development, it is considered that the proposed development is unlikely to give rise to complex, long term or irreversible impacts upon the environment such that it would justify assessment via EIA.

The proposal does not result in development within a sensitive area defined at Regulation 2(1) of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. Furthermore, whilst the proposed development would exceed the threshold set out in Column 2 of Schedule 2 (The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, the overall characteristics and type of impacts are unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment. There is therefore no further requirement for screening and the proposal does not require the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment.

This opinion has been made by an appropriately authorised officer at the Local Planning Authority. In accordance with the 2017 Regulations, a copy of this screening opinion has been placed on the Planning Register.

If you have any further queries, please contact the Case Officer Matthew Chadwick (Principal Planning Officer).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D.P.', is positioned above the printed name and title.

David Peckford

Assistant Director – Planning and Development