

Our ref: 20/00006/ODC
Your Ref: EN010118
Direct Dial: 01376 551414 Ext. 2526
Ask for: Mr Tim Havers
Date: 14th March 2022



Development Management
Causeway House, Bocking End,
Braintree, Essex, CM7 9HB

Tel: 01376 557779
Email: planning@braintree.gov.uk

Mr Simon Raywood
National Infrastructure Planning
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol
BS1 6PN
(By Email Only)

Dear Mr Raywood,

RE: Adequacy of Consultation Request - Longfield Solar Farm Energy Ltd

I write in response to your letter dated 1st March 2022 and am responding on behalf of Braintree District Council.

Having had regard to the following:

- Duty to consult – Planning Act 2008 (as amended) (PA2008) – section 42
- Duty to consult the local community - PA2008 – section 47
- Duty to publicise - PA2008 – section 48

I can confirm that Braintree District Council consider that Longfield Solar Farm Energy Ltd have carried out adequate pre-application consultation in accordance with the provisions as set out in Sections 42, 47, and 48 of the Act.

The Applicant commenced early engagement with Braintree District Council (alongside Chelmsford City Council and Essex County Council) by meeting with the host Authorities from September 2020 onwards, well in advance of the commencement of the overall necessary statutory consultation process. Regular joint meetings were then held with Braintree District Council and the other two host Authorities throughout the majority of the pre-application process up until the date the DCO was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate.

Non-statutory consultation was formally carried out between 2nd November and 14th December 2020. Braintree District Council provided a detailed response dated 14th December 2020 covering a number of points including loss of best and most versatile agricultural land and ecological and arboricultural impact. The Applicant subsequently sought to respond to these matters. In addition, Braintree District Council provided a full response (3rd December 2020) to the Scoping Opinion Consultation completed by the Planning Inspectorate which covered a number of the same matters. Again, it is noted that the Applicant subsequently sought to respond to the points/matters raised by Braintree District Council.

The Applicant produced a draft Statement of Community Consultation which was reviewed by the host Authorities. Initially informal discussions took place, including around how to address Covid restrictions successfully prior to the formal consultation commencing. Braintree District Council were supportive of the outlined consultation

approach but raised a number of points/suggestions in our response (dated 9th April 2021). The Applicant sought to address those in the final SOCC.

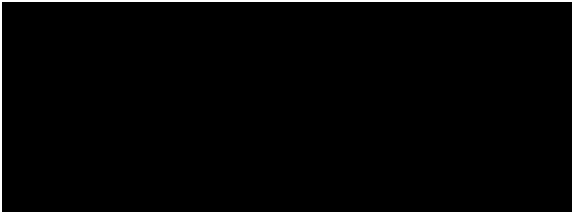
The Applicant completed their s42 consultation between 1st June 2021 and 13th July 2021 and allowed 42 days for comment rather than the 28 day minimum. Braintree District Council raised a number of detailed points for consideration in our response dated 13th July 2021 which again the Applicant subsequently sought to address. This included detailed specialist input from our Ecology, Heritage, and Landscape Consultants.

Following the statutory consultation, Longfield Solar Energy Farm Ltd made a number of alterations and changes to the Order limits which required further targeted consultation from 26th October to 23rd November 2021. Following a formatting error on the scheme boundary plan, a corrected scheme boundary plan was prepared with additional further targeted consultation taken place between 11th January and 8th February 2022.

In addition to the above, I have also read the Applicant's Consultation Report dated February 2022 which sets out the above and the Applicant's consultation programme in full detail and I am satisfied that they have undertaken an extensive and inclusive consultation programme.

I can therefore confirm that Braintree District Council consider that Longfield Solar Farm Energy Ltd have carried out adequate pre-application consultation in accordance with the provisions as set out in Sections 42, 47, and 48 of the Act.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Tim Havers MRTPI
Lead Principal Planner
(BDC Longfield Lead)

For

Mr Christopher Paggi
Planning Development Manager