

West Burton Solar Project

The Applicant's Cover Letter

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The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010



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Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
3-8 Whitehall Place
London

29 November 2024

Dear Secretary of State,

West Burton Solar Project – Submissions to the Secretary of State
Application Ref: EN010132

This letter sets out the documents which are submitted by West Burton Solar Project Limited ('the Applicant') in response to the third Request for Information (RfI3) dated 22 November 2024 made by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero ('the SoS'). The SoS has requested clarification on matters relating to Best and Most Versatile ("BMV") Land and Biodiversity Net Gain ("BNG"). The Applicant's comments on these matters are set out below.

Submitted Documents

Note: For revised documents, clean and tracked changes versions of each are submitted when appropriate

| Ref or plan/ drawing number | Document Title |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Environmental Statement Appendices | |
| DEC/WB6.3.9.12_B | ES Appendix 9.12 Biodiversity Net Gain Report (Revision B) |
| Examination Submissions | |
| Core Submissions | |
| DEC/WB8.1.8_I | Schedule of Changes (Revision I) |
| DEC/WB8.1.47 | The Applicant's Cover Letter |

Best and Most Versatile ("BMV") Land

In respect of the SoS's request to the Applicant in paragraph 4 of the 22 November RfI3, the Applicant has set out the agricultural land classification (ALC) figures for the Scheme in Tables 1 to 4 below. Tables 1 and 2 set out the ALC figures with solar panels on Stow Park Deer Park and Tables 3 and 4 set out the ALC figures with panels removed from Stow Park Deer Park.

Table 1 ALC Figures including Stow Park Deer Park

| Agricultural Land Grade | West Burton 1 (ha) | West Burton 2 (ha) | West Burton 3 (ha) | Scheme Total (ha) |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 17.59 | 17.59 |
| 2 | 0.00 | 2.60 | 6.93 | 9.53 |
| 3a | 19.26 | 7.32 | 145.84 | 172.42 |
| 3b | 71.12 | 291.59 | 194.32 | 557.03 |
| Non-agri | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.31 | 1.31 |
| Unsurveyed | 0.00 | 1.52 | 1.18 | 2.70 |
| Total | 90.38 | 303.03 | 367.17 | 760.58 |
| Scheme Total BMV (Grade 1, 2 and 3a) | | | | 199.54 |

Table 2 ALC %'s including Stow Park Deer Park

| Agricultural Land Grade | West Burton 1 (%) | West Burton 2 (%) | West Burton 3 (%) | Scheme Total (%) |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 1 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 4.79 | 2.31 |
| 2 | 0.00 | 0.86 | 1.89 | 1.25 |
| 3a | 21.31 | 2.42 | 39.73 | 22.68 |
| 3b | 78.69 | 96.22 | 52.92 | 73.24 |
| Non-agri | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.36 | 0.17 |
| Unsurveyed | 0.00 | 0.30 | 0.31 | 0.27 |
| Scheme Total BMV (Grade 1, 2 and 3a) | | | | 26.24% |

Table 3 ALC Figures excluding Stow Park Deer Park

| Agricultural Land Grade | West Burton 1 (ha) | West Burton 2 (ha) | West Burton 3 * (ha) | Scheme Total* (ha) |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.01 |
| 2 | 0.00 | 2.60 | 0.00 | 2.60 |
| 3a | 19.26 | 7.32 | 118.39 | 144.97 |
| 3b | 71.12 | 291.59 | 113.46 | 476.17 |
| Non-agri | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.31 | 1.31 |
| Unsurveyed | 0.00 | 1.52 | 1.18 | 2.70 |
| Total | 90.38 | 303.03 | 234.35 | 627.76 |
| Scheme Total BMV (Grade 1, 2 and 3a) | | | | 147.58 |

Table 4 ALC %'s Figures excluding Stow Park Deer Park

| Agricultural Land Grade | West Burton 1 (%) | West Burton 2 (%) | West Burton 3 * (Stow Park Alteration) (%) | Scheme Total * (%) |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|--|--------------------|
| 1 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 2 | 0.00 | 0.86 | 0.00 | 0.41 |
| 3a | 21.31 | 2.42 | 50.52 | 23.09 |
| 3b | 78.69 | 96.22 | 48.41 | 75.85 |
| Non-agri | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.56 | 0.21 |
| Unsurveyed | 0.00 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.43 |
| Scheme Total BMV (Grade 1, 2 and 3a) | | | | 23.51% |

* The calculation for West Burton 3 and the Scheme Total is based on the exclusion of the Stow Park Deer Park (132.82ha) from the previous West Burton 3 total.

The tables above show that the amount of BMV in the Scheme with panels in the Deer Park is 26.24% and this figure is stated in **ES Chapter 5 Alternatives and Design Evolution [APP-043]** and 73.76% of non-BMV. These figures have also been used in many of the Applicant's response documents to Interested Parties at deadlines throughout examination. With panels removed from the Deer Park, the amount of BMV is 23.51%. The majority of the Deer Park land is Grade 3b (60.88%).

The Applicant would reiterate, as set out in **Without Prejudice Stow Park Alterations to DCO Document: Response to Rule 17 Letter [REP7-022]**, that if the SoS is minded to approve the Scheme without panels on the Deer Park land, it is not proposed for that land to be removed from the Order Limits. Underground apparatus and other development will still

need to take place within the Deer Park including but not limited to underground cabling, access, construction compounds and landscape mitigation and enhancement works.

In **ES Chapter 19 Soils and Agriculture [APP-057]**, Table 19.10 sets out the ALC distribution within the study area by ALC grading which matches Table 1 above. It should be noted that the percentages do differ between Table 19.10 and Table 2 above because Table 19.10 excludes the unsurveyed area but it has been provided above for clarity. The total area of 757.8ha stated in Table 19.10 differs from the figure of 886.4ha which is stated in **ES Chapter 4 Scheme Description [APP-042]** paragraph 4.2.4 as the latter figure is the total area within the Order Limits of which not all land was subject to ALC testing. Paragraph 19.7.7 states there is approximately 754.7ha of the Order Limits, which is a typographical error and should be as stated in Table 19.10.

Appendix 19.1 Agricultural Land Quality, Soil Resources and Farming Circumstances Report [APP-137], Table 1 figures mirror the figures in Table 19.10 **[APP-057]**. Annex 1 of **Appendix 19.1 [APP-137]** contains the Agricultural Land Classification Report. This was carried out early in the development process of the Scheme and therefore includes some land that was not included within the final Order Limits as it was removed subsequent to the report through the design iterations (which are set out in **ES Chapter 5 Alternatives and Design Evolution [APP-043]**).

It should be noted that some of the small discrepancies between figures relates to rounding of numbers by authors and the basis of their calculations such as some using the Order Limits and some using the individual areas of the Sites.

Biodiversity Net Gain ("BNG")

In respect of the SoS's request to the Applicant in paragraph 5 of the 22 November Rf13, the Applicant can confirm that the net gain figure for River Units listed in the Executive Summary of **ES Appendix 9.12 Biodiversity Net Gain Report [DEC/WB6.3.9.12_A]** is a typographical error. The correct value is 38.01%, as it reads in the main report in Figure 3 and paragraph 6.1.5. This error is corrected in the submitted version of **ES Appendix 9.12 Biodiversity Net Gain Report Revision B [DEC/WB6.3.9.12_B]**

The Applicant considers that the above, and supporting submissions, satisfactorily provide the Applicants response to the matters requested by the SoS in their letter of 22 November 2024.

Please do not hesitate to contact us using the details provided below if you have any questions.



Yours sincerely,



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