

Consultee Comment for planning application 22/03873/F

Application Number	22/03873/F
Location	Land North And Adjacent To Mill Lane Stratton Audley
Proposal	Installation and operation of a renewable energy generating station comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays and battery-based electricity storage containers together with a switchgear container, inverter/transformer units, Site access, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure and landscaping and biodiversity enhancements.
Case Officer	Rebekah Morgan
Organisation	Ecology (CDC)
Name	
Address	Cherwell District Council Bodicote House White Post Road Bodicote Banbury OX15 4AA
Type of Comment	Comment
Type	
Comments	<p>RE - additional submissions.</p> <p>The applicants have now submitted the full metric as part of their biodiversity impact assessment. This proposes a net gain of over 200%. I have some reservations about the aim of achieving moderate condition for the grassland within the compounds as this does not allow for the fact that much of the grassland is actually covered with a sealed surface of panels (At least half by surface area is impacted at least by shading) - it does not seem accurate therefore to treat this the same as the creation of 49 hectares of 'Other neutral grassland' in the traditional sense. Whilst I appreciate there is no habitat class of 'grassland with solar panels' - I think as a minimum it should be accepted that the grassland is likely to achieve fairly poor condition at best.</p> <p>However even changing the condition proposed to this lower level leads to a 100% net gain for biodiversity on site and so I have no objections on these grounds but suggest the applicant may wish to consider what is feasible in their HMMP for the site.</p> <p>I support the proposed change in seed mix to a now more beneficial type and appreciate the clarity over lighting and fencing.</p> <p>The certificate and impact risk map for the great crested newt DL has now been submitted and we should include the conditions within it verbatim in any decision notice.</p> <p>Do we have information on the scheme for the intent at the end of the solar panels functional life? Or does this need conditioning?</p> <p>Ideally a comparative monitoring scheme is carried out to monitor bat and breeding bird activity changes over time across the site in comparison to baseline, even if only at 3, 5 and 10 years. There is a relative paucity of information on the impacts of solar farms in these habitat conditions and this would contribute to the knowledge base for our locality. This could be factored into the LEMP or HMMP. Note this is a request as opposed to requirement.</p> <p>Should permission be granted I would propose the following conditions would be required as a minimum: GCN DL conditions as written CEMP for biodiversity Walkover update survey if more than two years elapse before works commence LEMP to include locations and types of enhancements (bird boxes, hibernacula etc..) Habitat Management and monitoring Plan - to include all areas of biodiversity net gain with monitoring periods (monitoring report review fee to be included in legal agreement)</p> <p>Kind regards Charlotte</p>

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Attachments