

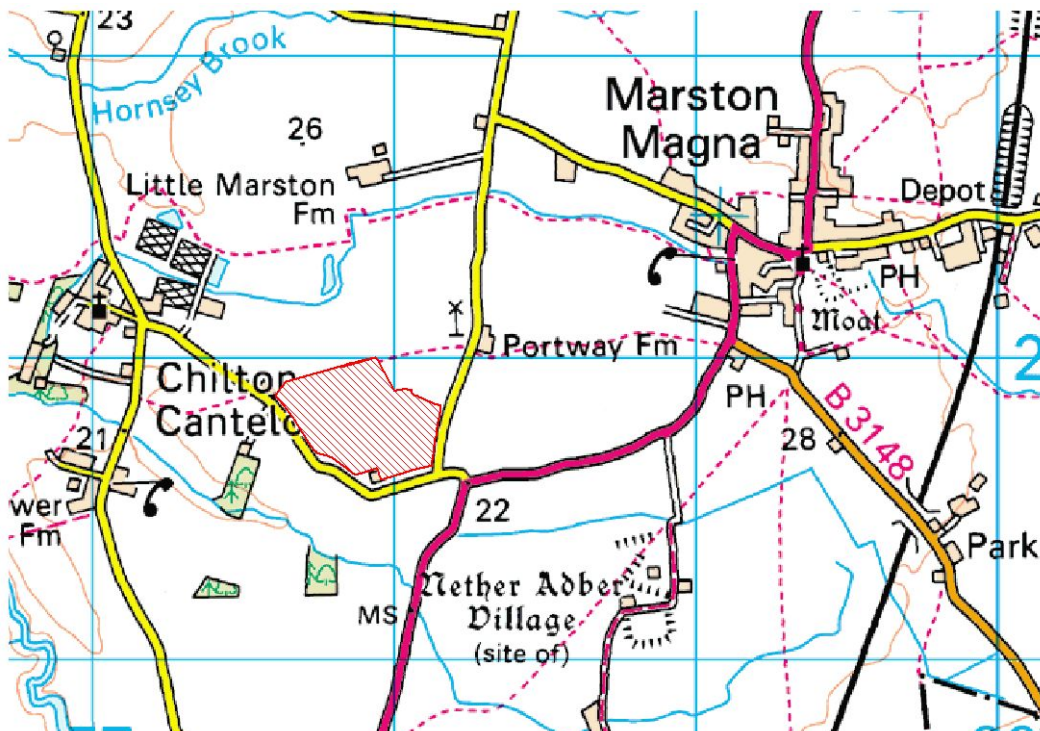
Officer Report On Planning Application: 19/02847/S73A

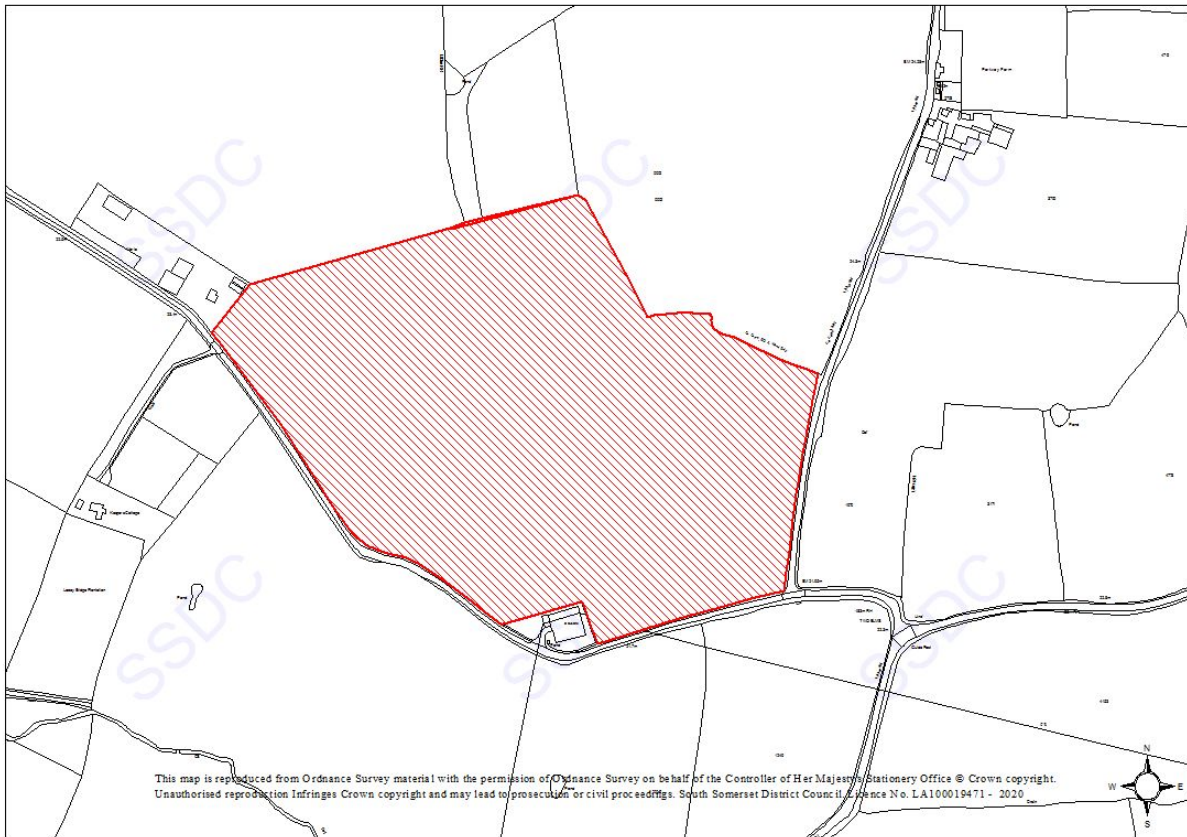
Proposal:	S73A Application for the erection of a solar farm comprising the erection of solar arrays, inverters, transformers, equipment housing, security fencing, internal tracks and ancillary equipment (without complying with Condition 7 of planning permission 12/01055/FUL, to extend operational lifespan of Solar Farm to 40 years).
Site Address:	Chilton Cantelo Solar Park Chilton Cantelo Yeovil
Parish:	Chilton Cantelo
NORTHSTONE, IVELCHESTER & ST MICHAEL'S Ward (SSDC Member)	Cllr A Capozzoli Cllr C Hull Cllr P Rowsell
Recommending Case Officer:	Neil Simpson Tel: 01935 462462 Email: planningcaseteam@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date :	14th January 2020
Applicant :	Chilton Cantello Solar Park Limited
Agent: (no agent if blank)	Mr Stephen MacLeod Intelligent Alternatives 100 Brand Street Glasgow G511DG
Application Type :	Major Other f/space 1,000 sq.m or 1 ha+

REASON FOR REFERRAL

The application was referred to Committee in terms of the Council's Scheme of Delegation as it comprises a large scale major development proposal ('Major Major').

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL





The applicant seeks variation to Condition 7 of the granted consent (12/01020/FUL) for the erection of a Solar Farm to extend the operational life span of the Solar Farm to 40 years.

HISTORY

19/01020/FUL: Installation of a secure storage container - Permitted with conditions

12/01055/FUL. Revised inverter layout, reduction in area covered by P.V modules and reduced area within security fencing. - Permitted.

12/01055/FUL: Erection of a solar farm comprising the erection of solar arrays, inverters, transformers, equipment housing, security fencing, internal tracks and ancillary equipment. Permitted with conditions.

11/01905/EIASS: Proposed solar photovoltaic farm. EIA not required.

History for storage / works compound:

10/03713/COU: Change of use from Use Class B8 to a mixed B8 / B2 use for the sorting, processing and storage of recyclable materials. Refused due to insufficient information to assess the impact the proposal would have upon amenity, local landscape and highway safety.

POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), and Paragraphs 2, 11, and 12 of the NPPF (2019) indicate it is a matter of law that applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise

South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028)

On the 5th March 2015 this new local plan was adopted and constitutes the development plan. The most relevant policies are:-

SD1 - Sustainable Development

EQ1 - Addressing Climate Change in South Somerset

EQ2 - General Development

EQ4 - Biodiversity

EQ5 - Green Infrastructure
EQ7 - Pollution Control
TA5 - Transport Impact of New Development

National Planning Policy Framework March 2019

- 2. Achieving sustainable development
- 4. Decision-making
- 11. Making effective use of land
- 12. Achieving well-designed places
- 14. Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change
- 15. Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Other Material Considerations

National Design Guide 2019
Somerset County Council Parking Strategy (as amended September 2013)
Somerset County Council Highways Development Control - Standing Advice (June 2013)

CONSULTATIONS

Chilton Cantelo Parish Council

No comment received.

West Camel Parish Council

West Camel Parish Council met last evening in full scheduled session and reviewed this application. Councillors were minded to Not Object to this application on the grounds that a) it is in a neighbouring parish and b) extending the life of the site to 40 years appears to be in keeping with National and Local Government 'Green Policies'.

SCC Highway Authority

Standing Advice Applies

SSDC Highways Consultant

No highways issues - no objection.

Somerset County Ecologist

Given the Climate Change declarations made by both SSDC and SCC the need to generate sustainable renewable energy is paramount. I therefore have no objections to extend the life of the scheme to 40 years.

Environmental Protection Unit

No comments to make from an Environmental Health point of view.

MOD

The MOD have confirmed the safeguarding position of the Ministry of Defence in respect of this application.

REPRESENTATIONS

No representations received.

CONSIDERATIONS

Permission was granted under application 12/01055/FUL for the installation of a solar array, together with associated equipment. The permission was for a period of 25 years from the date of approval, 17 July 2012. Condition 07 attached to that permission states:

The development hereby permitted shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition within 25 years of the date of this permission or within six months of the cessation of the use of the solar farm for the generation of electricity whichever is the sooner in accordance with a restoration plan to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The restoration plan will need to include all the works necessary to revert the site to open agricultural land including the removal of all structures, materials and any associated goods and chattels from the site.

Reason: In the interests of landscape character and visual amenity in accordance with Policies ST3, ST5, ST6 and EC3 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

The applicant is seeking to extend the period of the consented development from 25 years to 40 years from the date of the original consent (17 July 2012).

While acknowledging that this is a relatively sizeable increase in time, there are, however, no obvious concerns raised. While it is acknowledged that approval would result in the effects of the development being longer in duration, there would be no change in the nature of the impacts, while it is noted that these remain temporary and would be fully reversible in time. The benefits of the proposal include the opportunity to continue generating renewable energy, supporting national and local objectives relating to the installation and continuation of renewable energy sources.

Overall, there are considered to be no long-term adverse impacts resulting from the proposal to extend the operational lifespan of the solar park from 25 years to 40 years as such consent is not deemed to have a material impact on the temporary nature of the development and supports national and local objectives relating to the installation and continuation of renewable energy sources. For these reasons, the application is considered to be in accordance with Policies SD1 and EQ1 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028).

Visual Amenity

The applicant is seeking to extend the life of the consented in situ works. No changes to scale and design are proposed and therefore there is no material increase in the visual impact of the scheme. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the landscape character.

For these reasons, the application is considered to be in accordance with Policies SD1 and EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028).

Highways

The Highways Authority and SSDC Highway Consultant have both commented that the highway safety implications of the current S73 application have now been assessed and considered to not be harmful to highway safety. For these reasons, the application is considered to be in accordance with Policy TA5 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028).

CONCLUSION

The proposal to vary the operational lifespan of the solar farm for a period of 40 years is considered acceptable, having no material impact on the temporary nature of the permission, and causing no demonstrable harm to landscape character, neighbour amenity, highway safety or the environment. The proposal is in accordance with the aims and objectives of the NPPF and Policies SD1, TA5, EQ1, EQ2, EQ4, EQ5 and EQ7 of the South Somerset Local Plan and the application is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant consent for the following reasons:

01. The proposal to vary the operational lifespan of the solar farm for a period of 40 years is considered acceptable, having no material impact on the temporary nature of the permission, and causing no demonstrable harm to landscape character, neighbour amenity, highway safety or the

environment. The proposal is in accordance with the aims and objectives of the NPPF and Policies SD1, TA5, EQ1, EQ2, EQ4, EQ5 and EQ7 of the South Somerset Local Plan and the application is recommended for approval.

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:

01. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
Location plan and planning application boundary plan received 20/03/2012
Drawings numbered 11853-SD07 and 3001_Rev B received 20/03/2012
Drawings numbered 2334_100_Rev E, 2334_300_Rev B, 2334_301_Rev A received 02/05/2012

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

02. The perimeter fencing and CCTV equipment hereby approved shall accord with the height, colours, appearance and other specifications set out in the letter and attachments from Landmark Practice dated 02/05/2012.

Reason: In the interests of landscape character and visual amenity in accordance with Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the relevant aims and priorities of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

03. The supporting posts to the solar array shall be anchored into the ground as shown in drawing no. 2334_300 Rev B received 02/05/2012 and shall not be concreted into the ground.

Reason: In the interests of sustainable construction and to accord with Policies SD1 and EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the relevant aims and priorities of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

04. The development hereby permitted shall be based on the indicative planting scheme detailed on plan 2334_100_Rev E received 02/05/2012 and shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land, and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of the approved development and a management plan for the maintenance of the hedgerows around the perimeter of the site for the operational lifetime of the development. The approved details shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the commencement of the development. Any trees or plants which, within the operational lifetime of the development, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and landscape character in accordance with Policy EQ5 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the relevant aims and priorities of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

05. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details regarding surfacing materials for all hardstanding and tracks to serve the development and shall not be altered unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the locality and in accordance with Policies SD1 and EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the relevant aims and priorities of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

06. The development hereby permitted shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition within 40 years of the date of permission 12/01020/FUL or within six months of the cessation of the use of the solar farm for the generation of electricity whichever is the sooner in accordance

with a restoration plan to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The restoration plan will need to include all the works necessary to revert the site to open agricultural land including the removal of all structures, materials and any associated goods and chattels from the site.

Reason: In the interests of landscape character and visual amenity in accordance with Policies SD1, EQ1 and EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the relevant aims and priorities of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

07. The development hereby permitted shall only be carried out in accordance with the mitigation measures set out within the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) by H2OK dated March 2012 and associated drawing number 3001 Rev B received 20/03/2012 to limit the surface water run-off generated by the 1:100 year storm so that it will not exceed the run-off from the undeveloped site.

Reason: To prevent flooding by ensuring the satisfactory storage of / disposal of surface water from the site in accord with Policies SD1 and EQ1 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the relevant aims and priorities of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

08. No means of external illumination/lighting shall be installed without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and to safeguard the rural character of the area to accord with Policies SD1, EQ1 and EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the relevant aims and priorities of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

09. No works shall be carried out, no machinery operated and no deliveries taken or despatched from the site at any time on Sundays, bank or public holidays or outside the hours 07.00 to 18.30 Mondays to Fridays and 07.00 to 12.30 on Saturdays for the duration of the construction phase of the development hereby permitted.

Reason: In the interest of the amenities of the area to accord with Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the relevant aims and priorities of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

10. The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and timing of the approved 'Ecological Working Method Statement', unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: For the conservation and protection of legally protected species of recognised nature conservation importance in accordance with Policies EQ1 and EQ4 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028), and to ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the relevant aims and priorities of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

Informatives:

01. There must be no interruption to the surface water drainage system of the surrounding land as a result of the operations on the site. Provisions must be made to ensure that all existing drainage systems continue to operate effectively and that riparian owners upstream and downstream of the site are not adversely affected.
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