

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Proposed 30 MW Solar PV Array on land south of Berrington, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY5 6HA

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Author:	Technical Review:	Issued By:
Jacques Carboni BSc (Hons), MSC MRTPI	Anthony Heslehurst MPlan, MRTPI	Anthony Heslehurst MPlan, MRTPI

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1 Executive Summary

- 1.1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared by ADAS Planning (Agent) on behalf of Econergy International Ltd (Applicant).
- 1.1.2 This Statement is submitted in support of a Planning Application under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (hereafter 'TCPA') (as amended) for the installation of a 30 MW Solar PV development on land south of Berrington, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY5 6HA.
- 1.1.3 This proposal is an opportunity to produce a significant amount of renewable, carbon-free electricity in the UK, whilst utilising innovative technology to mitigate and adapt to climate change. This project is expressly supported in both the local development plan and at national level in the NPPF, PPG and the Climate Change Act 2008.
- 1.1.4 In a Statement released by the UK Government on the 19th of April 2022, targets were outlined to increase the country's electricity being produced by low-carbon means in 2030 by up to 95% and 100% in 2035. It also states that the country's solar capacity will grow by up to five times by 2035, emphasising the pivotal role that solar will facilitate in meeting these national targets.
- 1.1.5 The Site measures 44.09 hectares in size and is located in an area of open countryside to the south west of the village of Berrington, Shropshire. The Site is formed of two field parcels, separated by a single-track road.
- 1.1.6 Prior to the submission of this Planning Application, Pre-Application advice was sought from Shropshire Council. The response that was issued on the 8th of March 2022 has been used to inform the proposals on the Site. Full details of the Public Consultation are set out in Chapter 5 of this Statement and the accompanying Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 1.1.7 This Planning, Design and Access Statement sets out the need for the development and provides a detailed assessment of the proposal against the relevant policies in Shropshire's Development Plan and other material considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendments) and the emerging Local Plan Review.
- 1.1.8 This Statement and the submitted reports demonstrate that the proposed development accords with relevant planning policy and other material considerations, and that planning permission should be granted without delay.

2 Introduction

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared by ADAS Planning (henceforth 'ADAS') on behalf of Econergy International Ltd (henceforth 'Econergy'). Econergy is an Independent Power Producer (IPP) that develops, owns, and operates large-scale renewable energy projects throughout the UK and internationally.
- 2.1.2 The proposal is for the for the construction of a 30 MW Solar PV Array on land south of Berrington, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY5 6HA.
- 2.1.3 The description of development is as follows:
- Erection of an up to 30 MW Solar PV Array, comprising ground mounted solar PV panels, vehicular access, internal access tracks, landscaping and associated infrastructure, including security fencing, CCTV, client storage containers and grid connection infrastructure, including substation buildings and off-site cabling.*
- 2.1.4 The proposal has the potential to offset the average annual UK electricity consumption of approximately 7,000 houses per annum. In this respect, the proposed development represents an exciting project which will make a meaningful contribution to the renewable energy landscape in the UK, thus assisting in reducing our reliance on imported energy and fossil fuels.

2.2 Scope of the Planning Application

- 2.2.1 This Statement is one of a number of documents submitted in support of the proposal. The following documents are submitted in support of this Planning Application:
- 1) Planning Application Forms and Plans;
 - 2) Planning, Design and Access Statement;
 - 3) Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Report
 - 4) Landscape Visual Appraisal (LVA);
 - 5) Transport Statement and Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP);
 - 6) Ecological Impact Assessment;
 - 7) Biodiversity Strategy;
 - 8) Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (DBA);
 - 9) Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage strategy;
 - 10) Glint and Glare Assessment;
 - 11) Built Heritage Assessment;
 - 12) Noise Assessment;
 - 13) Arboriculture Assessment;
 - 14) Site Sequential Selection Report;
 - 15) Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment; and
 - 16) Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 2.2.2 The information contained in the above reports provides a comprehensive assessment of the impacts of the proposal and complies with the Shropshire Validation Checklist (adopted 2012).

2.2.3 In addition to the above documentation, the following plans are submitted alongside the Planning Application:

- 1) Site Location Plan (Drawing No: 1051487-ADAS-XX-XX-DR-P-8006)
- 2) Site Layout Plan (Drawing No. 1051487-ADAS-XX-XX-DR-PL-8000)
- 3) Site Access Drawing (Transport Assessment Drawing Ref. 111182-10-01)
- 4) Landscape Masterplan (Drawing No. 1051487-ADAS-XX-XX-DR-L-8001)
- 5) Technical Details: Customer Substation (Drawing No. PL.006)
- 6) Technical Details: MV Power Station (Drawing No. PL.005)
- 7) Technical Details: Storage Container (Drawing No. PL.010)
- 8) Technical Details: Mounting Structure (Drawing No. PL.001)
- 9) Technical Details: Various (Drawing No. PL.007)
- 10) Kazubaloo 1 (Drawing No. Drg.No.KL1)

2.2.4 The plans outlined within the above list are those necessary to describe the nature of this proposal, in line with the Shropshire Validation Checklist (2012).

2.3 This Document

2.3.1 The remainder of the Statement is structured as follows:

- Chapter 3 describes the Site and its surroundings;
- Chapter 4 describes the proposed development;
- Chapter 5 provides details of Pre-Application engagement undertaken;
- Chapter 6 provides the planning history for the Site and relevant appeal decisions;
- Chapter 7 details the relevant policies in the development plan;
- Chapter 8 details other material considerations;
- Chapter 9 confirms the principle of development;
- Chapter 10 details how the layout design has developed;
- Chapter 11 provides a full assessment of other environmental considerations;
- Chapter 12 assesses the planning balance; and
- Chapter 13 sets out the summary and conclusions.

2.3.2 In addition to this, the following appendices are included at the end of this Statement, these set out the policies relevant to this proposal in full:

- Appendix A – Relevant Policies: Shropshire Core Strategy 2006–2026 (Adopted 2011)
- Appendix B – Relevant Policies: Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015)
- Appendix C – Relevant Policies: National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Appendix D – Relevant Policies: Draft Shropshire Local Plan (2016 – 2038)

3 Site and Surroundings

3.1 Site Location

- 3.1.1 The Site measures 44.09 hectares in size and is located in an area of open countryside to the south west of the village of Berrington, Shropshire. The Site is formed of two field parcels, separated by a single-track road. There is an existing Site access to the northern Site boundary on Cliff Hollow, a further farm access to the eastern Site boundary, as well as from the unnamed single-track road running through the centre of the Site.
- 3.1.2 The location of the Site is indicated below in Figure 1.

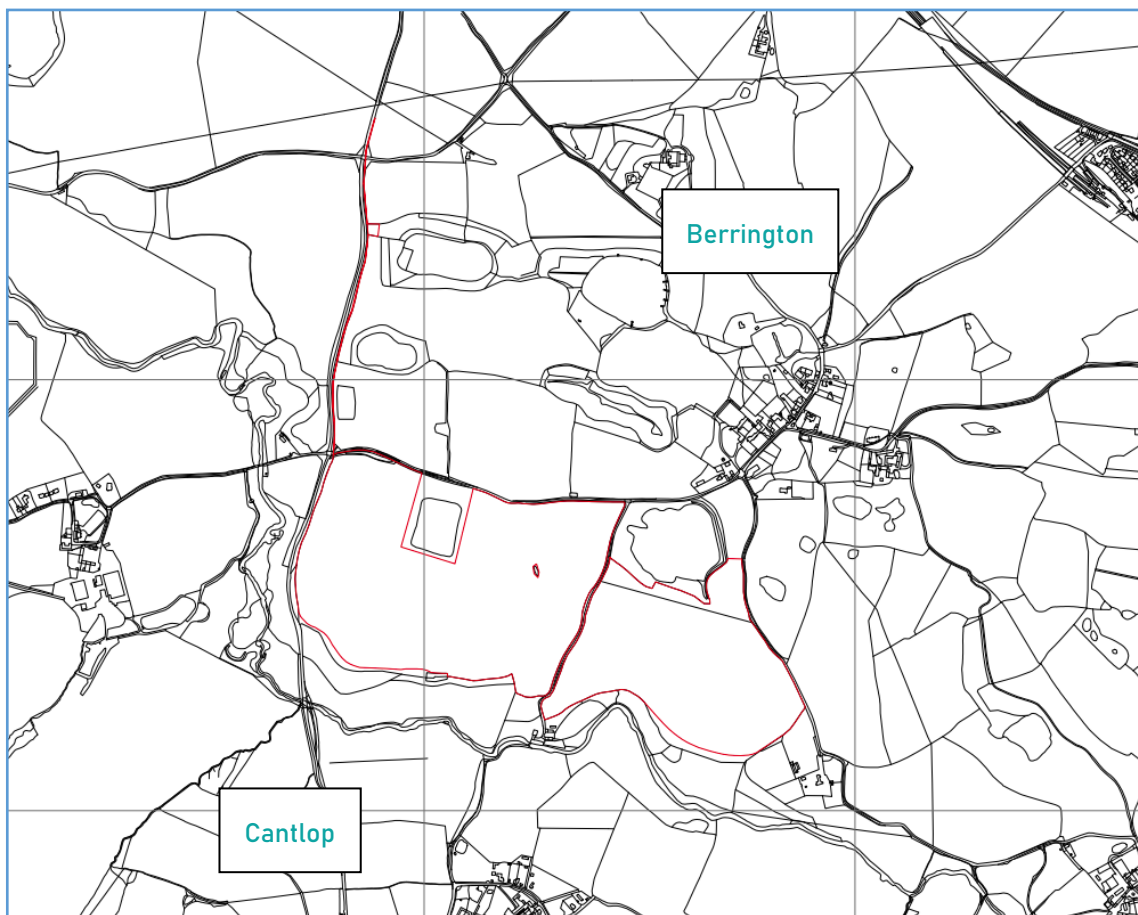


Figure 1. Extract of Location Plan

- 3.1.3 The Site is currently in agricultural use and is bound on all sides by mature hedgerow and occasional trees. The character of the Site surroundings is mixed. The village of Berrington is located circa 250m to the north of the Site, and immediately to the west is the Boreton 'Motocross' Track. Candover Solar Farm is also located circa 670m to the west of the Site (approved under Application Ref. 13/03519/FUL).
- 3.1.4 The topography of the Site is gently undulating, with the area of highest ground comprising the northern section of the Site. There are no Public Right of Ways (PRoW) running through the Site. However, outside of the Site there is a route running in a north west to south east orientation through Berrington to the north (Ref's 8905, 6259 and 8900). There is also route from the west which terminates at Shrewsbury Road (Ref. 5342) and a route running in a west to east orientation through Cantlop (Ref's 12641 and 12642).

3.1.5 There are no ecological designations on the Site, with the nearest Statutory Designated Sites being as follows:

- Berrington Pool (SSSI) – 0.4 km north.
- Bomere, Shomere and Betton Pools (SSSI) – 1.1 km north west.
- Attingham Park (SSSI) – 3.1 km north.
- Coundmoor Brook (SSSI) – 3.6 km south east.
- Rea Brook Valley (LNR) – 4.6 km north west.

3.1.6 The Site is located wholly within Flood Risk Zone 1, at the lowest risk of flooding from rivers and the sea. The Site is also at very low risk of flooding from surface water.

3.1.7 The Application Site is not located within a Conservation Area. The nearest designated heritage assets to the Site are as follows:

- Church of All Saints, Grade I (Ref. No. 1176997)
- Boreton Farmhouse and Attached Stable Blocks, Grade II (Ref. No. 1175180)
- Berrington Farmhouse, Grade: II (Ref. No. 1177114)
- 69 And 70, Grade: II (Ref. No. 1055548)
- Newman Hall Cottages, Grade II (Ref. No. 1176937)

3.2 Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land

3.2.1 An Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Survey has been undertaken on Site and this accompanies the planning application. The Site was found to comprise predominantly Grade 2 and 3a land, which constitutes Best and Most Versatile (henceforth 'BMV') Agricultural Land. The full results of this Survey are explored in full in Chapter 11 of this Statement. The proposal is temporary and will not result in the permanent loss of any agricultural land and there are opportunities for alternative agricultural uses to take place alongside the operation of the solar farm.

3.3 Alternative Site Appraisal & Sequential Test

3.3.1 A review of sequentially preferable sites was undertaken in order to compare alternative available sites for a development of the type and scale proposed. The findings are summarised in the Site Sequential Report submitted with the planning application. As the proposal is not EIA development, the Applicant is not required to consider alternative sites, however this information has been provided as requested during the pre-application public consultation.

4 The Proposed Development

4.1 Details of the Proposed Development

4.1.1 The proposed layout has been informed by the Site's opportunities and constraints, the Pre-Application enquiry to Shropshire Council and feedback from the Public Consultation exercise that was undertaken (see Chapter 5).

4.1.2 The proposal is for the erection of a solar photovoltaic (PV) array, with a total export capacity of up to 30 MW. Other features included as part of the proposed layout include:

- Boundary Fencing
- Customer Sub-Stations
- MV Power Stations
- Fencing and CCTV Cameras
- Landscaping Works
- Internal Access Tracks
- Welfare Units
- Compound Area/Track Type 1
- Waterless Toilet
- Britcabs x 3
- Set Down Area
- Other associated infrastructure

4.1.3 Access to the site, during both the construction and operational phase, will be gained via the creation of a new access point off the unnamed highway (locally referred to as 'Shrewsbury Road') running along the western flank of the site.



Figure 2. Extract of Site Layout Plan

- 4.1.4 Shrewsbury Road runs in a north-south orientation, providing access onto the A458 towards Shrewsbury, as well as the A5. This access will remain in place throughout the operational lifetime of the project and will be fitted with a gate and a turning area for the benefit of larger vehicles visiting the site.
- 4.1.5 In regard to the design of the arrays, a tracker system will be utilised, to orient the panels towards the sun throughout the day. The panels are covered by high transparency solar glass with an anti-reflective coating which minimises glint and glare, whilst also allowing the maximum absorption of the available sunlight. The panels are dark grey/blue in colour.
- 4.1.6 A Storage Container and Customer Sub-Station are also proposed along the western section of the western field parcel. Off-Site cabling works are proposed, running north along the highway connecting to the Grid Substation.
- 4.1.7 The solar PV panels will be erected on posts ensuring that the soil beneath them will still be available for the infiltration of rainwater. In addition, the inverter station, customer switch gear and spare containers will all be elevated above ground level.
- 4.1.8 During the construction phase of the project, temporary welfare units will be set up along the western side of the site. During the operational phase, a waterless toilet will also be located on site, to serve staff on site.
- 4.1.9 The final layout for this development has been refined to ensure that any potential impacts are minimised, whilst also incorporating enhancement measures into the scheme. Chapter 11 of this Statement provides a summary of all the assessed impacts of the proposal. The Proposed Site Layout Plan can be found appended in the Appendices.

4.2 Landscape Mitigation Plan

- 4.2.1 The proposed layout incorporates a series of measures to mitigate the potential effects on the immediate and surrounding landscape. Retention of as many important landscape features as possible and inclusion of an appropriate landscape scheme.
- 4.2.2 In addition to this, the following mitigation and enhancement proposals respond to the findings in the LVA:
- Species rich grassland and ecological mitigation area.
 - Grazing areas for livestock beneath solar panels.
 - Visual screening and retention of existing trees
 - The installation of bird and bat boxes.
 - Inclusion of species rich grass land to support carbon sequestration on site.
- 4.2.3 Planting stock used in the landscape proposals will be native and, where feasible, locally sourced. The palette of indicative species will take into consideration the native species present in the vicinity of the site. Furthermore, proposed trees will also be sized appropriately to their location.

4.3 Access and Traffic Management

- 4.3.1 Access to the site, during both the construction and operational phase, will be gained via the construction of a new access point off the unnamed highway along the western flank

of the site (locally referred to as 'Shrewsbury Road'). It is considered that the existing access points to the site are suitable for construction vehicles of varying size. The duration of the construction period will be short owing to the nature of the development (estimation of 6 months). Furthermore, once operations, the development will create very little additional traffic, as it requires low levels of on-site maintenance.

4.4 Operational Lifespan

- 4.4.1 The development would have a lifespan of about 40 years. At the end of the useful life of the facility, it will be decommissioned, and all the associated equipment will be removed. It is considered that the land can then be quickly reverted to agricultural use. The strengthened boundary hedgerows and planting would remain, however, leaving an enhanced landscape with richer biodiversity.

4.5 Designing out Crime

- 4.5.1 The proposed layout includes a gated access point and fencing along all boundaries at a height of 2.5 m. Fencing will comprise of timber posts and wire material to form the main sections of the boundary treatment. CCTV (in the form of 'Bullet Cameras') will be fixed onto the external face of the boundary treatment at intervals to ensure effective coverage. The CCTV will be positioned so as to avoid an unacceptable impact upon the amenity of adjacent neighbouring properties.
- 4.5.2 Solar development is a global and mature industry, and the proposal will require standard insurance to cover both the construction and operational phases of its lifespan. This will ensure that all plant and machinery are compliant with health and safety legislation and aid risk mitigation.

5 Pre-Application Engagement

5.1 Pre-Application Meeting and Advice

- 5.1.1 The Applicant has engaged directly with the Local Planning Authority through the formal Pre-Application process.
- 5.1.2 A Pre-Application Enquiry was submitted to Shropshire Council, with a formal response being received on the 8th of March 2022. At the Pre-Application meeting over Zoom, the proposal was outlined in detail and further clarifications and additional information were sought by Officers.
- 5.1.3 The Officer drew the following conclusion with respect to the principle of development:
'It is considered at this stage that it may be possible to design a scheme where the renewable energy benefits outweigh any residual impacts provided the visual, heritage, agricultural and other environmental issues referred to above can be satisfactorily addressed.'
- 5.1.4 In addition to this, the Officer's Response outlined other key considerations in assessing the level of acceptability of the final proposal:
- Visual impact including from nearby rights of way;
 - Effect on the setting of nearby listed buildings and structures; and
 - The effect on best and most versatile agricultural land.
- 5.1.5 This Statement, together with the comprehensive suite of technical reports submitted with this Application, robustly addresses all the matters raised at the Pre-Application stage, and we will continue to work with the relevant statutory consultees throughout the determination of the Application.

5.2 EIA Screening Request

- 5.2.1 An EIA Screening Request was submitted to Shropshire Council, with the LPA confirming that an EIA would be not required on the 15th of December 2021.

5.3 Public Consultation Strategy

- 5.3.1 At the Pre-Application stage, we have sought to carry out a comprehensive public consultation exercise, as follows:
- Leaflets/Letters posted to Local Residents and Ward Councillors;
 - Online Webinar Presentation;
 - Feedback Forms; and
 - Public Meeting at Berrington Village Hall.
- 5.3.2 In response to the feedback received in the Public Consultation, the following measures have been undertaken to ensure that concerns raised by members of the public are addressed:
- The proposal has been set in from the boundary treatment adjacent to Cantlop Mill to preserve the immediately adjacent residents in this property.

- The proposal has also been set in from Newman's Hall Cottage to preserve the immediately adjacent residents in this property.
- Additional hedgerow planting along the northern boundary of the eastern parcel to provide additional screening of the site from Berrington.
- The main access point has moved from its initial position along the northern boundary off Cliff Hollow, to the unnamed highway along the western flank. This was done to ensure construction traffic was diverted around Berrington, where it was perceived, it could result in congestion and a loss of highway safety.

5.3.3 The accompanying Statement of Community Engagement (SCE) provides a full summary of the public consultation process, the comments received and our response to them. All relevant matters are addressed within this Statement and associated technical documents.

5.3.4 Overall, the appropriate level of consultation for the type and size of development proposed has been undertaken, having regard to the strategy set out within the Shropshire Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (Adopted June 2021).

6 Planning History

6.1 The Site and Surroundings

- 6.1.1 A search of the Council's Public Access System shows that there is not any relevant planning history for the Site.
- 6.1.2 In the wider area, it is noted that Candover Solar Farm is located circa 670 m to the west of the Site (Application Ref. 13/03519/FUL). This was approved at Planning Committee on the 9th of January 2014 and has since been built out.
- 6.1.3 In the Committee Report, it was identified that the Site comprises of BMV agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a). The following comments are made by Natural England with respect to this matter in the Report:

'Natural England responds to agricultural planning consultations on behalf of DEFRA and has not objected to the current proposals. Natural England recognises that solar parks are a 'soft' use not entailing a permanent loss of agricultural land. They have however advised on the need for careful soil management and handling and have recommended that the developer uses a soil specialist to advise on and supervise soil handling. An appropriate clause relating to this has been included in appendix 1 as part of the requirement for a construction management plan. It is recognised that the proposed method for emplacing the solar panel frames would involve auger drilling without the use of any concrete foundations. Concrete surfaces within the Site would be limited to the bases of the proposed inverters and the substation and would occupy less than 1% of the total Site area. Such surfaces and the permeable hardstanding for the proposed track would all be removed at the end of the design life of the Site.'

- 6.1.4 In this Committee Report, the 'soft' use (referring to the temporary nature of the development) is considered the main justification by Natural England for not objecting to development on this Site. In addition to this, it is noted that the solar panel frames would not require concrete foundations and that all permeable hardstanding would be removed following the decommissioning of the facility. The current proposal would have similar characteristics to this approved scheme, in that it is temporary and would not require concrete foundations and it should therefore be treated by the Council in the same manner.

6.2 Relevant Appeal/SoS Decisions

- 6.2.1 This Section sets out recent comparable appeal decisions in similar circumstances. This provides a useful indication of whether a proposal such as this might be considered acceptable in principle.

Appeal Ref.	Decision
Application Ref. S62A/22/0000004 Uttlesford District Council	The main issues for this application were the effect on the character and appearance of the area (Countryside Protection Zone) and the effect on BMV land (76% Grade 2 and 3a).

<p>14MW Solar Farm with associated infrastructure</p> <p>Application Approved by PINS (LPA Special Measures – S62A)</p>	<p>The Inspector noted objections from the Parish Council and Ward Councillors that the proposal would lead to an ‘unacceptable loss’ of agricultural land. However, the proposal would not result in any permanent loss, and the site would be restored. During operation, there would also be options for alternative agricultural uses to take place on the site alongside the solar farm.</p> <p><i>The mounting for the PV panels would allow for the restoration to full agricultural use, subject to appropriate soil management, and during operation, there are well documented options for alternative agricultural use to take place alongside the operation of the site; such use can be secured through conditions...</i></p> <p><i>‘I have found that the proposal would conflict with the development plan, but that significant benefits would arise sufficient to address this conflict along with the temporary loss of BMV land’</i></p> <p>In relation to landscape and visual impacts, the Inspector made the following observations:</p> <p><i>‘It is unavoidable, and recognised in policy, that large-scale solar farms may result in some landscape and visual impact harm. However, national policy and guidance promotes a positive approach indicating that development can be approved where the harm is outweighed by the benefits...</i></p> <p><i>...In such circumstances, whilst there would be some localised harm to landscape character and some visual harm in conflict with the relevant development plan policies, the imperative to tackle climate change, as recognised in legislation and energy policy, and the very significant benefits of the scheme clearly and decisively outweigh the limited harm.’</i></p>
<p>Appeal Ref. APP/T3535/A/13/219 3543</p> <p>Waveney District Council</p> <p>Solar Farm and Associated Infrastructure</p> <p>Appeal Allowed</p>	<p>The main issue in this appeal was:</p> <p>Whether the benefits of the scheme, including the production of electricity from a renewable source, outweigh any harmful impacts, having particular regard to the effect upon the character and appearance of the countryside, including the likely impact upon the Hundred Tributary Valley Farmland Landscape Character Area.</p> <p><i>‘There is no certainty that sheep would graze the land after the completion of the development. However, the loss of about 11.6ha of Grade 3a agricultural land would not trigger a requirement to consult Natural England. Furthermore, there is no cogent evidence to demonstrate that the proposal would result a significant (or permanent) loss of the best and most versatile agricultural or harm the agricultural industry.’</i></p>

<p>Appeal Ref. APP/V2255/W/15/301 7938</p> <p>Swale Borough Council</p> <p>Solar Farm and Associated Infrastructure</p> <p>Appeal Allowed</p>	<p>The main issue in this appeal was:</p> <p>Whether the proposed development comprises inappropriate use of best and most versatile agricultural land (BMV).</p> <p><i>The appellant has demonstrated that the appeal site, whilst classified as BMV agricultural land is not the most versatile and productive land within the agricultural holding and has provided compelling evidence that no viable and available alternative sites comprising poorer quality land has been identified.</i></p> <p><i>It is clear that there is neither an absolute prohibition on the use of BMV agricultural land for solar generation nor that the benefits of generation of electricity from renewable sources always outweighs other considerations...</i></p> <p><i>It is concluded that the limited harm is outweighed by the significant benefits in terms of assisting the imperative of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the lack of alternative sites and other benefits accruing'</i></p>
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Table 1: Appeal Decisions

7 The Development Plan Policy

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Town and Country Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 places a statutory duty on local planning authorities to determine Planning Applications in accordance with the development plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.1.2 The Site falls within the planning jurisdiction of Shropshire Council; therefore, the relevant development plan is comprised of the following:
- Shropshire Core Strategy 2006–2026 (adopted February 2011)
 - Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (SAMDev) (adopted December 2015)
- 7.1.3 This Chapter provides a summary of the relevant policies in the adopted development plan. The full details of each relevant Policy can be found in Appendix A and B of this Statement. In terms of Local Designations, the Application Site is within the Open Countryside (CS Policy CS5) and the western edge is located within a Mineral Safeguarding Area (SAMDev Policy MD16).

7.2 Shropshire Core Strategy 2006–2026 (adopted February 2011)

- 7.2.1 The Shropshire Core Strategy, which was adopted in 2011, is the principle document in the Local Plan and sets out the Council's strategic planning policies for the period 2006–2026. This Section sets out the most relevant policies to the proposed development.
- 7.2.2 The key Core Strategy Policies for this proposal are set out below:
- CS Policy CS5 'Countryside and the Green Belt'
 - CS Policy CS8 'Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Provision'
 - CS Policy CS13: 'Economic Development, Enterprise and Employment'
- 7.2.3 In addition the above, the following policies are also relevant within the context of this proposal and have been set out in Appendix A of this Statement:
- CS Policy CS6 'Sustainable Design and Development Principles'
 - CS Policy CS17 'Environmental Networks'
 - CS Policy CS18 'Sustainable Water Management'
 - CS Policy CS20 'Strategic Planning for Minerals'
- 7.2.4 CS Policy CS5 states that new development will be strictly controlled in accordance with national planning policies protecting the Countryside and Green Belt. Subject to the further controls over development that apply to the Green Belt, development proposals on appropriate Sites which maintain and enhance countryside vitality and character will be permitted where they improve the sustainability of rural communities by bringing local economic and community benefits, particularly where they relate to:
- Small-scale new economic development diversifying the rural economy, including farm diversification schemes;

- Required community uses and infrastructure which cannot be accommodated within settlements;
- 7.2.5 CS Policy CS8 states that the development of sustainable places in Shropshire with safe and healthy communities where residents enjoy a high quality of life will be assisted by:
- Positively encouraging infrastructure, where this has no significant adverse impact on recognised environmental assets, that mitigates and adapts to climate change, including decentralised, low carbon and renewable energy generation, and working closely with network providers to ensure provision of necessary energy distribution networks.
- 7.2.6 CS Policy CS13 states that Shropshire Council, will plan positively to develop and diversify the Shropshire economy, supporting enterprise, and seeking to deliver sustainable economic growth and prosperous communities. In doing so, particular emphasis will be placed on:
- In rural areas, recognising the continued importance of farming for food production and supporting rural enterprise and diversification of the economy, in particular areas of economic activity associated with agricultural and farm diversification, forestry, green tourism and leisure, food and drink processing, and promotion of local food and supply chains. Development proposals must accord with Policy CS5.

7.3 Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (adopted December 2015)

- 7.3.1 The Site Allocations and Development Management Plan was adopted in December 2015 and sets out development management policies to guide planning decisions in the district over the plan period.
- 7.3.2 The key SAMDev Policies for this proposal are set out below in the following list:
- Policy MD8 'Infrastructure Provision'
 - Policy MD16 'Mineral Safeguarding'
- 7.3.3 In addition the above, the following policies are also relevant within the context of this proposal and have been set out in Appendix A of this Statement:
- Policy MD2 'Sustainable Design'
 - Policy MD12 'Natural Environment'
 - Policy MD13 'Historic Environment'
- 7.3.4 SAMDev Policy MD8 states that Applications for new strategic energy infrastructure “will be supported in order to help deliver national priorities and locally identified requirements, where its contribution to agreed objectives outweighs the potential for adverse impacts” in relation to a number of criteria.

7.3.5 SAMDev Policy MD16 states that Applications for non-mineral development which fall within Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSA) and which could have the effect of sterilising mineral resources will not be granted unless:

- The applicant can demonstrate that the mineral resource concerned is not of economic value; or
- The mineral can be extracted to prevent the unnecessary sterilisation of the resource prior to the development taking place without causing unacceptable adverse impacts on the environment and local community; or
- The development is exempt as set out in the supporting text below.

7.4 Summary

7.4.1 In terms of Local Plan Designation, the Application Site is within the Open Countryside (CS Policy CS5) and the western edge is located within a Mineral Safeguarding Area (SAMDev Policy MD16). Notwithstanding this, it is highlighted that neither of these designations preclude solar development in this location, provided they meet the set out criteria. A full assessment of the impacts against the relevant policies is provided in Section 11 of this Statement.

7.4.2 At a local level, policy indicates a strong level of support for renewable energy developments, particularly highlighting the need to support developments of this type that aim to maximise energy generation whilst also ensuring no adverse impacts on the surrounding area. This is particularly evident in Policy CS8 (Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Provision), which encourages the development of infrastructure, which mitigates and adapts to climate change, including decentralised, low carbon and renewable energy generation.

8 Other Material Considerations

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 Material considerations to the proposal include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and the emerging Local Plan Review.

8.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

8.2.1 The NPPF is an important material consideration in the taking of planning decisions. The Framework confirms the statutory presumption in favour of the development plan and sets out the Government's national planning policies for the achievement of sustainable development.

8.2.2 The most relevant NPPF Paragraphs are as follows:

- NPPF P2 – Development Plan
- NPPF P8 – Sustainable Development
- NPPF P152 – Low Carbon Future
- NPPF P158 – Renewable Development
- NPPF P81 – Economics
- NPPF P84 – Rural Economy

8.2.3 In addition the above, the following NPPF Paragraphs are also relevant within the context of this proposal and have been set out in Appendix C of this Statement:

- NPPF P111 – Highways
- NPPF P167 – Flood Risk
- NPPF P174 – Countryside, BMV & Net Gains
- NPPF P180 – Biodiversity
- NPPF P194 – Heritage

8.2.4 NPPF Paragraph 2 states that Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

8.2.5 NPPF Paragraph 8 sets out three 'overarching objectives' to achieve sustainable development and notes that there are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways.

8.2.6 The three objectives are as follows:

- a. Economic Objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring sufficient land of the right type in the right places, to support growth, innovation and improved productivity.
- b. A Social Objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided.
- c. An Environmental Objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land.

- 8.2.7 NPPF Paragraph 158 of the NPPF states that when determining Planning Applications for renewable development, local planning authorities should:
- a. not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and
 - b. approve the Application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.
- 8.2.8 NPPF Paragraph 152 states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate. It states that the planning system should help to shape places in ways that contribute to a radical reduction to greenhouse gas emissions, encouraging the reuse of existing resources, and supports renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.
- 8.2.9 NPPF Paragraph 81 states that planning decisions should help to create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. It states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, considering both local business needs and the wider opportunities for development. Significant weight, therefore, should be attached to the contribution of the proposed development towards supporting the growth and productivity of local businesses.
- 8.2.10 NPPF Paragraph 84 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should support a prosperous rural economy by enabling the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses.

8.3 Planning Practice Guidance – Climate Change

- 8.3.1 This planning practice guidance (PPG) document addresses the role that the planning system can play in addressing climate change. Specifically, it refers to the importance of supporting the delivery of appropriately Sited green energy. Furthermore, it states that LPAs should ensure that protecting the local environment is properly considered when factoring in the broader issue of protecting the global environment.
- 8.3.2 It is noted that the PPG also reiterates that responding to climate change is central to the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development.
- 8.3.3 Additionally, within this document, reference is made to the Climate Change Act of 2008, stating that it is required that Local Planning Authorities align with the goals set out within the Act, encouraging the adoption of proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

8.4 Planning Practice Guidance – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

- 8.4.1 This PPG states that planning has an important role in the delivery of new renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure, specifically stating that increasing the amount of energy from renewable sources is a key aspect in ensuring that the UK has a secure energy supply, as well as also slowing down the negative impacts of climate change and stimulating investment in new jobs and businesses.
- 8.4.2 It is further stated within this PPG that whilst all communities have the responsibility of helping to increase the use and supply of green energy, this responsibility does not override other considerations, such as environmental designations that may be affected

as a result of a proposed development. Whilst noting this, the Climate Change PPG raises the point that the UK has legal commitments to cut greenhouse gases and meet increased energy demand from renewable sources.

- 8.4.3 Further to this, this planning practice guidance also specifically discusses larger scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic farms. It notes the importance of assessing a proposal's visual impact, the effect of the development on the landscape, and the impact of potential glint and glare.

8.5 Draft Shropshire Local Plan (2016 – 2038)

- 8.5.1 Paragraph 48 of the NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to the stage of preparation, the extent to which there are unresolved objections, and the degree of consistency with Framework.

- 8.5.2 Shropshire Council is at an advanced stage of a Local Plan Review. The decision to submit the plan for examination was made at a meeting of the full council on 15th of July 2021. The draft Shropshire Local Plan (2016 – 2038) was subsequently submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 3rd of September 2021.

- 8.5.3 The most relevant Emerging policy is as follows:

- Policy SP3: Climate Change

- 8.5.4 Draft Policy SP3 states that development in Shropshire will support the transition to a zero-carbon economy in accordance with the policies of the Local Plan by:

- Reducing carbon emissions through a number of means;
- Integrating or supporting both on-and off-Site delivery of renewable and low carbon energy;
- Maximising carbon sequestration; and
- Mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

- 8.5.5 The full details of each relevant emerging policy can be found in Appendix D of this Statement.

8.6 The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019

- 8.6.1 There are a large number of international, national and local drivers for renewable energy, all of which are considered to be material considerations when making decisions on Planning Applications. The proposal is considered imperative to secure the carbon reductions which is a legislative requirement by the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019. This act introduced the UK's statutory target to reduce its' carbon dioxide emissions to below 80% of the country's 1990 levels by 2050.

- 8.6.2 The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 is a legislative requirement which seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from at least 80% to 100%, this significant reduction will be assisted by allowing renewable energy projects such as this to be built out. This legal requirement needs to be taken into account during the decision-making process and indeed it needs to be given significant weight.

- 8.6.3 The UK is still dependent on coal, oil and gas powered generation, therefore the need to comply with the legal requirement to become carbon neutral by 2050 places a statutory requirement on the planning system to deliver a greater number of renewable energy generation sources so these fossil fuel powered stations can be closed in a systematic way to make way the transition to a carbon neutral sustainable future.

8.7 British Energy Security Strategy

- 8.7.1 A Statement was issued on the 19th of April 2022 by Kwasi Kwarteng (Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) in relation to the British Energy Security Strategy. As part of the Statement, it outlines the UK targets to increase the country's electricity being produced by low-carbon means in 2030 to 95% and in 2035 to 100%. In meeting these targets, specific reference is made with respect to the importance of cheap renewables as the best defence against fluctuation in global gas prices. Furthermore, it is advised that solar capacity can grow in the UK by up to five times by 2035.

8.8 Summary

- 8.8.1 The strong support for renewable energy developments is noted in both national and local planning policy. In particular, national planning policy specifies that local plans should include policies that 'take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change' (NPPF Paragraph 153).
- 8.8.2 Further to this, it is noted that national planning policy directly encourages local planning authorities to take a positive and proactive approach in regard to sustainable development, highlighting the three key aspects of economic, environmental, and social objects that form a sustainable development (NPPF Paragraph 8). As demonstrated above, the ability to generate renewable energy is given significant support in both the NPPF as well as PPG: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and PPG: Climate Change.
- 8.8.3 The Draft Shropshire Local Plan (2016 – 2038) seeks to support proposals contributing to the transition to a zero-carbon economy in accordance with the Policies of the Local Plan. Furthermore, it supports the integration and supporting of on-and-off delivery of renewable and low carbon energy development.
- 8.8.4 The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 is a legislative requirement which seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This legal requirement needs to be taken into account during the decision-making process and indeed it needs to be given significant weight.

9 Principle of Development

9.1 The Principle of Development

- 9.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Town and Country Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 places a statutory duty on local planning authorities to determine Planning Applications in accordance with the development plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise.
- 9.1.2 The Development Plan for Shropshire comprises of The Core Strategy 2006-2026 (February 2011) and The Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (adopted December 2015).
- 9.1.3 The Application Site is located outside of a settlement boundary and is therefore considered to fall within the countryside. In terms of other local designations, the western edge is also located within a Mineral Safeguarding Area (SAMDev Policy MD16).
- 9.1.4 CS Policy CS5 permits development in the Countryside which maintains and enhances countryside vitality and character and improves the sustainability of rural communities by bringing local economic and community benefits. This policy makes particular reference to support for small-scale new economic development diversifying the rural economy, including farm diversification schemes. It also makes reference to required community uses and infrastructure which cannot be accommodated within settlements.
- 9.1.5 SAMDev Policy MD16 supports development for non-mineral development which could have the impact of sterilising mineral resources where it meets the provided criteria. In the Pre-Application Response from Shropshire Council on the 8th of March 2022 (see Chapter 5) it stipulates that the proposal would be unlikely to be in conflict with this Policy due to the spatial extent of the mineral resources and the temporary nature of the proposed use.
- 9.1.6 SAMDev Policy DM8 states that Applications for new strategic energy infrastructure “will be supported in order to help deliver national priorities and locally identified requirements, where its contribution to agreed objectives outweighs the potential for adverse impacts in relation to the provided criteria”.
- 9.1.7 CS Policy CS8 supports the construction of infrastructure, where this has no significant adverse impact on recognised environmental assets, that mitigates and adapts to climate change, including decentralised, low carbon and renewable energy generation, and working closely with network providers to ensure provision of necessary energy distribution networks. Chapter 11 of this Statement provides a full assessment of environmental considerations and confirms the proposal is in full accordance with the relevant policy.
- 9.1.8 CS Policy CS13 supports the development and diversification of the Shropshire economy, supporting enterprise, and seeking to deliver sustainable economic growth and a prosperous economies. Particular emphasis is placed on (in rural areas) on agricultural and farm diversification.

9.2 Other Material Considerations

- 9.2.1 Material planning considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and the emerging Local Plan Review. Any material planning benefits and/or harms are also material planning considerations, and these are assessed in full in Chapter 11 of this Statement.
- 9.2.2 The NPPF is clearly supportive of solar development. NPPF Paragraph 148 states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, whilst NPPF Paragraph 154 sets out a presumption in favour of approving such Applications, stating that local planning authorities should “approve the Application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.” Furthermore, NPPF Paragraph 83 states that planning decisions should support a prosperous rural economy by enabling the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses.
- 9.2.3 The PPG is strongly supportive of solar development – the PPG on Climate Change reiterates that responding to climate change is central to the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development. The PPG on Renewable and Low Carbon Energy PPG emphasises the importance of renewable energy in ensuring that the UK has a secure energy supply, as well as also slowing down the negative impacts of climate change and stimulating investment in new jobs and businesses. The PPG does note that the impacts, particularly landscape and visual, should be assessed. Chapter 11 of this Statement provides a full assessment of all environmental impacts of the proposal, including landscape and visual.
- 9.2.4 The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 is strongly supportive of the proposal and the proposal is considered imperative to secure the significant carbon reductions and new renewable energy generation sources which is a legislative requirement of this Act.
- 9.2.5 The emerging Local Plan is still at an early stage of preparation, so is afforded limited weight in planning decisions. However, it is noted that the proposal is clearly supported by the relevant policies in the emerging Local Plan, with Policy SP3: Climate Change confirming that seeks to support proposals contributing to the transition to a zero-carbon economy in accordance with the Policies of the Local Plan.

9.3 Conclusion

- 9.3.1 Overall, there is clear policy support in the Local Plan for solar development in the countryside and there are no policies that indicate planning permission should be refused on this site. Furthermore, the NPPF, PPG, Emerging Local Plan and The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 all provide strong and clear support for solar developments in locations such as this. Notwithstanding that the proposal is in accordance with the development plan, this is an additional material planning consideration that weighs in favour of the proposal. Chapter 11 provides a full assessment of all environmental impacts of the proposal and confirms compliance with all relevant local and national policies.

10 Design Development

10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 This Chapter outlines how the design of the proposal has developed and considers compliance with the relevant policies in the Local Plan and the NPPF.

10.2 Proposed Layout Alterations

10.2.1 The design of the proposal has been informed by a full appreciation of the Site and its surroundings in context. The Application is supported by a comprehensive suite of technical reports which provide a full assessment of the Site, including in relation to landscape and visual appraisal and heritage.

10.2.2 The Application has also been informed by detailed Pre-Application discussions with the Local Planning Authority. Full details of this are provided in the accompanying Statement of Community Engagement (SCE). This has provided a full understanding of the Site and the key opportunities and constraints for development. These are discussed in Chapter 11 of this Statement in relation to specific technical matters.

10.2.3 In response to the feedback received verbally and in written form during the Public Consultation, the following alterations were implemented to the proposed layout:

- The proposal has been set in from the boundary treatment adjacent to Cantlop Mill to preserve the immediately adjacent residents in this property.
- The proposal has also been set in from Newman's Hall Cottage to preserve the immediately adjacent residents in this property.
- Additional hedgerow planting along the northern boundary of the eastern parcel to provide additional screening of the site from Berrington.
- The main access point has moved from its initial position along the northern boundary off Cliff Hollow, to the unnamed highway along the western flank. This was done to ensure construction traffic was diverted around Berrington, where it was perceived, it could result in congestion and a loss of highway safety.

10.2.4 The above improvements to the proposed layout, will ensure that the development is of a high quality design that it is appropriate to its context in terms of materials, scale, height and massing. Furthermore, the alterations will ensure that natural environment is protected, through the utilisation of natural resources in accordance with Local Plan Policy CS6 (Sustainable Design and Development Principles). The proposal would also result in a safe, and accessible environment, which protects the amenity of existing and future neighbouring residents in line with Paragraph 130 of the NPPF.

10.2.5 Overall, the proposal has been designed to achieve high standards of sustainability, in full accordance with Policy CS6 (Sustainable Design and Development Principles) of the Local Plan and the NPPF.

11 Other Environmental Considerations

11.1 Introduction

- 11.1.1 This Chapter provides an assessment of the proposals in relation to the relevant policies in the development plan and other material considerations including the NPPF.

11.2 Landscape

- 11.2.1 This Application is supported by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) which undertakes a full assessment of how the proposal will be viewed within the context of the wider landscape.
- 11.2.2 The site is located to the south-west of Berrington. As shown on viewpoint 1, 2, 3 and 4, the site is made up of two agricultural fields. There is a track that runs north to south through the centre of the site that leads to residential properties to the south of the site. The boundaries of the site are lined with hedgerows and occasional trees. There are There is a seasonally wet pond in the western field.
- 11.2.3 The Report summarises that there would be a 'slight' effect on The Estate Farmlands LCT. and an at most 'large residual (at year 15) effect' to the landscape character of the site itself and its immediate surrounding area (up to 500m).
- 11.2.4 To the north, views of the site are screened by the rising landform and vegetation. To the east, views of the site are screened by the intervening vegetation and landform, and where local views are possible, this is only of the western field parcel. To the west, views of the site are screened by the intervening vegetation and landform, and where local views are possible, this is only of the eastern field parcel. To the south there are local views of the site across the open landscape from the rising ground. The receptors most affected by the development would be the users of the roads, PRoW and properties closest to the site.
- 11.2.5 Most of the receptors visually impacted by the proposed development would not experience a view of the entire site. Views from the east and west would only experience views of one of the field parcels. Receptors located on the rising ground to the south would also be affected by the development. The roads adjacent to the site, Newman's Hall Cottage, The Rectory, residents on the northern edge of Cantlop, PRoW 0407/16/1 and PRoW 0407/5R/2 would experience moderate residual effects due to the development. The remaining visual receptors would either experience a slight or negligible residual level effects because of the development.
- 11.2.6 Proposed mitigation measures include the creation and re-establishment of boundary hedgerows around the site, and adaptation to management to encourage taller hedgerow growth. These measures will assist in reinforcing visual screening of the development from the users of the local roads, PRoW and residential properties and other biodiversity enhancements.
- 11.2.7 The overall impact on the landscape of the development is therefore considered to be acceptable and the proposal is in accordance with Policy DP12 (Draft Shropshire Local Plan), Policy CS17 (Shropshire Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy 2011) and Policy MD12 (Environmental Network and the 'Site Allocations and Management of Development')

11.3 Highways and Transportation

- 11.3.1 This Application is supported by a Highway Statement which describes the effects that the construction phase of the solar farm is likely to have on traffic flows in the local area. Once operational, the site will encounter low levels of traffic with one or two visits per week for regular maintenance and inspection purposes only, therefore there will be no long-term operation changes occurring as a result of the development.
- 11.3.2 The measures outlined in the Highway Statement are also supported by a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). The Highway Statement finds that the existing strategic road network has sufficient capacity to overcome any temporary minimal increases in HGV and non-HGV construction traffic movements during the construction period.
- 11.3.3 Overall, the Highways Statements finds that the proposal is acceptable from a highway's perspective and would pose no harm to the safety of the users of the public highway network. It is therefore in full accordance with Local Plan Policy CS7 ('Communications and Transport') and Paragraph 111 of the NPP

11.4 Ecology

- 11.4.1 This Planning Application is supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) which reports on the findings of the PEA and ecological surveys undertaken for this proposal.
- 11.4.2 The proposed development will have a positive impact on the environment through the provision of biodiversity net gains within the Site. In particular, the proposal will seek to enhance local habitats by implementing measures such as creating and enhancing existing Site boundaries with native species, providing wildflower mix across the Site and taking the Site out of intensive crop production.
- 11.4.3 In order to comply with relevant legislation recommendations have been made to safeguard habitats and species present including the bats, birds, hedgehogs, hazel dormouse, badgers and reptiles both during construction and post-development.
- 11.4.4 Recommendations have been made to ensure that the development complies with NPPF and the Shropshire Local Plan (Policy CS17) by retaining, protecting and enhancing mature trees, woodlands and hedgerows and enhancing the Sites biodiversity post-development this includes; the enhancement of existing hedgerows with native planting of fruit/seed bearing species; and creating and allowing areas for hibernaculum.
- 11.4.5 The overall impact on ecology of the development will be a positive one therefore the proposal is therefore in accordance with Local Plan Policy CS17 and Paragraph 180 of the NPPF.

11.5 Arboriculture

- 11.5.1 An ADAS Arboricultural Consultant carried out a full arboricultural survey of the Site in March 2022. The tree survey identified a total of 63 tree features which have the potential to be impacted by the development proposals, comprising 39 individual trees, 15 groups of trees eight hedgerows and one woodland.
- 11.5.2 Of the 63 tree features on site at the time of the survey, a 15 metre section of G50 and 10 metre section of H24 will require removal in order to facilitate the proposed vehicular accesses. Both features were categorised as a low C grade and as such it is not

anticipated that their loss should pose a constraint to development. Their loss can be easily compensated for, and it is anticipated that planting of this type will be included within the site landscaping scheme.

- 11.5.3 There were 11 veteran trees surveyed either on or within 15m of the site and their RPA's will be sufficiently protected through the installation of robust tree protection barriers and new, permanent site fencing. Their RPA's were calculated at 15 x DBH, rather than the standard 12 x DBH in order to afford the trees further protection and every effort was made to ensure a design which is both appropriate and proportionate could be achieved with the primary objective of preserving and maintaining all veteran trees as these are irreplaceable features which provide significant arboricultural and ecological contributions.
- 11.5.4 ADAS are satisfied that, providing the recommendations contained within this report are followed, the proposed development of the site can be successfully achieved without causing undue harm to trees identified for retention and the proposed tree losses are not expected to have a significant negative impact on the treescape of the area.

11.6 Noise

- 11.6.1 A construction phase assessment has been undertaken for the development. The assessment focuses on the construction and operational impact of the development at nearest human receptors to the requirements of BS 5228-1:2009+ A1: 2014 and BS 4142: 2014+A1: 2019.
- 11.6.2 Predicted noise levels from construction activity would remain within the adopted noise criteria at all receptor locations.
- 11.6.3 Predicted rated noise levels during daytime and night-time operation of the development would likely exceed the representative background sound level at nearby sensitive receptors. In accordance with BS 4142, the context of the development within its locality, the absolute noise levels and mitigation afforded by the building envelope, predicted noise levels would not exceed the existing ambient noise level, nor exceed the criteria for internal noise levels for residential property within WHO guidelines. This is a positive indication that noise from the development would have a low impact.
- 11.6.4 In summary, the assessment concludes that the development is considered acceptable within the relevant standards and guidance for construction and operational noise. In this respect, the proposed development is in line with the relevant sections of the NPSE and World Health Organisation Guidelines, as well as Policy DM15 of the Local Plan and Paragraphs 170 of the NPPF.

11.7 Archaeology

- 11.7.1 The Application is supported by an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (DBA), which identifies and assesses the impact of the proposed development on the below ground archaeological resource and any earthworks or historic buildings on the Site.
- 11.7.2 The Assessment identified no designated Scheduled Monuments, Grade I, II* or II Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Designated Wrecks, Designated Battlefields or Registered Parks and Gardens on the Site or immediately adjacent to the Site. There will

be no physical impact to any of these types of designated heritage assets from the development.

- 11.7.3 The Site is recorded to lie within an area where the results of previous archaeological investigation carried out within the wider landscape suggest there is a high general potential for archaeological deposits dating between the Roman and post-medieval periods to be present on or surrounding the Site particularly in undeveloped areas. Based on the available evidence any such unknown buried archaeological remains are considered to have a low to moderate archaeological significance with regards to the evidence that these might hold, or potentially hold, of past human activity in the area.
- 11.7.4 This assessment has established that historic environment impacts should not be seen as an overriding constraint preventing the construction of this development. Therefore, it recommended that this Application should be considered under Paragraph 194 of the NPPF 2021. This recommendation would be in accordance with the Shropshire Local Plan and Section 16 of the National Planning

11.8 Built Heritage

- 11.8.1 This Application is supported by a Built Heritage Setting Assessment. This provides an assessment of the heritage resource within the Site and an assessment of the contribution that the Site makes to the significance of surrounding heritage assets and identifies any harm or benefit to them which may result from the development proposal.
- 11.8.2 The Assessment concludes that there are no built heritage assets within the Site and the majority of designated heritage assets within the 1km study area and beyond have no potential to be affected by the proposed development.
- 11.8.3 Only five designated heritage assets could potentially be affected by the proposed development. These are the Grade I Listed Church of All Saints; the Grade II Listed Boreton Farmhouse and attached Stable Blocks; the Grade II Listed Berrington Farmhouse; the Grade II Listed house at 69 And 70 at Cantlop and the Grade II Listed Newman Hall Cottages.
- 11.8.4 However, when considering the limited intervisibility and lack of any significance of the views of the heritage assets from the Application Site or from the heritage asset to the Site, and the lack of any significant viewpoints to see the Application Site and the heritage assets together, then it is considered the proposed development will result in no negative impact on the heritage significance of these designated heritage assets via any change to their setting.
- 11.8.5 The topography, especially the difference in land levels between the Application Site and this heritage asset, together with the intervening vegetation and trees ensure that the ability to see the Site from the heritage asset and vice versa is very limited, if at all. However, any ability to see the Application Site from the heritage asset and vice versa does not contribute to the heritage significance of this Locally Listed building.
- 11.8.6 Overall, the proposal will result in no negative impact to the significance of the identified Listed Buildings. With reference to the levels of harm in the NPPF, the proposals will result in 'no harm' to any of the Listed Buildings. Furthermore, the proposals are compliant with the statutory duty of the section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; and the heritage strategy and policies contained in

Shropshire's Adopted Core Strategy in that they preserve the identified Listed Buildings and the special architectural/historic interest which they possess.

11.9 Flood Risk and Drainage

- 11.9.1 The Site lies in an area designated by the EA as Flood Zone 1, outlined to have a chance of flooding of 1 in 1000 or less ($\leq 0.1\%$) in any year.
- 11.9.2 NPPF sets out a Sequential Test, which states that preference should be given to development located within Flood Zone 1. This flood risk assessment demonstrates that the requirements of the Sequential Test have been met, with the Site area located within Flood Zone 1 and 'Essential Infrastructure' classification of the development.
- 11.9.3 The Site is currently a greenfield Site and is existing agricultural land. The proposed development will only alter the impermeable area on Site by a diminutive amount, resulting in a negligible increase in surface water runoff. The solar panels will not increase the impermeable area on-Site, and therefore will not increase the volume of surface water runoff.
- 11.9.4 The FRA concludes that the proposal would not involve the construction of inappropriate development in an area of high risk, nor would the proposal result in increased flood risk elsewhere. The development of the Site should therefore not be precluded on flood risk grounds, in accordance with Policy CS18 ('Sustainable Water Management') and Paragraph 167 of the NPPF.

11.10 Agricultural Land Classification

- 11.10.1 This Application is supported by an Agricultural Land Classification Report, in order to establish the Grade of the Agricultural Land.
- 11.10.2 The survey has identified the following:
- Non-calcareous over well drained loamy sand soils over sand; and
 - Fine loamy soils over clayey soils.
- 11.10.3 These soils form agricultural land of Grade 2 (24.0 ha, 58%), Subgrade 3a (12.3 ha, 30%) and Subgrade 3b (4.8 ha, 12%) quality.
- 11.10.4 The proposal will have a lifespan of 40 years, following which the land will be reverted to its former agricultural use, resulting in no permanent loss of any BMV land. In addition to this, land will present opportunities for grazing during the operational phase of the development, owing to the none-intrusive nature of the proposal. The application will also be supported by a Soil Resource Management Plan to ensure the protection and conservation of soil resources on site.
- 11.10.5 The proposed development is in line full accordance with Local Plan Policy CS6 (Sustainable Design and Development Principles) and Paragraph 174 of the NPPF.

11.11 Glint and Glare

- 11.11.1 This Application is supported by a Glint and Glare Study, to assess the possible effects of glint and glare from the mount photovoltaic solar arrays which are being proposed.

- 11.11.2 All roads within the 1km assessment area for consideration of glint and glare effects are local roads. Technical modelling is not recommended for local roads, where traffic densities are likely to be relatively low. Any solar reflections from the proposed development that are experienced by a road user along a local road would be considered low impact in the worst case in accordance with the guidance presented in Appendix D of this Report. Overall, no significant impacts upon road users are predicted and no mitigation is required.
- 11.11.3 Views of the reflecting panels are considered possible for 10 dwellings; however, a mitigation recommendation has not been identified because:
- The duration of effects is not significant; and/or
 - The separation distance between the dwelling and the closest reflecting panel is sufficiently large; and/or
 - Due to existing screening views are likely to be possible for observers above the ground floor only, i.e. the first floor or above¹⁴; and/or
 - Solar reflections would occur within approximately 2 hours of sunrise/sunset; therefore, effects would mostly coincide with direct sunlight.
- 11.11.4 Overall, the Report concludes that the no impacts requiring mitigation are predicated for the surrounding road users of dwellings.

11.12 Conclusion: Assessment of the Impacts

- 11.12.1 This Statement and the accompanying suite of reports demonstrates that the proposed development would maximise opportunities on the Site, while minimising any adverse impacts. The proposal would result in significant beneficial effects to the landscape features on the Site and result in biodiversity net gains
- 11.12.2 In light of the assessment and consideration of impacts, we consider that the proposal is therefore in full accordance with all relevant policies in the Local Plan and the Framework.

12 Planning Balance

12.1 Benefits vs Harms

- 12.1.1 This Chapter discusses the significant planning benefits of the development and assess the proposal's impacts on the landscape and the temporary loss of agricultural land. The benefits are substantial and have been set out in Table 2 below.

Benefits	Harm
<p>Climate Change - Renewable energy generation helps to alleviate climate change and the social issues associated with this.</p> <p><i>Substantial Weight</i></p>	<p>Agricultural Land - The proposal would result in the temporary loss of BMV Agricultural Land, which will be protected and conserved in accordance with a Soil Resource Management Plan.</p> <p><i>Limited Weight</i></p>
<p>Clean Renewable Energy - Potential to offset the average annual UK electricity consumption of approximately 7,000 houses per annum.</p> <p><i>Substantial Weight</i></p>	<p>Landscape - Specified areas, including the roads adjacent to the site, would experience moderate residual effects due to the development.</p> <p>The remaining visual receptors would either experience a slight or negligible residual level effect because of the development.</p> <p><i>Limited Weight</i></p>
<p>Energy Security - Will contribute towards an independent, secure energy supply in the UK (which is particularly necessary in the current geopolitical climate).</p> <p><i>Substantial Weight</i></p>	
<p>Employment Creation - The creation of long and short-term jobs opportunities within the local area.</p> <p><i>Substantial Weight</i></p>	
<p>Bio-Diversity Net Gains - Provision of biodiversity net gains within the Site (123.5% for habitat units and 76.4% for hedgerow units).</p> <p><i>Moderate Weight</i></p>	
<p>Diversification of Farm Business - The proposal would allow for more effective utilisation of agricultural land which is rated at Grade 3b and ensure the</p>	

landowner has a secure supply of income to reinvest in their agricultural business.

Limited Weight

Table 2: Benefits vs Harms

12.2 Planning Balance

- 12.2.1 It is clear from the above, that the limited harm created through the temporary loss of the BMV agricultural land and limited landscape harm, is clearly outweighed by the substantial benefits of bringing forward a solar PV development in this location.
- 12.2.2 The public benefits of the proposal would be significant and wide-ranging; namely through the generation of clean renewable energy, which will help to alleviate the impacts of climate change and contribute towards a secure source of energy in the UK. Additional benefits also include job creation (short and long-term) and the creation of net biodiversity gains (123.5% for habitat units and 76.4% for hedgerow units).
- 12.2.3 The proposed development would not result in significant harm to the natural or physical environment, nor would it result in a loss of amenity to those residents living adjacent to the Site. It should also be noted that the development is a temporary installation, which can be quickly decommissioned, and the land restored to its former agricultural use.
- 12.2.4 In summary, there are no harms that would outweigh the public benefits of the proposal, and in accordance with the NPPF, planning permission should be granted without delay.

13 Summary and Conclusions

13.1 Summary

- 13.1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement is submitted in support of a Planning Application for the construction of a 30 MW Solar PV development on land south of Berrington, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY5 6HA.
- 13.1.2 The proposal will deliver significant benefits, with the potential to offset the average annual UK electricity consumption of approximately 7,000 houses per annum. In this respect, the proposed development represents an exciting project which will make a significant contribution to promoting renewable energy use and moving to a low carbon economy, in support of national and local planning policy and all other material considerations.
- 13.1.3 Section 38 (6) of the Town and Country Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 places a statutory duty on local planning authorities to determine Planning Applications in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for Shropshire comprises The Core Strategy 2006-2026 (February 2011) and The Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (December 2015).
- 13.1.4 The principle of development is clearly confirmed in the Local Plan. Whilst the Site is located outside of the development boundary, CS Policy CS5 states that development will be permitted where it maintains and enhances countryside vitality and character and improves the sustainability of rural communities by bringing local economic and community benefit. Furthermore, CS Policy CS5 supports development in the form of community uses and infrastructure, which cannot be accommodated within settlements. With respect to the Site's designation as a Mineral Safeguarding Area, SAMDev Policy MD16 would not preclude development in this location, which has been confirmed by the Case Officer in the formal Pre-Application Response.
- 13.1.5 This Statement, with the support of the accompanying technical reports, has demonstrated that these requirements have been met and the principle of development is therefore acceptable. Furthermore,
- 13.1.6 The emerging Local Plan is still at an early stage of preparation, so is given limited weight in planning decisions. However, it is noted that the proposal is clearly supported by the relevant policies in the emerging Local Plan, with Policy SP3: Climate Change confirming support for proposals contributing to the transition to a zero-carbon economy. This is a material consideration that weights in favour of the proposal, albeit with limited weight.
- 13.1.7 It is demonstrated that the proposal can be delivered without giving rise to any unacceptable impacts on the environment or the local community, in full accordance with the Local Plan and the NPPF.

13.2 Conclusions

- 13.2.1 Section 38 (6) of the Town and Country Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that development proposals should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 13.2.2 The proposal accords with the Local Plan and with all the relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 13.2.3 In these circumstances, the Framework sets out that Applications should only be refused where the harms significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
- 13.2.4 This Statement, together with the suite of reports submitted with the Application, demonstrates that the proposal will deliver significant benefits of national importance and will not result in any unacceptable impacts.
- 13.2.5 In accordance with planning law and the National Planning Policy Framework, we respectfully request that the proposal is approved without delay.

Appendix A – Relevant Policies: Shropshire Core Strategy 2006–2026 (Adopted 2011)

Policy	Description
<p>CS Policy CS5 'Countryside and the Green Belt'</p>	<p>New development will be strictly controlled in accordance with national planning policies protecting the countryside and Green Belt.</p> <p>Subject to the further controls over development that apply to the Green Belt, development proposals on appropriate Sites which maintain and enhance countryside vitality and character will be permitted where they improve the sustainability of rural communities by bringing local economic and community benefits, particularly where they relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small-scale new economic development diversifying the rural economy, including farm diversification schemes; • dwellings to house agricultural, forestry or other essential countryside workers and other affordable housing / accommodation to meet a local need in accordance with national planning policies and Policies CS11 and CS12; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ With regard to the above two types of development, applicants will be required to demonstrate the need and benefit for the development proposed. Development will be expected to take place primarily in recognisable named settlements or be linked to other existing development and business activity where this is appropriate. • Agricultural/horticultural/forestry/mineral related development, although proposals for large scale new development will be required to demonstrate that there are no unacceptable adverse environmental impacts; • The retention and appropriate expansion of an existing established business, unless relocation to a suitable Site within a settlement would be more appropriate; • The conversion or replacement of suitably located buildings for small scale economic development / employment generating use; • Sustainable rural tourism and leisure and recreation proposals which require a countryside location, in accordance with Policies CS16 and CS17; • Required community uses and infrastructure which cannot be accommodated within settlements; • Conversion of rural buildings which take account of and make a positive contribution to the character of the buildings and the countryside. Proposals for conversions will be considered with regard to the principles of PPS4, giving equal priority to the following uses:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ small scale economic development/employment generating use, including live-work proposals and tourism uses; ○ affordable housing to meet local need (including agricultural workers dwellings); ○ other uses appropriate to a countryside location. <p>Open market residential conversions will only be considered where respect for the heritage asset (as also required by Policy CS17) and high standards of sustainability are achieved; a contribution to infrastructure requirements is made in accordance with Policy CS9; and, except where the buildings are listed, a financial contribution for the provision of affordable housing to be delivered off Site is provided in accordance with Policy CS11. In all cases, development proposals should be consistent with the requirements of Policies CS6 and CS17.</p> <p>Within the designated Green Belt in south-eastern Shropshire, there will be additional control of new development in line with government guidance in PPG2. Land within development boundaries in the settlements of Shifnal, Albrighton, Alveley, Beckbury, Claverley, and Worfield, and at the Alveley and Stanmore Industrial Estates is excluded from the Green Belt. In addition to appropriate development in these areas, limited infilling will be permitted in any other Community Hubs and Community Clusters listed in the SAMDev DPD, subject to the requirements of Policies CS4, CS6 and CS11. Also, limited local needs affordable housing on exceptions Sites which accords with the requirements of Policy CS11 will be permitted in the Green Belt. Areas of safeguarded land are reserved for potential future development at Albrighton and Shifnal, while the military base and Royal Air Force Museum at Cosford is recognised as a major existing developed Site within the Green Belt where limited defence related development will be permitted. The Green Belt boundary and all relevant policy areas are identified on the Proposals Map for the SAMDev DPD, which sets out the detailed approach to development in the Green Belt and any new Site allocations required within the safeguarded land.</p>
<p>CS Policy CS8 'Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Provision'</p>	<p>The development of sustainable places in Shropshire with safe and healthy communities where residents enjoy a high quality of life will be assisted by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Protecting and enhancing existing facilities, services and amenities that contribute to the quality of life of residents and visitors; ● Preserving and improving access to facilities and services wherever possible, including access to information and communication technologies (ICT), throughout Shropshire; ● Facilitating the timely provision of additional facilities, services and infrastructure to meet identified needs, as outlined in the LDF Implementation Plan whether arising from new developments or existing community need, in locations that are appropriate and accessible;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positively encouraging infrastructure, where this has no significant adverse impact on recognised environmental assets, that mitigates and adapts to climate change, including decentralised, low carbon and renewable energy generation, and working closely with network providers to ensure provision of necessary energy distribution networks.
<p>CS Policy CS13: 'Economic Development, Enterprise and Employment'</p>	<p>Shropshire Council, working with its partners, will plan positively to develop and diversify the Shropshire economy, supporting enterprise, and seeking to deliver sustainable economic growth and prosperous communities. In doing so, particular emphasis will be placed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting Shropshire as a business investment location and a place for a range of business types to start up, invest and grow, recognising the economic benefits of Shropshire's environment and quality of life as unique selling points which need to be valued, conserved and enhanced; Raising the profile of Shrewsbury, developing its role as the county town, growth point and the main business, service and visitor centre for the Shropshire subregion, in accordance with Policy CS2; Supporting the revitalisation of Shropshire's Market Towns, developing their role as key service centres, providing employment and a range of facilities and services accessible to their rural hinterlands, in accordance with Policy CS3; Supporting the development and growth of Shropshire's key business sectors and clusters, in particular: environmental technologies; creative and cultural industries; tourism; and the land based sector, particularly food and drink production and processing; Planning and managing a responsive and flexible supply of employment land and premises comprising a range and choice of Sites in appropriate locations to meet the needs of business, with investment in infrastructure to aid their development or to help revitalise them; Supporting initiatives and development related to the provision of higher/further education facilities which offer improved education and training opportunities to help raise skills levels of residents and meet the needs of employers; Supporting the development of sustainable transport and ICT/broadband infrastructure, to improve accessibility / connectivity to employment, education and training opportunities, key facilities and services; Encouraging home based enterprise, the development of business hubs, live-work schemes and appropriate use of residential properties for home working; In rural areas, recognising the continued importance of farming for food production and supporting rural enterprise and diversification of the economy, in particular areas of economic activity associated with agricultural and farm diversification, forestry, green tourism and leisure, food and drink processing, and promotion of local food and supply chains. Development proposals must accord with Policy CS5.

<p>CS Policy CS6 'Sustainable Design and Development Principles'</p>	<p>To create sustainable places, development will be designed to a high quality using sustainable design principles, to achieve an inclusive and accessible environment which respects and enhances local distinctiveness, and which mitigates and adapts to climate change. This will be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring all development proposals, including changes to existing buildings, to achieve applicable national standards, or for water use, evidence based local standards as reflected in the minimum criteria set out in the sustainability checklist. This will ensure that sustainable design and construction principles are incorporated within new development, and that resource and energy efficiency and renewable energy generation are adequately addressed and improved where possible. The checklist will be developed as part of a Sustainable Design SPD; • Requiring proposals likely to generate significant levels of traffic to be located in accessible locations where opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport can be maximised and the need for car based travel to be reduced; <p>And ensuring that all development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is designed to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all, to respond to the challenge of climate change and, in relation to housing, adapt to changing lifestyle needs over the lifetime of the development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS11; • Protects, restores, conserves and enhances the natural, built and historic environment and is appropriate in scale, density, pattern and design taking into account the local context and character, and those features which contribute to local character, having regard to national and local design guidance, landscape character assessments and ecological strategies where appropriate; • Contributes to the health and wellbeing of communities, including safeguarding residential and local amenity and the achievement of local standards for the provision and quality of open space, sport and recreational facilities. • Is designed to a high quality, consistent with national good practice standards, including appropriate landscaping and car parking provision and taking account of Site characteristics such as land stability and ground contamination; • Makes the most effective use of land and safeguards natural resources including high quality agricultural land, geology, minerals, air, soil and water; • Ensures that there is capacity and availability of infrastructure to serve any new development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS8.
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	<p>Proposals resulting in the loss of existing facilities, services or amenities will be resisted unless provision is made for equivalent or improved provision, or it can be clearly demonstrated that the existing facility, service or amenity is not viable over the long term.</p>
<p>CS Policy CS17 'Environmental Networks'</p>	<p>Development will identify, protect, enhance, expand and connect Shropshire's environmental assets, to create a multifunctional network of natural and historic resources. This will be achieved by ensuring that all development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protects and enhances the diversity, high quality and local character of Shropshire's natural, built and historic environment, and does not adversely affect the visual, ecological, geological, heritage or recreational values and functions of these assets, their immediate surroundings or their connecting corridors; • Contributes to local distinctiveness, having regard to the quality of Shropshire's environment, including landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets, such as the Shropshire Hills AONB, the Meres and Mosses and the World Heritage Sites at Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal and Ironbridge Gorge; • Does not have a significant adverse impact on Shropshire's environmental assets and does not create barriers or sever links between dependant Sites; • Secures financial contributions, in accordance with Policies CS8 and CS9, towards the creation of new, and improvement to existing, environmental Sites and corridors, the removal of barriers between Sites, and provision for long term management and maintenance. Sites and corridors are identified in the LDF evidence base and will be regularly monitored and updated.
<p>CS Policy CS18 'Sustainable Water Management'</p>	<p>Developments will integrate measures for sustainable water management to reduce flood risk, avoid an adverse impact on water quality and quantity within Shropshire, including groundwater resources, and provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity, health and recreation, by ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Applications and allocations in the Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) DPD, are in accordance with the tests contained in PPS25, and have regard to the SFRA's for Shropshire; • New development is designed to be safe, taking into account the lifetime of the development, and the need to adapt to climate change. Proposals should have regard to the design guidance provided in the SFRA's for Shropshire; • All development within local surface water drainage areas, as identified by the Water Cycle Study, and any major development proposals, demonstrate that surface water will be managed in a sustainable and coordinated way. Proposals will be supported by either a Surface Water Management Statement or Plan, depending on the scale of the development;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All developments, including changes to existing buildings, include appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) to manage surface water. All developments should aim to achieve a reduction in the existing runoff rate, but must not result in an increase in runoff; • New development improves drainage by opening up existing culverts where appropriate; • Proposals within areas of infrastructure capacity constraint, as identified by the Water Cycle Study and the Implementation Plan, and any major development, demonstrates that there is adequate water infrastructure in place to serve the development; • New development enhances and protects water quality, including Shropshire's groundwater resources; • New development, including changes to existing buildings, incorporate water efficiency measures, in accordance with the sustainability checklist in Policy CS6, to meet the water efficiency objectives within the Shropshire Water Cycle Study to protect water resources and reduce pressure on wastewater treatment infrastructure.
CS Policy CS20 'Strategic Planning for Minerals'	<p>Shropshire's important and finite mineral resources will be safeguarded to avoid unnecessary sterilisation and there will be a sustainable approach to mineral working which balances environmental considerations against the need to maintain an adequate and steady supply of minerals to meet the justifiable needs of the economy and society. This will be achieved by:</p>

Appendix B – Relevant Policies: Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015)

Policy	Description
Policy MD8 'Infrastructure Provision'	<p>New Strategic Infrastructure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applications for new strategic energy, transport, water management and telecommunications infrastructure will be supported in order to help deliver national priorities and locally identified requirements, where its contribution to agreed objectives outweighs the potential for adverse impacts. Particular consideration will be given to the potential for adverse impacts on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Residential and other sensitive neighbouring land uses; ii. Visual amenity; iii. Landscape character and sensitivity, including impacts on sensitive skylines; iv. Natural and heritage assets, including the Shropshire Hills AONB (Policies MD12 and MD13); v. The visitor and tourism economy including long distance footpaths, cycle tracks and bridleways (Policy MD11); vi. Noise, air quality, dust, odour and vibration; vi. Water quality and resources; vii. Impacts from traffic and transport during the construction and operation of the infrastructure development; viii. Cumulative impacts. Development proposals should clearly describe the extent and outcomes of community engagement and any community benefit package. 2. The following infrastructure specific criteria will also apply: Renewable Energy Infrastructure: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. In the case of wind energy proposals, proposals will be assessed against national policy guidance; pending the development of new local policy as part of the proposed Plan Review; ii. In the case of biomass, anaerobic digestion and geothermal energy proposals, particular attention will also be paid to the potential for opportunities to recover heat and power; iii. In the case of hydro-electric energy schemes, particular attention will also be paid to impacts on flood risk, ecology, water quality and fish stocks; Other New Infrastructure iv. In the case of water treatment infrastructure, particular attention will also be paid to impacts on water quality in the local river catchment and impacts on the sewerage network; Monitoring and Decommissioning

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> v. Where planning permission establishes performance standards, applicants will be expected to demonstrate compliance through the submission of regular monitoring reports; vi. Proposals for temporary infrastructure will be expected to include measures for satisfactory restoration, including progressive restoration, of the site at the earliest practicable opportunity to an agreed after-use or to a state capable of beneficial after-use; vii. Where appropriate, a planning obligation will be sought in order to secure the after-use, long term management and maintenance of the site.
<p>Policy MD16 'Mineral Safeguarding'</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applications for non-mineral development which fall within Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSA) and which could have the effect of sterilising mineral resources will not be granted unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The applicant can demonstrate that the mineral resource concerned is not of economic value; or ii. The mineral can be extracted to prevent the unnecessary sterilisation of the resource prior to the development taking place without causing unacceptable adverse impacts on the environment and local community; or iii. The development is exempt as set out in the supporting text below. 2. Consistent with the requirements of Policy MD8, Applications for non-mineral development within the identified buffer zone surrounding identified mineral transport and processing facilities will not be granted unless the applicant can demonstrate that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The development proposed would not prevent or unduly restrict the continued operation of the protected infrastructure; or, ii. That the identified facilities are no longer required or that viable alternative facilities are available. MSA boundaries and protected mineral transport and processing facilities are identified on the Policies map and insets. The buffer zones which will apply to protected resources and facilities are identified in the explanatory text below. 3. Applications for permission for non-mineral development in a MSA must include an assessment of the effect of the proposed development on the mineral resource beneath or adjacent to the site of the development or the protected mineral handling facility (termed a Mineral Assessment). This assessment will provide information to accompany the Planning Application to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the MPA that mineral interests have been adequately considered and that known mineral resources will be prevented, where possible, from being sterilised or unduly restricted by other forms of development occurring on or close to the resource;

	<p>4. Identification of these areas does not imply that any Application for the working of minerals within them will be granted planning permission.</p>
<p>Policy MD2 'Sustainable Design'</p>	<p>Further to Policy CS6, for a development proposal to be considered acceptable it is required to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respond positively to local design aspirations, wherever possible, both in terms of visual appearance and how a place functions, as set out in Community Led Plans, Town or Village Design Statements, Neighbourhood Plans and Place Plans. 2. Contribute to and respect locally distinctive or valued character and existing amenity value by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Responding appropriately to the form and layout of existing development and the way it functions, including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement; and ii. Reflecting locally characteristic architectural design and details, such as building materials, form, colour and texture of detailing, taking account of their scale and proportion; and iii. Protecting, conserving and enhancing the historic context and character of heritage assets, their significance and setting, in accordance with MD13; and iv. Enhancing, incorporating or recreating natural assets in accordance with MD12. 3. Embrace opportunities for contemporary design solutions, which take reference from and reinforce distinctive local characteristics to create a positive sense of place but avoid reproducing these characteristics in an incoherent and detrimental style. 4. Incorporate Sustainable Drainage techniques, in accordance with Policy CS18, as an integral part of design and apply the requirements of the SuDS handbook as set out in the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. 5. Consider design of landscaping and open space holistically as part of the whole development to provide safe, useable and well-connected outdoor spaces which respond to and reinforce the character and context within which it is set, in accordance with Policy CS17 and MD12 and MD13, including. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Natural and semi-natural features, such as, trees, hedges, woodlands, ponds, wetlands, and watercourses, as well as existing landscape character, geological and heritage assets and; ii. providing adequate open space of at least 30sqm per person that meets local needs in terms of function and quality and contributes to wider policy objectives such as surface water drainage and the provision and enhancement of semi

	<p>natural landscape features. For developments of 20 dwellings or more, this should comprise an area of functional recreational space for play, recreation, formal or informal uses including semi-natural open space;</p> <p>iii. where an adverse effect on the integrity of an internationally designated wildlife site due to recreational impacts has been identified, particular consideration will be given to the need for semi-natural open space, using 30sqm per person as a starting point. iv. ensuring that ongoing needs for access to manage open space have been provided and arrangements are in place for it to be adequately maintained in perpetuity.</p> <p>6. Ensure development demonstrates there is sufficient existing infrastructure capacity, in accordance with MD8, and should wherever possible actively seek opportunities to help alleviate infrastructure constraints, as identified with the Place Plans, through appropriate design.</p> <p>7. Demonstrate how good standards of sustainable design and construction have been employed as required by Core Strategy Policy CS6 and the Sustainable Design SPD.</p>
<p>Policy MD12 'Natural Environment'</p>	<p>In accordance with Policies CS6, CS17 and through applying the guidance in the Natural Environment SPD, the avoidance of harm to Shropshire's natural assets and their conservation, enhancement and restoration will be achieved by:</p> <p>1. Requiring a project-level Habitats Regulations Assessment for all proposals where the Local Planning Authority identifies a likely significant effect on an internationally designated site. Permission will be refused where a HRA indicates an adverse effect on the integrity of a designated site which cannot be avoided or fully mitigated. Where mitigation can remove an adverse effect, including that identified by the HRA for the Plan or the Minerals HRA, measures will be required in accordance with; CS6, CS8, CS9, CS17, CS18, MD2; remedial actions identified in the management plan for the designated site and the priorities in the Place Plans, where appropriate.</p> <p>2. Ensuring that proposals which are likely to have a significant adverse effect, directly, indirectly or cumulatively, on any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the special qualities of the Shropshire Hills AONB; ii. locally designated biodiversity and geological sites; iii. priority species; iv. priority habitats v. important woodlands, trees and hedges; vi. ecological networks vii. geological assets;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> viii. visual amenity; ix. landscape character and local distinctiveness. will only be permitted if it can be clearly demonstrated that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. there is no satisfactory alternative means of avoiding such impacts through re-design or by re-locating on an alternative site and; b. the social or economic benefits of the proposal outweigh the harm to the asset. In all cases, a hierarchy of mitigation then compensation measures will be sought. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Encouraging development which appropriately conserves, enhances, connects, restores or recreates natural assets, particularly where this improves the extent or value of those assets which are recognised as being in poor condition. 4. Supporting proposals which contribute positively to the special characteristics and local distinctiveness of an area, particularly in the Shropshire Hills AONB, Nature Improvement Areas, Priority Areas for Action or areas and sites where development affects biodiversity or geodiversity interests at a landscape scale, including across administrative boundaries.
<p>Policy MD13 'Historic Environment'</p>	<p>In accordance with Policies CS6 and CS17 and through applying the guidance in the Historic Environment SPD, Shropshire's heritage assets will be protected, conserved, sympathetically enhanced and restored by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensuring that wherever possible, proposals avoid harm or loss of significance to designated or non-designated heritage assets, including their settings. 2. Ensuring that proposals which are likely to affect the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset, including its setting, are accompanied by a Heritage Assessment, including a qualitative visual assessment where appropriate. 3. Ensuring that proposals which are likely to have an adverse effect on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, including its setting, will only be permitted if it can be clearly demonstrated that the public benefits of the proposal outweigh the adverse effect. In making this assessment, the degree of harm or loss of significance to the asset including its setting, the importance of the asset and any potential beneficial use will be taken into account. Where such proposals are permitted, measures to mitigate and record the loss of significance to the asset including its setting and to advance understanding in a manner proportionate to the asset's importance and the level of impact, will be required. 4. Encouraging development which delivers positive benefits to heritage assets, as identified within the Place Plans. Support will be given in particular, to proposals which appropriately conserve, manage or enhance the significance

	<p>of a heritage asset including its setting, especially where these improve the condition of those assets which are recognised as being at risk or in poor condition.</p>
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Appendix C – Relevant Policies: National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Policy	Description
NPPF Paragraph 2: Development Plan	Paragraph 2 states that Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements.
NPPF Paragraph 8: Sustainability Objectives	<p>Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out three 'overarching objectives' to achieve sustainable development and notes that there are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways.</p> <p>The three objectives are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Economic Objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring sufficient land of the right type in the right places, to support growth, innovation and improved productivity. b. A Social Objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided. c. An Environmental Objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land.
NPPF Paragraph 11: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development	Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development and confirms that where proposals accord with an up-to-date development plan, they should be approved without delay. It is our position that the proposal as submitted is in accordance with the development plan when viewed as a whole.
NPPF Paragraph 152: Low Carbon Future	Paragraph 152 states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate. It states that the planning system should help to shape places in ways that contribute to a radical reduction to greenhouse

	gas emissions, encouraging the reuse of existing resources, and supports renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.
NPPF Paragraph 158: Renewable Development	<p>Paragraph 158 of the NPPF states that when determining Planning Applications for renewable development, local planning authorities should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and b. approve the Application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.
NPPF Paragraph 81: Economics	Paragraph 81 states that planning decisions should help to create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. It states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, considering both local business needs and the wider opportunities for development. Significant weight, therefore, should be attached to the contribution of the proposed development towards supporting the growth and productivity of local businesses.
NPPF Paragraph 84: Rural Economy	Paragraph 84 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should support a prosperous rural economy by enabling the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses.
NPPF Paragraph 111: Highways	Paragraph 111 is clear that development “should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe”.
NPPF Paragraph 167: Flood Risk	Paragraph 167 of the Framework states that when determining Planning Applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere and that where appropriate, Planning Applications should be supported by a Site-specific flood risk assessment.
NPPF Paragraph 174: Net Gains	Paragraph 174 states that proposals should minimise impacts on and provide net gains in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

	Paragraph 174 of the Framework also states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services, including the economic and other benefits of trees and woodland.
NPPF Paragraph 180: Biodiversity	Paragraph 180 sets out a number of 'principles' to guide decisions, including that a) if significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided, the Application should be refused.
NPPF Paragraph 194: Heritage	Paragraph 194 states that where a Site includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment, and where necessary, a field evaluation.

Appendix D – Relevant Policies: Draft Shropshire Local Plan (2016 – 2038)

Policy	Description
Policy LP04 'Development Boundaries'	Emerging Policy LP04 'Development Boundaries' states that all areas outside development boundaries will be treated as countryside where new development will be more restricted and will be limited to that identified as suitable in rural areas by other policies of the local plan, including "e) renewable energy generation (under policy LP24 – Renewable Energy)".
Policy LP24 'Renewable Energy'	Policy LP24 'Renewable Energy' states that proposals will be supported and considered in the context of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and adapting to climate change. Proposals for renewable energy will be assessed to determine whether the benefits are outweighed by the impacts, either individually or cumulatively, upon a number of criteria, including the Norfolk Coast AONB, the surrounding landscape and townscape, and designated on non-designated heritage assets.