

PLANNING BOARD

Date and Time:- Thursday 16 July 2026 at 9.00 a.m.

Venue:- Rotherham Town Hall, The Crofts, Moorgate Street, Rotherham. S60 2TH

Membership:- Councillors Mault (Chair), Jackson (Vice-Chair), Adair, Ahmed, Brent, Currie, Duncan, Elliott, Fisher, Hussain, Lelliott, Reynolds, Sutton, Tarmey, Taylor and Thorp.

This meeting will be webcast live and will be available to view [via the Council's website](#). The items which will be discussed are described on the agenda below and there are reports attached which give more details.

Rotherham Council advocates openness and transparency as part of its democratic processes. Anyone wishing to record (film or audio) the public parts of the meeting should inform the Chair or Governance Advisor of their intentions prior to the meeting.

AGENDA

1. To consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any part of the agenda.
2. To determine any items which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Apologies for absence (substitution)
4. Declarations of Interest (Page 5)
(A form is attached and spares will be available at the meeting)
5. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 25th June, 2026 (Pages 7 - 10)
6. Deferments/Site Visits (information attached) (Pages 11 - 12)
7. Development Proposals (Pages 13 - 103)
8. Report of the Service Director of Planning, Regeneration and Transportation Service (Pages 105 - 222)
9. Updates

**The next meeting of the Planning Board will be held on
Thursday 6 August 2026 commencing at 9.00 a.m.
in Rotherham Town Hall.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Edwards', with a stylized, cursive script.

**JOHN EDWARDS,
Chief Executive.**

Planning Regulatory Board 'Public Right To Speak'

REGISTERING TO SPEAK

The Council has a "Right to Speak" policy, under which you may speak in the Planning Board meeting about an application. If you wish to do this, it is important that you complete a tear-off slip and return it with any written comments, within 21 days of the date of the notification letter back to the Planning Department.

Your comments will be made known to the Planning Board when it considers the application and you will be written to advising of the date and time of the Planning Board meeting to exercise your right to speak

If you wish to speak in the meeting, please try to arrive at the venue **ten minutes** before the meeting starts. The reception staff will direct you to the Council Chamber.

In the Council Chamber, please give your name to the Board clerk (who will have a checklist of names derived from the agenda). The clerk will direct you to the seating reserved for people who wish to speak.

The agenda is available online at least 5 days prior to the meeting, and a few copies will be made available at the meeting, so you can read the report relating to the application which concerns you and see where it comes in the agenda.

The **Council Chamber** is equipped with microphones and a hearing loop.

Take time to familiarise yourself with the layout of the Chamber and the procedure of the meeting, before 'your' application is reached.

Please note that applications can sometimes be withdrawn or deferred at short notice. **The Council will do its best to notify the public in advance**, but on occasions this may not be possible.

The meeting is being filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's website and can be found at:-

<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

If anyone present or members of the public in the public galleries do not wish to have their image captured they should make themselves known to Democratic Services before the start of the meeting.

YOUR RIGHT TO SPEAK

The 'right to speak' applies equally to the applicant and to the general public.

You will be invited to speak by the Chairman at the correct interval.

Each speaker will be allowed three minutes to state his/her case. The applicant does not have a "right to reply" to the objector(s) comments.

Only planning related comments can be taken into consideration during the decision process.

CONDUCT OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Speakers should not be allowed to engage in discussion with members of the Committee during public speaking or the Committee deliberations, to avoid any risk of accusation of bias or personal interest.

All attendees are reminded of the importance to remain calm, courteous and respectful during the meeting. Please refrain from shouting out and allow people to speak. Any person causing a disruption will be asked to leave the meeting.

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING BOARD

MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Your Name (Please PRINT):-

Meeting at which declaration made:-

Item/Application in which you have an interest:-

Date of Meeting:-

Time Meeting Started:-

Please tick (✓) which type of interest you have in the appropriate box below:-

1. Disclosable Pecuniary

☐

2. Personal

☐

Please give your reason(s) for you Declaring an Interest:-

(Please continue overleaf if necessary)

N.B. It is up to a Member to determine whether to make a Declaration. However, if you should require any assistance, please consult the Legal Adviser or Governance Adviser prior to the meeting.

Signed:-

(When you have completed this form, please hand it to the Governance Adviser.)

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PLANNING BOARD
Thursday 25 June 2026

Present:- Councillor Mault (in the Chair); Councillors Adair, Ahmed, Brent, Currie, Duncan, Elliott, Fisher, Jackson, Lelliott, Tarmey, Taylor and Thorp.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Hussain and Reynolds.

The webcast of the Planning Meeting can be viewed at:-
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items on the agenda to warrant exclusion of the press and public.

9. MATTERS OF URGENCY

There were no matters of urgency for consideration.

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mault declared a pecuniary interest in application RB2025/1576 (installation of 3 No. enclosed padel courts with acoustic mitigation and floodlighting along with relocation of existing cricket nets at Upper Haugh Cricket Club, Harding Avenue, Rawmarsh) on the grounds of being a local business owner and living in the locality. He left the room whilst the item was discussed. Councillor Jackson assumed the Chair in this absence.

11. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 4TH JUNE, 2026

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Planning Regulatory Board held on Thursday, 4th June, 2026 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

12. DEFERMENTS/SITE VISITS

There were no site visits or deferments recommended.

13. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Resolved:- (1) That, on the development proposals now considered, the requisite notices be issued and be made available on the Council's website and that the time limits specified in Sections 91 and 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 apply.

In accordance with the right to speak procedure the following people attended the meeting and spoke about the applications below:-

- Installation of 3 No. enclosed Padel Courts with acoustic mitigation and floodlighting along with relocation of existing cricket nets at Upper Haugh Cricket Club, Harding Avenue, Rawmarsh (RB2025/1576)

Mr. D. Ramsay (Applicant)
Mr. I. Jukes (Supporter)
Mr. J. Rigg (Supporter)
Mr. T. Hyde (Supporter)
Mr. I. Cunningham (Supporter)
Mr. P. Hitchen (Supporter)
Ms. S. Hough (Supporter)
Mr. R. Mighali (Objector)
Mrs. N. Mighali (Objector)
Mr. E. Elliott (Objector)
Ms. T. Clapman (Objector)
Mrs. A. Mannion (Objector)
Mr. M. Mannion (Objector)
Ms. F. Mannion (Objector)
Mrs. K. Johnson (Objector)
Ms. M. Horsbrough (Objector)

Statements were also read out on behalf of:-

Mr. J. Doran (Supporter)
Councillor Baker-Rogers (Supporter)
Councillor Sheppard (Supporter)
Councillor Steele (Objector)
Mr. M. Higgins (Objector)
Mr. Harrison (Objector)

(2) That the Planning Board declare that it was minded to grant application RB2025/1576 and the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the applicant, Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning Board, be authorised to determine the conditions/reasons for the grant of this application. In the event that agreement could not be reached on the application consideration be given to returning it back to the Planning Board.

(Councillor Mault declared a pecuniary interest in application RB2025/1576 (installation of 3 No. enclosed padel courts with acoustic mitigation and floodlighting along with relocation of existing cricket nets at Upper Haugh Cricket Club, Harding Avenue, Rawmarsh) on the grounds of being a local business owner and living in the locality. He left the room whilst the item was discussed)

14. UPDATES

The following update information was discussed:-

Call for Sites for the New Local Plan

The Head of Planning and Building Control advised the Planning Board about how the existing Local Plan covered the period from 2013 to 2028. Following a review of the Core Strategy and wider changes introduced through the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 and associated planning reforms, the Council decided not to progress the Core Strategy Partial Update and instead prepared to develop a new Local Plan.

The new Local Plan was required to identify sufficient land to meet development needs into the 2040's. The Call for Sites, therefore, formed a key enabling step ahead of the formal plan-making stages, which were expected to commence later in 2026.

The Call for Sites opened on 22 June 2026 and ran for 10 weeks until 28 August 2026. This was an early-stage information-gathering exercise to identify potential sites across the borough for a wide range of land uses. It did not allocate land, confirm suitability for development, or grant planning permission. All submissions were to be assessed at a later stage and further information could be requested to understand suitability, scale, deliverability and site constraints.

Submissions were made through the Council's consultation platform (Citizenspace). The Planning Policy team provided support with completing the form and could be contacted by various methods.

The Council sought a broad range of potential sites, including those for housing, employment and commercial uses, retail and leisure, environmental uses, infrastructure and community facilities, renewable energy, waste management and minerals.

Sites could be submitted by any interested party, including landowners, developers, public bodies and members of the public. Previously promoted sites needed to be re-submitted to ensure the Council held current and consistent information.

Residential sites were generally required to be at least 0.25 hectares or capable of delivering five or more dwellings, although some smaller specialist housing opportunities were also considered relevant.

Employment, commercial and retail sites were generally expected to be capable of delivering 500 square metres or more of floorspace.

The Call for Sites was publicised through the Local Plan consultee database.

The Council's Strategic Leadership Team were also informed at its June meeting and Members were briefed via a note prior to the start of the Call for Sites.

Submitted sites were to be published on an online map at a later stage of the plan-making process, with only key site details made public. Personal data was managed in line with data protection requirements.

There were to be three stages of public consultation during the formal 30-month plan-making period. Public feedback on site options and the emerging strategy was anticipated at the second consultation stage in mid-2027, in accordance with the approved Local Development Scheme.

Resolved:- That the updated be received and the contents noted.

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**PLANNING BOARD****DEFERMENTS**

- Planning applications which have been reported on the Planning Board Agenda should not be deferred on request without justification.
- Justification for deferring a decision can arise from a number of matters:-
 - (a) Members may require further information which has not previously been obtained.
 - (b) Members may require further discussions between the applicant and officers over a specific issue.
 - (c) Members may require a visit to the site.
 - (d) Members may delegate to the Assistant Director of the Service the detailed wording of a reason for refusal or a planning condition.
 - (e) Members may wish to ensure that an applicant or objector is not denied the opportunity to exercise the “Right to Speak”.
- Any requests for deferments from Members must be justified in Planning terms and approved by the Board. The reason for deferring must be clearly set out by the Proposing Member and be recorded in the minutes.
- The Assistant Director of Planning, Regeneration and Transport or the applicant may also request the deferment of an application, which must be justified in planning terms and approved by the Board.

SITE VISITS

- Requests for the Planning Board to visit a site come from a variety of sources:- the applicant, objectors, the Parish Council, local Ward Councillors, Board Members or sometimes from the Assistant Director of Planning, Regeneration and Transport.
- Site visits should only be considered necessary if the impact of the proposed development is difficult to assess from the application plans and supporting information provided with the officer's written report; if the application is particularly contentious or the application has an element that cannot be adequately expressed in writing by the applicant or objector. Site visits can cause delay and additional cost to a project or development and should only be used where fully justified.
- The reasons why a site visit is called should be specified by the Board and recorded.
- Normally the visit will be programmed by Democratic Services to precede the next Board meeting (i.e. within three weeks) to minimise any delay.
- The visit will normally comprise of the Members of the Planning Board and appropriate officers. Ward Members are notified of visits within their Ward.
- All applicants and representees are notified of the date and approximate time of the visit. As far as possible Members should keep to the schedule of visits set out by Committee Services on the Board meeting agenda.
- Normally the visit will be accessed by coach. Members and officers are required to observe the site directly when making the visit, although the item will be occasioned by a short presentation by officers as an introduction on the coach before alighting. Ward Members present will be invited on the coach for this introduction.
- On site the Chair and Vice-Chair will be made known to the applicant and representees and will lead the visit allowing questions, views and discussions. The applicant and representees are free to make points on the nature and impact of the development proposal as well as factual matters in relation to the site, however, the purpose of the visit is not to promote a full debate of all the issues involved with the application. Members must conduct the visit as a group in a manner which is open, impartial and equitable and should endeavour to ensure that they hear all points made by the applicant and representees.
- At the conclusion of the visit the Chair should explain the next steps. The applicant and representees should be informed that the decision on the application will normally be made later that day at the Board meeting subject to the normal procedure and that they will be welcome to attend and exercise their "Right to Speak" as appropriate.

**REPORT TO THE PLANNING REGULATORY BOARD
TO BE HELD ON THE 16TH JULY 2026**

The following applications are submitted for your consideration. It is recommended that decisions under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 be recorded as indicated.

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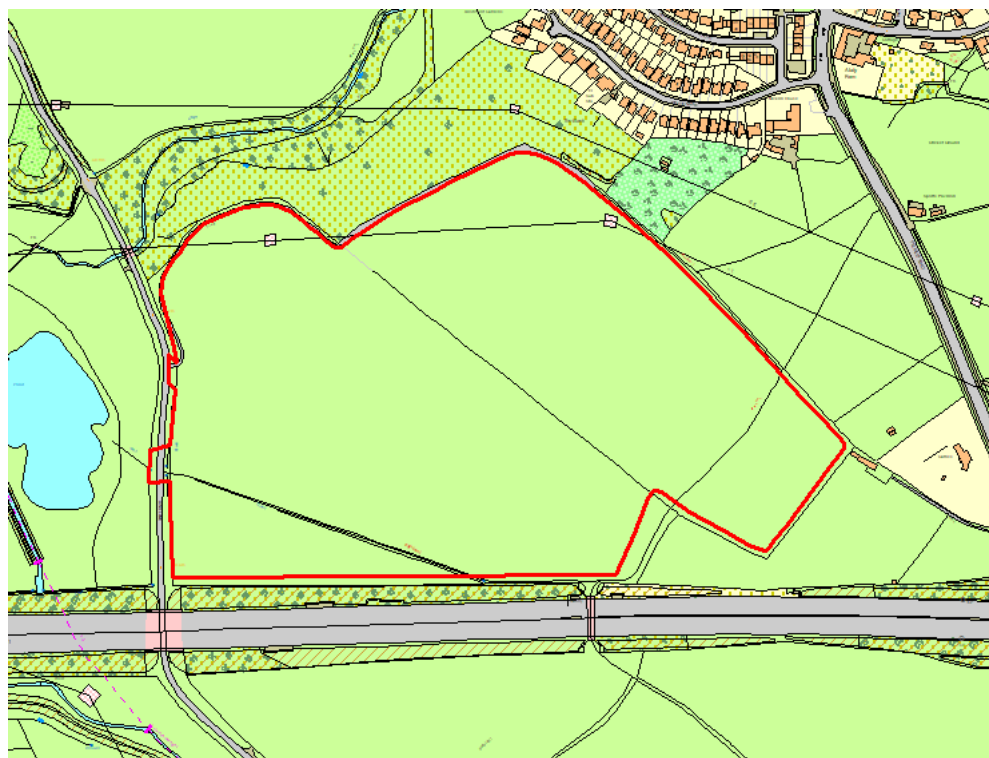
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**REPORT TO THE PLANNING BOARD
TO BE HELD ON THE 16TH JULY 2026**

The following applications are submitted for your consideration. It is recommended that decisions under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 be recorded as indicated.

Application Number	RB2025/1468 - https://rotherham.planportal.co.uk/?id=RB2025/1468
Proposal and Location	Erection of a new 400kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) substation including gantries, internal access roads, a GIS building, parking, drainage, emergency diesel generator, lighting and CCTV, permanent access road from Long Lane, earthworks, landscaping and biodiversity enhancement, and fencing and the permanent realignment of Whiston Footpath 10
Recommendation	A. That the Council enter into an Agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the purposes of securing the following: £24,954 towards Biodiversity Net Gain Monitoring over a period of 30 years B. Consequently upon the satisfactory signing of such an agreement the Council grants permission for the proposed development subject to the conditions set out in this report.

This application is being presented to Planning Board due to the number of objections received.



Site Description & Location

The application site consists of an area of land located off Long Lane, Whiston, Rotherham, set within a predominantly rural environment. The land is currently undeveloped and comprises open fields with grassland coverage, interspersed with areas of existing vegetation. Site levels vary gently across the parcel, reflecting the natural topography of the surrounding landscape, and there are no permanent buildings currently present on the site.

The wider context comprises a blend of agricultural land and established strategic infrastructure, notably including the M1 motorway, which runs in close proximity to the site and forms a prominent feature within the local landscape. The area also contains significant utility infrastructure, including the existing Brinsworth Substation, reinforcing the functional and operational character of the locality. Despite this, the surrounding land remains largely open and rural in appearance, with limited sporadic development.

Long Lane forms the principal local access route adjacent to the site, connecting into the wider road network, while a public right of way crosses the area, contributing to recreational use of the landscape. A Scheduled Ancient Monument is located nearby, representing an important heritage asset within the site's setting.

Background

RB1990/1779 - Outline for erection. of a centre for industrial/employment regeneration – WITHDRAWN

Adjacent application under consideration:

RB2025/1420 - Outline planning application for the construction of up to 170 dwellings with associated landscaping, open space, drainage infrastructure and associated works (all matters reserved except access from Long Lane)

EIA Screening Opinion

The proposed development falls within the description contained at Paragraph 3(a) "Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water" of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environment Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 and meets the criteria set out in column 2 of

the table in Schedule 2 i.e. the area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectares (when

the blue edged plan is considered as well as the red edge plan). However, the Borough Council as the relevant Local Planning Authority has taken into account the criteria set out in Schedule 3 to the Regulations and it is considered that the development would not be likely to have a significant effect on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size and location.

The development has been assessed against the following three factors:

- Major developments of more than a local importance;
- Development in particularly environmentally sensitive or vulnerable locations;
- Developments with unusually complex and potentially hazardous environmental effects.

The proposal is not considered to have more than a local importance due to the type and scale of the development proposed. The capacity of the facility is to serve the local area only and no additional off site works are required within or outside the borough to accommodate the development.

The site does not lie within an environmentally sensitive location as defined in the Regulations such as a SSSI, a National Park, the Broads, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a World Heritage Site or Scheduled Ancient Monument. As such it is considered that the proposal would not have a significant ecological impact within the locality.

The development would not have unusually complex and potentially hazardous environmental effects as the proposed battery technology is well established and mitigation measures are in place/can be conditioned to prevent/manage a fire, as well as any flood water pollution issues. The matters are not of more than local impact.

Therefore, it is the Local Planning Authority's opinion, that the proposed development is not 'EIA development' within the meaning of the 2017 Regulations.

Proposal

The proposal relates to the development of a new 400kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) substation on land off Long Lane, Whiston. The development would establish a new strategic electricity infrastructure facility intended to support the operation and resilience of the wider transmission network. Part of the substation would be contained primarily within a purpose-designed building, allowing the majority of operational equipment to be enclosed and reducing the overall spatial footprint when compared to more conventional outdoor substations.

In addition to the main building, the proposals include associated electrical equipment, gantries and ancillary infrastructure required for the safe and effective operation of the facility. Internal access roads and parking areas would be provided within the site to accommodate operational and maintenance activities, alongside drainage infrastructure, lighting, CCTV and perimeter fencing. Earthworks would be undertaken as necessary to create appropriate development platforms and manage site levels, with all works contained within the defined site boundary.

Access to the site would be taken from Long Lane via a new permanent access arrangement. The proposals also include landscaping and biodiversity enhancement works designed to integrate the development into its surroundings and provide ecological improvements over time. Where necessary, changes to existing public rights of way would be implemented, including the permanent realignment of Whiston Footpath 10, to ensure continued public access while maintaining the safety and functionality of the operational site.

Cut & Fill Operations

The proposed development includes significant earthworks to create a suitable level platform for the new 400kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) substation and associated infrastructure. Cut and fill operations will be undertaken across the site, with material excavated from higher areas (cut) being reused where possible to raise lower ground levels (fill). These works will facilitate the construction of the GIS building, electrical equipment compounds, internal access roads, drainage infrastructure and the permanent access road from Long Lane, while ensuring appropriate site gradients and ground stability.

The earthworks strategy is also expected to support the wider landscaping and biodiversity enhancement proposals included within the development. Reused fill material may be incorporated into engineered landforms, screening bunds and landscaped areas to help integrate the substation into the surrounding landscape and assist with surface water management. The cut and fill approach aims to balance material movements across the site where practicable, reducing the need for imported or exported material and minimising construction-related impact.

Applicant's Green belt Assessment

The Scheme is located within the Green Belt but is assessed as being on grey belt land, which does not significantly contribute to the primary Green Belt purposes outlined in the NPPF. The assessment under Paragraph 155 of the NPPF demonstrates that the Scheme does not represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt and it is not necessary to give any weight to any harm to the Green Belt including to its openness. It is also not necessary to demonstrate very special circumstances for development of the Site.

In the event that this primary case is not accepted the benefits of the Scheme in any event constitute “very special circumstances”, which justify development in the Green Belt.

Noise Impact Assessment

The National Grid Electricity Transmission Environmental Engineering Team have undertaken a noise impact assessment for operational noise to accompany a full planning application for the Scheme of the new Long Lane 400kV Substation, approximately 1 km northeast of the M1 Junction 33. The

main noise sources of the Scheme are two SGTs, one Shunt Reactor, and power quality filter equipment indicatively consisting of a Static Compensator. Additional substation elements, such as circuit breakers, disconnectors or switches have been scoped out of this assessment.

An unattended noise survey was undertaken at one location considered representative of the most exposed receptors between 20th June 2025 to 28th June 2025.

A 3D noise model, without acoustic mitigation, was created to predict noise levels from the operation of the Scheme to Receptors. The assessment is considered in general accordance with BS 4142, to evaluate the potential impacts.

Without mitigation, negligible impacts are predicted for all Receptors, as all rating levels are below the representative background level. It is therefore recommended that enclosures are not required.

Given the context in which the negative rating level over background sound level calculated from the BS 4142 assessment at all Receptors is predicted, it is considered that an adverse impact from the site is not likely for any of the identified Receptors.

Flood Risk Assessment

Hydraulic modelling undertaken in support of this flood risk assessment has established that due to the elevated position of the Proposed Development relative to the floodplain it is not at risk from fluvial or surface water flooding for all events up to and including the 0.1% AEP plus climate change.

Hydraulic modelling also demonstrates that the Proposed Development does not encroach into the Canklow Washlands or the 0.1% AEP flood extent, consequently compensatory storage for encroachment into a flood storage area does not need to be provided.

Earthworks in the south of the Site, to form the elevated platform on which the Proposed Development will be located, do encroach into an overland flow route for water draining from a small catchment to the south of the M1. However hydraulic modelling demonstrates that flood water displaced by these earthworks does not result in increased flood depths or extents off-site for all events up to and including the 0.1% AEP plus climate change and hence there is a low risk of the Proposed Development exacerbating fluvial flood risk to third parties.

To mitigate the impact of the increase in impermeable area on surface water flood sources, the Proposed Development surface water drainage strategy (SWDS) demonstrates how sufficient attenuation storage can be provided within the development to limit discharge rates to greenfield runoff rates. Inclusion of these proposed discharges within the hydraulic model demonstrates negligible impacts on flood depths in the immediate vicinity of

the discharge point with no consequences off-site. With the inclusion of the SWDS there is a low risk of the Proposed Development exacerbating surface water flood risk to third parties.

The presence of existing flood risk on Long Lane does present a risk of the Proposed Development being cutoff during fluvial and/or surface water flood events. However, the substation will be unmanned, with visits to site only required for routine maintenance, inspection and any necessary repair works. These works can be planned / deferred to avoid dispatching staff to site during times of flood. Welfare facilities will be available on site should staff need to wait until egress from the site is safe.

Agricultural Land Classification Report

The majority of land across the surveyed area, as shown in Appendix B of this ALC Report, is non-BMV land (Grades 3b and Grade 4), which accounts for 94% of the area surveyed (16.4 ha). Grade 3b land is moderate quality agricultural land and Grade 4 land is poor quality agricultural land.

Grade 2 BMV land (very good quality agricultural land), accounts for 1.0 ha (6%). 6.1.3

The whole Site was predominantly limited by soil droughtiness.

It is recommended a detailed Soil Management Plan (SMP) is prepared postplanning consent and implemented during construction and operation to protect agricultural land quality and soil resources, ensuring that good practice measures are implemented for soil stripping, stockpiling and reinstatement. An Outline SMP (OSMP) (see Appendix T of the Long Lane New 400 kV Substation Environmental Appraisal Report) has been prepared and submitted alongside this report.

Cultural Heritage Desk-Based Assessment

This DBA has identified and assessed the significance of known heritage assets present within the Site and 1km study area. There are no designated heritage assets located within the Site.

The baseline established that human activity has occurred within the vicinity of the Site from the Prehistoric period onwards, with a focus on settlement and farming at Canklow Hill in the Iron-Age to Romano-British periods, and at Whiston from the Medieval period. The Site's historical land use and character was agricultural and still is today. This report anticipates that there would be no significant impacts (either physically or through changes to setting) to known designated and non-designated heritage assets, from the Scheme. No visible archaeological features have been identified within the Site. However, based on the findings of this DBA, there is potential, albeit low, for Prehistoric flint finds as well as buried Iron Age, RomanoBritish and Medieval features or deposits within the Site.

Based on the findings of this DBA and following advice from the archaeological advisor for Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (South Yorkshire Archaeology Service), it is recommended that further investigation in the form of a geophysical survey is undertaken initially, potentially with evaluation trenching to follow, dependent on the results, to establish the presence and significance of any undiscovered archaeological remains. This would enable a more conclusive understanding of the impact of the Scheme on the archaeological resource. A written scheme of archaeological investigation/evaluation should be agreed with the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service prior to the commencement of groundworks.

Following the submission of the application a geophysical survey of the Site was undertaken and the finding shared with South Yorkshire Archaeology Service.

Development Plan Allocation and Policy

The Core Strategy was adopted by the Council on the 10th September 2014 and forms part of Rotherham's Local Plan together with the Sites and Policies Document which was adopted by the Council on the 27th June 2018.

The application site is allocated for Green Belt purposes in the Local Plan. For the purposes of determining this application the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

Local Plan policy(s):

- CS4 - Green Belt.
- CS20 'Biodiversity & Geodiversity'
- CS21 'Landscape'
- CS22 'Greenspace'
- CS25 'Dealing with Flood Risk'
- CS27 'Community Health and Safety'
- CS28 'Sustainable Design'
- CS30 'Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Generation'

Sites and Policies Document:

- SP2 – Development in the Green Belt
- SP16 'Land Identified for Industrial and Business Uses'
- SP32 'Green Infrastructure and Landscape'
- SP33 - Conserving & enhancing the natural environment
- SP38 'Protecting Green Space'
- SP33 'Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment'
- SP47 'Understanding and Managing Flood Risk and Drainage'
- SP52 'Pollution Control'
- SP54 'Contaminated and Unstable Land'
- SP55 'Design Principles'
- SP56 'Car Parking Layout'
- SP 69 - Utilities Infrastructure

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) - On 6 March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched this planning practice guidance web-based resource. This was accompanied by a Written Ministerial Statement which includes a list of the previous planning practice guidance documents cancelled when this site was launched.

National Planning Policy Framework: The revised NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It sits within the plan-led system, stating at paragraph 2 that "Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise" and that it is "a material consideration in planning decisions".

The Local Plan policies referred to above are consistent with the NPPF and have been given due weight in the determination of this application.

Rotherham Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents:

- Air Quality and Emissions
- Transport Assessments, Travel Plans and Parking Standards

Publicity

The application has been advertised by way of site notices along with individual neighbour notification letters to adjacent properties. 345 letters of objection have been received. One letter of support has been received.

A petition against the proposal has been received, signed by 61 people

The objections include letters from Thurgroft Parish Council, Treeton Parish Council, Aston Parish Council, Uley Parish Council, Conisborough parish Council, Whiston Parish Council and Killamarsh Parish Council

The objections submitted relate to the following:

1. Green Belt Concerns

- The site is designated Green Belt.
- Many objectors reject the applicant's use of the term "grey belt".
- Commenters argue that the development would cause permanent loss of open countryside and damage the rural character of the area.
- Many state that "very special circumstances" have not been demonstrated.

2. Flood Risk

- Long Lane is frequently described as an area already affected by surface water flooding.
- Concerns that the development will increase runoff and worsen flooding.
- Doubts are raised about the effectiveness of the proposed drainage measures.

3. Traffic and Highway Safety

- Significant concern about construction traffic, including HGVs and abnormal loads.
- Long Lane is regarded as unsuitable for heavy traffic.
- Concerns about congestion on local roads, the M1, M18 and nearby junctions.
- Safety concerns for pedestrians, horse riders and other road users.

4. Environmental and Ecological Impact

- Repeated criticism that a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been carried out.
- Concerns regarding impacts on wildlife, habitats and biodiversity.
- Objections mention harm to birds, bats, badgers and other protected species.

5. Relationship to Whitestone Solar Farm

- A large number of comments state that the substation is enabling infrastructure for the proposed Whitestone Solar Farm.
- Many say the applications should be considered together rather than separately.
- Concerns about cumulative impacts with the solar farm, housing developments and other energy infrastructure.

6. Public Rights of Way

- Concerns about the diversion and long-term closure of Whiston Footpath 10.

- Many objectors believe insufficient information has been provided regarding alternative routes and safety.

7. Visual Impact and Community Amenity

- Concerns about visual intrusion, industrialisation of countryside, noise and lighting.
- Loss of views, green space and separation between settlements are frequently cited

The letter in support states that:

- This proposal is helping to protect the environment by making our energy supply network connect to much needed clean green energy by helping reduce the reliance on gas.
- The Brinsworth B substation appears to be closely linked to the proposals for Whitestone Solar Farm, which I and I'm sure a large number of residents across Rotherham and Rother Valley (and even as far as Doncaster).

Consultations

RMBC – Transportation Infrastructure Service: No objections subject to conditions, following the receipt of amended plans

RMBC – Environmental Health: No objections subject to relevant conditions, agrees with the findings of the submitted noise assessment.

RMBC - Trees & Woodlands: No objections subject to conditions

Landscape Consultant on Behalf of RMBC: After review of the LVA with the applicants Landscape Architect, the changes made by the applicant are sufficient enough to approve the LVA with respect to the proposals.

RMBC - Public Rights of Way Officer: No objections subject to appropriate diversion taking place.

RMBC – Land Contamination: No objection subject to standard land contamination conditions

Canal & River Trust: No Comments

South Yorkshire Archaeology Service: No objection following additional survey subject to relevant conditions

RMBC Ecology: No Objections subject to conditions, following additional bird surveys have taken place

Yorkshire Water: No objections subject to condition

Environment Agency: No objection subject to informative

South Yorkshire Police Architectural Liaison Officer: Recommends informative

Sheffield Area Geology Trust: No objections

South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority: No comment received

Active Travel England: No objection subject to standing advice

South Yorkshire Digital Infrastructure Team: No objections

Ministry of Defence: No objections

Commercial Decarbonisation Officer: From both a climate change and energy decarbonisation perspective, this project is a high-impact enabler of net zero, delivering critical infrastructure for renewable integration and system resilience. Its design choices (GIS, SF₆-free, biodiversity net gain) reflect best practice in sustainable engineering. The planning balance strongly favours approval, provided mitigation measures are rigorously implemented.

Trans Pennine Trail: No objections

South Yorkshire Fire Safety: No objections subject to informative letter to be sent with any decision, relating to access, water supply and sprinklers.

Appraisal

Where an application is made to a local planning authority for planning permission.....In dealing with such an application the authority shall have regard to -

- (a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application,
- (b) any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and
- (c) any other material considerations. - S. 70 (2) TCPA '90.

If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise - S.38 (6) PCPA 2004.

The main considerations in the determination of the application are:

- Principle of Development
- Visual amenity of the landscape
- Loss of Agricultural Land
- Ecology
- Biodiversity Net Gain

- Tree Issues
- Drainage
- Archaeology and setting of Ancient Monument & Listed Buildings
- The impact on local amenity from noise and disturbance
- Design considerations
- Highway matters
- Land Contamination
- Public Rights of Way
- Other Issues

Principle of Development

Grey Belt

In respect of whether the site constitutes 'grey belt' land the NPPF states: "For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. 'Grey belt' excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development."

Firstly, the site is not considered to be previously developed land, as defined in the NPPF, but is 'any other land'. In respect of the 'purposes' of the Green Belt, (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143, these are:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and

To constitute 'grey belt' the development must not conflict with any of these purposes.

Purpose (a) – Sprawl:

The Framework does not contain a definition of what might constitute 'sprawl'. Concluding on whether the development would conflict with Purpose (a) depends on the relationship of the site with the large built-up area. In this instance the site does not lie adjacent to a large built-up area, nor does it form part of an existing settlement edge. Instead, it is located within open countryside and visually associated with existing infrastructure, including the nearby Brinsworth Substation and the M1 corridor. Development of a substation on this land would be physically and visually discrete from nearby settlements and would not represent an outward extension of any large built-up area.

Accordingly, the site makes only a limited contribution to Purpose (a). Development here would not amount to sprawl.

Purpose (b) – Merging of towns:

In this instance, there would be a loss of Green Belt land between Whiston (Part of Rotherham conurbation) and the Village of Treeton. This would result in a substantial reduction in the gap between these settlements, though significant open land would remain between the sites. However, Treeton falls within the definition of a village and can not be considered a town, as such the merging of towns can not occur.

It is noted that further to the South of Treeton lies the more substantial settlement of Aston cum Aughton, which could be considered fall within the definition of a Town. A separation distance of over 2km would still exist between the application site and Aston cum Aughton as such it could not be considered the proposed development would result strongly in the merging of two towns.

Purpose (d) – Setting of historic towns:

There are no historic towns in the vicinity of the appeal sites, and as such Purpose 'd' is not compromised.

In terms of Footnote 7, this states: "The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 194) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change."

Although the applicant has asserted that there are no strong reasons for refusal under Footnote 7 and that the land should therefore be regarded as Grey Belt, the definition of Grey Belt also requires consideration of whether the application of Footnote 7 policies would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting the specific development proposed. In this case, parts of the site are affected by flood risk and the associated policies within the NPPF are therefore engaged. However, the submitted Flood Risk Assessment demonstrates that the development has been designed to respond to those constraints through the siting of infrastructure, surface water management measures and other mitigation. Subject to the recommended planning conditions securing those measures, the development would be safe for its lifetime and would not increase flood risk elsewhere. Furthermore, whilst the site is close to an Ancient Monument and a number of Listed Building within Whiston, the proposal does not harm their settings.

Accordingly, whilst the setting of Heritage Assets and flood risk considerations have influenced the design of the proposal and require mitigation and planning controls, they do not provide a strong reason for refusing the development. Nor do they amount to a strong policy restriction such that the Footnote 7 exclusion within the Grey Belt definition is engaged. The flood risk

policies can therefore be satisfied in this case and do not prevent the site from being considered Grey Belt land for the purposes of the NPPF.

Paragraph 155 states: “The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where all the following apply:

- a. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;
- b. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;
- c. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework; and
- d. Where applicable the development proposed meets the ‘Golden Rules’ requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 below.”

Paragraph 155(a) - The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan

In this case, following the assessment above, the site is considered to constitute Grey Belt Land and given its scale, location and the extent and position with the Borough, the proposed development would not fundamentally undermine the remaining Green Belt.

Paragraph 155(b) Whether there is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed

Paragraph 155b requires there to be a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed. This is taken to be an unmet need across the Borough of the development proposed (for example, does the Council have sufficient land for housing in the Borough), and not a question of whether there is a need for this specific development at this location.

Paragraph 168 of the amended NPPF goes on to state that:

“When determining planning applications for all forms of renewable and low carbon energy developments and their associated infrastructure, local planning authorities should:

- a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and give significant weight to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and the proposal’s contribution to a net zero future;
- b) recognise that small-scale and community-led projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; ...”

This situation is also recognised at a local level by Rotherham Borough Council. In 2019, the local authority declared a climate emergency and is now fully committed to supporting measures to work with partners to reduce carbon emissions. These measures arguably include considering proposals for new infrastructure associated with renewable energy installations such as that proposed for within this current application.

Demand for electricity is expected to increase significantly as homes, businesses and transport systems transition away from fossil fuels and towards low-carbon energy sources. This supports the UK Government's commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, which requires the decarbonisation of the energy system and greater reliance on renewable electricity generation.

Growth in offshore wind generation in Scotland and the North East of England, together with increasing power transfers between the UK and European energy networks, is placing additional pressure on the existing transmission system. To maintain a secure, reliable and efficient electricity supply, National Grid has identified the need for significant network reinforcement through its Great Grid Upgrade programme, a major investment initiative designed to connect and transport increasing volumes of clean energy across the country.

As part of the Great Grid Upgrade, National Grid is proposing a new 400kV substation at Long Lane, Brinsworth, and the uprating of existing transmission lines between Brinsworth, Chesterfield and High Marnham from 275kV to 400kV. Operating at the higher voltage will increase the network's capacity to transfer electricity from the north of England to the Midlands, supporting the distribution of offshore wind generation and contributing to the UK's net zero ambitions.

The NPPF clearly identifies in its latest version that Local Planning Authorities should not require applicants to demonstrate the need for renewable and low carbon energy and significant weight should be given to the benefits and its contribution to net zero.

Moreover, by their nature Substations need to be positioned to fit in with existing electricity infrastructure, limiting their potential locations. In this case it also excludes any potential sites outside of the Green Belt as none are available close to the existing substation to accommodate the size of infrastructure required.

With the above circumstances in mind the Council considers that this substation to support the move to renewable forms of Energy within Rotherham would therefore meet an unmet need.

Paragraph 155(c) - Whether the developments proposed would be in a sustainable location.

This cross references paragraphs 110 and 115 of the NPPF. Those 2 paragraphs are concerned principally with patterns of growth, choice of transport modes, safe access and impacts on the transport network. The thrust of the advice relates to reducing the need to travel, especially by private car.

In this instance the substation is designed to be unmanned with engineers visiting occasionally to ensure the plants are safe and working efficiently.

As such there is no conflict with 155(c).

Paragraph 155(d) - Whether the 'Golden Rules' apply

The 'Golden Rules' do not apply in this case since they address major housing developments (developments of 10 or more dwellings).

Green Belt Conclusion

The assessment above concludes that the developments is on Grey Belt land and represents not inappropriate development within the Green Belt and is therefore acceptable in principle.

Furthermore, even if it were to be concluded that the proposal did not represent an appropriate type of Grey Belt development, very special circumstances are considered to exist by virtue of the need for important National Grid infrastructure to justify the development within the Green Belt as per paragraph 153 of the NPPF.

Visual amenity of the landscape

The proposal would introduce a new substation complex within an area that already contains existing electricity transmission infrastructure and is influenced by the presence of the M1 corridor, the urban edge of Rotherham and Whiston, and associated utility infrastructure. The site lies within the Coalfield Tributary Valleys – Canklow (LCA 5C) and Rother Valley Floor (LCA 6) Landscape Character Areas, where the existing landscape is characterised by a mixture of agricultural land, transport infrastructure, woodland blocks and utility installations. In this context, whilst the proposal would result in the permanent loss of a section of agricultural farmland and hedgerow, together with the introduction of engineered landforms associated with the proposed cut and fill operations, the development would be viewed alongside existing pylons and transmission infrastructure and would not fundamentally or harmfully alter the wider landscape character of the area.

At a local level, the development would inevitably introduce built infrastructure and associated earthworks into an agricultural field parcel, resulting in a degree of change to the immediate landscape character. The cut and fill operations are required to establish a suitable development platform for the substation and associated infrastructure and would alter existing ground levels within parts of the site. However, these earthworks would be contained

within the application boundary and would form part of a comprehensive landscape strategy incorporating new planting and landform integration. Furthermore, the site's relationship with existing transmission infrastructure, together with the adjacent M1 motorway and urban influences to the north and west, reduces the sensitivity of the receiving landscape to this type of development. The wider landscape framework, including established woodland to the north, roadside vegetation along Long Lane, and the wooded motorway embankment to the south, would remain largely intact and continue to provide containment to the development.

The submitted landscape strategy incorporates a range of mitigation measures designed to soften the appearance of both the substation infrastructure and the associated engineered landforms created through the cut and fill process. These measures include the retention of existing vegetation where possible, reinstatement of disturbed boundary features, new species-rich hedgerow planting, woodland planting along the southern boundary, and areas of species-rich grassland. The proposed earthworks also provide opportunities for landform modelling that will assist in integrating the development into the surrounding landscape. Over time, these landscape enhancements would strengthen the site's vegetated framework and assist in filtering views of the development from surrounding receptors, particularly from nearby public rights of way and residential properties.

In visual terms, the most notable effects would be experienced by users of the adjacent public rights of way, particularly Whiston Footpaths 10 and 12, where the proximity of the development would result in direct views of the substation infrastructure and associated regraded landform. Whilst these views would represent a noticeable change to the visual experience, they would be experienced within a landscape that already contains prominent pylons, transmission infrastructure and other utility features. As mitigation planting establishes and matures, the visual influence of both the development and the associated earthworks would progressively reduce, with hedgerow and woodland planting providing increased filtering and screening of the operational substation.

Residential receptors are generally well screened by existing topography, woodland and hedgerow vegetation. Views from properties to the south, including those around Guilthwaite, are substantially limited by the M1 embankment and associated vegetation, whilst views from Whiston are restricted by intervening woodland and the site's landform. Consequently, the development would have a limited influence on the visual amenity of the majority of nearby residents, and where views are available they would be experienced as part of an established infrastructure corridor rather than as an isolated feature within an undeveloped countryside setting.

Overall, having regard to the site's baseline context, the existing presence of electricity transmission infrastructure, the proposed cut and fill operations, the landscape mitigation measures and the contained nature of available views, the proposal is considered to give rise to localised adverse landscape and visual effects but would not result in significant harm to the wider landscape

character of the area. The engineered landforms associated with the earthworks would be integrated into the site's landscape strategy and, with the implementation of the proposed planting scheme, landscape and visual effects would reduce over time as mitigation planting matures and the development becomes more assimilated within the surrounding landscape framework.

Loss of Agricultural Land

Policy CS23 'Valuing the Historic Environment, Natural Assets and Landscapes' of the Rotherham Local Plan requires the protection and management of natural assets, including soil resources. This aligns with Paragraph 187 of the NPPF (December 2024), which seeks to safeguard the long-term potential of best and most versatile agricultural land.

The application site extends to approximately 18ha and is currently in agricultural use. Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) evidence indicates that the majority of the site (approximately 94%) comprises lower quality agricultural land (Grades 3b and 4), with only a small proportion (around 6%, approximately 1ha) identified as Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land (Grade 2).

The proposal would result in the permanent loss of agricultural land. However, the loss would predominantly affect land of lower agricultural quality, with only a limited extent of BMV land impacted.

Paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024) seeks to protect and enhance soils and advises that significant development of BMV agricultural land should be avoided where possible. In this case, the extent of BMV land affected is limited and is not considered to represent a significant loss in the context of the overall site area.

Accordingly, whilst some loss of agricultural land is acknowledged, the proposal is considered to accord with the aims of the NPPF, and the impacts are acceptable in principle, subject to the overall planning balance.

Ecology

Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (amongst other things) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.

Policy CS20 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' states: "The Council will conserve and enhance Rotherham's natural environment. Biodiversity and geodiversity resources will be protected and measures will be taken to enhance these resources ..."

Policy SP33 'Conserving the Natural Environment' states: "Development will be expected to enhance biodiversity and geodiversity on-site with the aim of contributing to wider biodiversity and geodiversity delivery..."

Policy SP35 'Protected and Priority Species' states: "Planning permission for development likely to have a direct or indirect adverse impact on the following will only be granted if they can demonstrate that there are no alternative sites with less or no harmful impacts that could be developed and that mitigation and / or compensation measures can be put in place that enable the status of the species to be conserved or enhanced.

- a. Protected species;
- b. Species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity;
- c. Species prioritised for action within the Rotherham Biodiversity Action Plan;
- d. Populations of species associated with statutorily protected sites.

Measures to mitigate and, or compensate for, any impact must be agreed prior to development commencing and should be in place by the time development is brought into use."

The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and subsequent protected species surveys which establish the baseline ecological conditions of the site and surrounding area. The site comprises predominantly intensively managed arable land with small areas of improved grassland, hedgerows and a dry ditch, and is therefore of generally low intrinsic ecological value. However, the site is located adjacent to Whiston Meadows Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and areas of woodland and hedgerows which qualify as Habitats of Principal Importance, and these features are material considerations in the assessment of the proposals.

The submitted surveys identify potential for protected and notable species including breeding birds, bats, badger, reptiles and amphibians. In particular, the site is assessed as having high suitability for breeding birds and for commuting and foraging bats associated with hedgerows and adjacent woodland features, although no roosting features were identified within the site itself. Targeted surveys have confirmed bat activity to be relatively low and largely associated with linear landscape features, while great crested newt surveys returned negative results and habitat suitability was assessed as poor. Overall, subject to appropriate mitigation, the ecological constraints associated with protected species are considered to be manageable.

The Ecology Report recommends a range of mitigation and precautionary measures including timing restrictions for vegetation clearance to protect nesting birds, ecological supervision where necessary, protection of retained habitats, and the implementation of measures to control invasive non-native species. These measures are capable of being secured through planning conditions, including a Construction Environmental Management Plan for Biodiversity (CEMP: Biodiversity), which will ensure that impacts during construction are appropriately avoided or minimised.

In addition, the Council's ecologist raises no objection to the proposed development subject to the imposition of conditions securing mitigation,

enhancement measures and biodiversity net gain delivery. Subject to these controls, it is considered that the proposal would comply with relevant local and national policy in respect of conserving and enhancing biodiversity and would not result in an unacceptable impact on designated sites, priority habitats or protected species.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The proposals are supported by a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment undertaken using the statutory biodiversity metric. The baseline site is dominated by low distinctiveness habitats, primarily arable land, with a calculated baseline value of approximately 35.07 habitat units and 9.17 hedgerow units. The development proposals include a comprehensive package of habitat creation and enhancement measures, including species-rich grassland, scrub, woodland planting, ponds and new hedgerows.

The submitted metric demonstrates that the scheme would deliver a substantial net gain in biodiversity, significantly exceeding the statutory minimum requirement of 10% set out in the Environment Act 2021. The assessment identifies an uplift of approximately +158.67% in habitat units and +38.68% in hedgerow units, representing a significant enhancement in ecological value across the site. This level of gain reflects the transition from low value arable land to a more diverse mosaic of habitats, including medium and higher distinctiveness habitats.

The Council's ecologist supports the findings of the BNG assessment and confirms that the proposed habitat creation measures and metric outputs are acceptable, subject to securing delivery and long-term management. In accordance with statutory requirements, a Biodiversity Gain Plan will be required prior to commencement, alongside a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) to secure the management and monitoring of habitats for a minimum period of 30 years.

As the scheme involves the creation of significant new habitat, that needs to be maintained for a minimum of 30 years, the Council has agreed an appropriate monitoring fee with the applicant of £24,954. This will ensure that appropriate monitoring of the newly created habitat is undertaken and that the cost burden of such extensive monitoring is not unduly placed upon the Council.

Additional biodiversity enhancements are also proposed, including installation of bat and bird boxes, habitat piles and native planting, which will further contribute to biodiversity improvements on site. These measures are consistent with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework to secure measurable gains for biodiversity and integrate ecological enhancements into development design.

Tree Issues

Policy CS21 'Landscape' states: "New development will be required to safeguard and enhance the quality, character, distinctiveness and amenity value of the borough's landscapes..."

Policy SP32 'Green Infrastructure and Landscape' states: "The Council will require proposals for all new development to support the protection, enhancement, creation and management of multi-functional green infrastructure assets and networks including landscape, proportionate to the scale and impact of the development..."

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has been submitted in support of the application, which identifies a total of 12 arboricultural features within and adjacent to the site, comprising individual trees, groups, hedgerows and a woodland. These features are largely of low to moderate quality, with the majority categorised as Category C, alongside a small number of higher value Category A and B features.

The proposed development has been designed to largely avoid direct impacts on higher value trees. No Tree Preservation Orders or ancient woodland are present within the site, and no incursions into Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of retained trees are anticipated.

The primary arboricultural impact relates to the removal of hedgerows to facilitate development, with approximately 481.7 metres of predominantly low-quality Category C hedgerow to be removed. The AIA concludes that this represents a low impact on the overall arboricultural value and visual amenity of the site.

Mitigation is proposed through replacement planting, including new hedgerows and woodland as part of the wider landscape scheme, which would offset losses and contribute to biodiversity enhancement.

The Council's Tree Service has reviewed the submission and raises no objection in principle, subject to conditions securing a detailed Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) and Tree Protection Plan (TPP) to ensure retained trees are adequately protected during construction.

Subject to the imposition of these conditions, the proposal is considered to accord with relevant local and national policy in respect of tree protection, landscaping and biodiversity.

Drainage

Policy CS25 'Dealing with Flood Risk' states proposals will be supported which ensure that new development is not subject to unacceptable levels of flood risk, does not result in increased flood risk elsewhere and, where possible, achieves reductions in flood risk overall. Furthermore, policy SP47 'Understanding and Managing Flood Risk and Drainage' states the Council

will expect proposals to demonstrate an understanding of the flood route of surface water flows through the proposed development; control surface water run-off as near to its source as possible through a sustainable drainage approach to surface water management (SuDS) and consider the possibility of providing flood resilience works and products for properties to minimise the risk of internal flooding problems. These policies are supported by paragraphs 163 and 165 of the NPPF.

A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Surface Water Management Strategy have been submitted in support of the application, assessing all sources of flood risk including fluvial, surface water, groundwater, reservoirs and drainage infrastructure. The site is predominantly located within Flood Zone 1, with only limited areas at greater risk located at the periphery of the site. The proposed development platform itself is located wholly within Flood Zone 1.

The FRA concludes that the proposed development will be at low risk of flooding from all sources. While parts of the wider site are subject to fluvial and surface water flood risk, the infrastructure has been designed on an elevated platform, ensuring it remains unaffected even during extreme flood events, including allowances for climate change

With regard to flood risk elsewhere, detailed hydraulic modelling confirms that the development will not increase flood risk to third parties. Although some displacement of floodwater may occur as a result of site earthworks, this would remain confined within the site and would not result in increased flood levels or extents beyond the site boundary.

In terms of drainage, a sustainable drainage strategy has been proposed in accordance with national guidance and local policy. Surface water runoff will be attenuated on-site and discharged at greenfield rates, ensuring that the development does not increase runoff or exacerbate flood risk. Attenuation measures, including on-site storage and controlled discharge, will accommodate extreme rainfall events with an appropriate allowance for climate change.

Whilst there is potential for access to the site to be affected during extreme flood events, the facility will be unmanned with only occasional maintenance visits. Appropriate operational measures, including a flood preparedness plan, will ensure safe access arrangements can be managed.

Overall, the proposal is considered to appropriately manage flood risk and surface water drainage and would not increase flood risk on or off site. The development is therefore considered acceptable in flood risk terms and accords with the requirements of the NPPF and Local Plan policies relating to flood risk and drainage.

Archaeology and setting of Ancient Monument & Listed Buildings

Local Plan Policy CS23 'Valuing the Historic Environment' states that: "Rotherham's historic environment will be conserved, enhanced and

managed, in accordance with the principles set out below (which includes amongst other things that): d. Proposals will be supported which protect the heritage significance and setting of locally identified heritage assets such as buildings of local architectural or historic interest, locally important archaeological sites and parks and gardens of local interest.”

Policy SP 43 ‘Conserving and Recording the Historic Environment’ states that: “All proposals affecting a heritage asset will require careful assessment as to the impact and appropriateness of development to ensure that the historic, architectural, natural history, or landscape value of the asset and / or its setting are safeguarded and conserved, and any conflict avoided or minimised in accordance with the policies of this Local Plan.”

The Site is located within an area of demonstrated archaeological potential, with evidence of human activity dating from the Prehistoric period through to the Medieval and post-Medieval periods. Desk-based assessment and supporting survey data indicate the presence of potential sub-surface remains, including elements of an Iron Age to Romano-British field system and associated enclosures, alongside dispersed prehistoric flint finds. Whilst no designated heritage assets are located within the Site boundary, a range of designated and non-designated assets are present within the wider study area, contributing to a landscape of long-term agricultural and settlement activity.

In accordance with national policy, the significance of heritage assets derives not only from their physical fabric but also from their setting and the way in which this setting contributes to their understanding and appreciation. The surrounding historic landscape, characterised by agricultural fields, historic routeways, and the settlement of Whiston, forms an important backdrop to nearby heritage assets. This includes Scheduled Monuments such as Blue Man’s Bower and listed buildings within Whiston Conservation Area, whose significance is partly derived from their rural context and historical continuity of land use.

The proposed development has the potential to result in direct impacts on buried archaeological remains through ground disturbance associated with construction activities, including foundations, services, and earthworks. Such impacts may lead to the partial or total loss of archaeological deposits and features, resulting in harm to their evidential and historical value. The archaeological advisor has identified that remains of regional significance may be present within the Site and could experience substantial harm if not appropriately mitigated.

However, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), this harm can be appropriately managed through a programme of archaeological mitigation. This will include a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), incorporating staged evaluation, targeted excavation where necessary, and preservation by record. This approach ensures that any loss of archaeological resource is offset by the creation of a comprehensive archive and improved understanding of the Site’s historic environment.

In terms of the impact on the Setting of Designated Heritage Assets. The assessment concludes that the proposed development would not result in substantial harm to the setting of nearby designated heritage assets. Intervisibility between the Site and key assets is limited due to topography, including intervening ridge lines and vegetation, which restrict views from Whiston Conservation Area and associated listed buildings. As such, the Site makes a negligible contribution to the significance of these assets through their setting.

For Scheduled Monuments such as Blue Man's Bower, the Site is not considered to form part of their functional or experiential setting, and therefore long-term impacts on their significance are limited. Nevertheless, temporary construction-related effects, including increased traffic, noise, and activity, may cause short-term changes to the way these assets are experienced. These impacts are reversible and, with appropriate management measures such as traffic routing and construction controls, are unlikely to be significant.

Overall, the proposed development is expected to result in less than substantial harm to the historic environment, primarily through potential impacts on below-ground archaeological remains. The significance of this harm will be reduced through appropriate mitigation secured by planning condition. Effects on the setting of designated heritage assets are limited and largely neutral, with only temporary and minor adverse effects during construction. The scheme is therefore considered to be compliant with relevant heritage policy, subject to the implementation of mitigation measures and further archaeological investigation.

The impact on local amenity from noise and disturbance

Core Strategy Policy CS27 states that: "Development will be supported which protects, promotes or contributes to securing a healthy and safe environment..." Local Plan Policy SP55 Pollution Control indicates that the Council will seek to minimise the adverse effects of nuisance, disturbance and pollution associated with development and transport. Planning permission will not be granted for new development which is likely to give rise unacceptable noise or light pollution.

The location is predominantly surrounded by agricultural fields, with the M1 located approximately 250m to the south. The nearest residential receptors are located on Whiston Vale approximately 200m to the northeast and Garnes a residential property located approximately 250m east of the site. The proposed substation will operate at voltages up to 400kV, with equipment including two Supergrid Transformers (SGTs), a shunt reactor, a power quality filter, circuit breakers, disconnectors, relay room and a Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) control building.

The Appendix P Noise Impact Assessment has been carried out using the methodology as contained within BS4142:2014+A1:2019. The assessment includes the main noise sources of the scheme which are the two Supergrid

Transformers (SGTs), a shunt reactor, and power quality equipment. The specific sound level used in this assessment for the SGTs is based on 102.5% voltage and 50% load. Typically, the transformers will operate at a lower voltage and load and, subsequently, with a lower sound power level. However, there is the potential for this load to be exceeded in emergencies/exceptional circumstances.

The Noise Impact Assessment concludes that no additional mitigation measures are necessary as the calculated noise levels from the scheme are considered as having a low impact and therefore acceptable given the distance away from residential receptors. The predicted Noise Rating Levels at the receptor locations range from 12dB to 16dB below background noise levels at nearest noise sensitive receptors. It can therefore be assumed that adverse impact to sensitive receptors is unlikely as a result of the development.

The External Lighting Plan shows the positioning of lighting columns and the maximum illuminance lux levels around the site. When the lux levels are compared to those stated in the Institution of Lighting Professionals Guidance – Reduction of Obtrusive Light Guidance Note 01/21, they appear to comply with this document with regard to Zone E2.

The Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP) provides details of what needs to be considered and included in a detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) that will be developed prior to works commencing. National Grid have stated that as a minimum, the Main Works Contractor(s) will be required to comply with applicable environmental legislation at the time of construction of the Scheme, together with any additional environmental controls imposed by the planning approval. Therefore, a further CEMP based on the OCEMP which includes full details of all mitigation measures to be taken will need to be submitted at a later stage.

There is the potential for noise disturbance from the development to nearby sensitive receptors should plant, machinery and equipment on site operate at a higher load than accounted for in the noise impact assessment. It would therefore be recommended that conditions be imposed to ensure noise emissions from site do not adversely impact nearby sensitive receptors.

There is also the potential for light nuisance should lighting not be installed in accordance with the submitted plans.

Whilst the majority of the content of the Outline CEMP is acceptable it is noted that the development is close to residential dwellings. Therefore, the construction times will need to be amended to the following hours in order to protect these receptors from adverse impact/disturbance when the final CEMP is submitted: 08:00-18:00 Mondays to Fridays and 09:00-13:00 Saturdays with no working on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

It is therefore concluded that subject to conditions, the proposed development would not give rise to any amenity issues and would therefore comply with policy SP52 and SP55 on Pollution Control matters.

Design considerations

The NPPG notes that: “Development proposals should reflect the requirement for good design set out in national and local policy. Local planning authorities will assess the design quality of planning proposals against their Local Plan policies, national policies and other material considerations.”

The NPPG further goes on to advise that: “Local planning authorities are required to take design into consideration and should refuse permission for development of poor design.”

SP55 ‘Design Principles’ states: “All forms of development are required to be of high quality, incorporate inclusive design principles, create decent living and working environments, and positively contribute to the local character and distinctiveness of an area and the way it functions. This policy applies to all development proposals including alterations and extensions to existing buildings”.

This approach is echoed in National Planning Policy in the NPPF.

Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states: “The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.”

The proposed substation is a standard utilitarian design which reflects the proposed use. The Gas-Insulated design has helped to reduce the scale of the development and is visually similar to an industrial building with an overall height of 14.23m. The proposal also includes a comprehensive landscaping scheme to mitigate the visual impact of the development. Overall, whilst the substation will be visible and will change the character of the area, it will be seen against the backdrop of other electrical infrastructure within the local area and in the context of the M1 motorway. On the basis of the above assessment and identified need, it is not considered that the proposal would be significantly or materially harmful to the visual amenity of the locality.

Highways

Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states: “Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.”

SP56 'Car Parking Layout' states that layouts should be designed to: "discourage the obstruction of footways by kerb parking, and parking that compromises the operation of the highway"

During the application process the applicant has submitted revised drawings indicating the proposed location of the vehicle access to the site with supporting documentation / drawings in support of the application. The applicant has now demonstrated that visibility at the proposed access is in accordance with industry standards, using recorded vehicle speeds to calculate the distances required.

A stage 1 road audit has been undertaken on the proposed access and forward visibility has also been demonstrated to be satisfactory, as shown on the amended plan, in conjunction with the swept path of vehicles entering and exiting the site.

It is noted that the scheme when completed does not represent a significant intensification of the existing access, with only minimal maintenance visits required periodically, which will be undertaken in small van type vehicle.

The applicant has also provided a Construction Management Plan (CMP) in support of the application, which sets out amongst other things how the applicant will mitigate

the increase in vehicle numbers during the construction period and includes construction traffic routeing to the site. This CMP is a live document which requires updating as the project progresses. The CMP shows that it is anticipated that there will be a maximum total of 210 (105 in and 105 out) movements per day. This equates to 130 HGVs (two-way movements) and 80 cars/LGVs (two-way movements). Therefore, there will be approximately 10–11 HGV two-way movements, and six to seven Car/LGV two-way movements an hour along the construction route. This number of vehicles can be accommodated on the existing highway network.

The proposed access as shown in draft form on will require the applicant to enter into a s278 legal agreement with RMBC. The works required include the formation of a vehicle access to the site, including new kerbing works. A reduction in the height of the existing hedge opposite the site entrance to facilitate forward visibility requirements as shown on the approved plans.

Land Contamination

NPPF Paragraph 196 states that: "Planning policies and decisions should ensure that:

a) a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination. This includes risks arising from natural hazards or former activities such as mining, and any proposals for mitigation including land remediation (as well as potential impacts on the natural environment arising from that remediation);

b) after remediation, as a minimum, land should not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990; and

c) adequate site investigation information, prepared by a competent person, is available to inform these assessments.”

NPPF Paragraph 197 States: “Where a site is affected by contamination or land stability issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner.”

Policy CS27 ‘Community Health and Safety’ states, in part, that: “Development will be supported which protects, promotes or contributes to securing a healthy and safe environment and minimises health inequalities. Development should seek to contribute towards reducing pollution and not result in pollution or hazards which may prejudice the health and safety of communities or their environments. Appropriate mitigation measures may be required to enable development. When the opportunity arises, remedial measures will be taken to address existing problems of land contamination, land stability or air quality.”

Policy SP52 ‘Pollution Control’ states that: “Development proposals that are likely to cause pollution, or be exposed to pollution, will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that mitigation measures will minimise potential impacts to levels that protect health, environmental quality and amenity. When determining planning applications, particular consideration will be given to:

- a. the detrimental impact on the amenity of the local area, including an assessment of the risks to public health.
- b. the presence of noise generating uses close to the site, and the potential noise likely to be generated by the proposed development. A Noise Assessment will be required to enable clear decision-making on any planning application.
- c. the impact on national air quality objectives and an assessment of the impacts on local air quality; including locally determined Air Quality Management Areas and meeting the aims and objectives of the Air Quality Action Plan.
- d. any adverse effects on the quantity, quality and ecology features of water bodies and groundwater resources.
- e. The impact of artificial lighting. Artificial lighting has the potential to cause unacceptable light pollution in the form of sky-glow, glare or intrusion onto other property and land. Development proposals should ensure that adequate and reasonable controls to protect dwellings and other sensitive property, the rural night-sky, observatories, road-users, and designated sites for conservation of biodiversity or protected species are included within the proposals.”

Policy SP54 ‘Contaminated and Unstable Land’ states that: “Where land is known to be or suspected of being contaminated, or development may result

in the release of contaminants from adjoining land, or there are adverse ground conditions caused by unstable land, development proposals should:

- a. demonstrate there is no significant harm, or risk of significant harm, to human health or the environment or of pollution of any water course or ground water;
- b. ensure necessary remedial action is undertaken to safeguard users or occupiers of the site or neighbouring land and protect the environment and any buildings or services from contamination during development and in the future;
- c. demonstrate that adverse ground conditions have been properly identified and safely treated;
- d. clearly demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, that the land is suitable for its current or proposed use.”

The site has historically been in predominantly agricultural use, with limited disturbance from former opencast coal workings. Site investigations (including trial pits, boreholes, and chemical testing of soil, groundwater and surface water) confirm that soils are generally uncontaminated and suitable for an industrial end use, with no asbestos or hazardous materials identified.

While some groundwater exceedances (including sulphate and phenol) were recorded, these are considered to be naturally occurring and do not pose a significant risk to the proposed development. Ground gas monitoring has not identified a requirement for gas protection measures.

Geotechnical risks associated with former mining activity and opencast backfill have been identified, and further site-specific investigation is recommended to inform foundation design. Earthworks, including substantial cut and fill, will require appropriate management through a Materials Management Plan.

Overall, subject to further investigation and appropriate mitigation and verification, the site is considered capable of being made suitable for its proposed use, in accordance with relevant national and local planning policies.

Other Issues

A significant number of objectors have raised links between this application and the proposed Whitestone Solar Farm project within the borough, which has recently been accepted as a DCO. The proposed substation is required irrespective of the Whitestone Solar Farm and as such is not a material consideration in any decision. Furthermore, as the Whitestone Solar Farm is not determined, the cumulative impact of Whitestone Solar Farm cannot be considered in determining this application.

Where planning consent is granted, National Grid will establish a dedicated Community Fund for the project. For Brinsworth to Chesterfield, a Local Fund will focus on communities closest to the new infrastructure. Community Funds

form part of National Grid's regulated project costs, which are reviewed and approved by Ofgem to ensure they are appropriate and represent value for money. Where approved, the funding is delivered through our regulatory allowances and ultimately funded in the same way as other essential electricity transmission infrastructure. This funding is separate to Planning and will not form part of any legal agreement should the application be approved, it is also not a material consideration as to whether the application should be approved or not.

South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service have been consulted in relation to the safety and potential emergency response to an incident at the site. There have been no objections raised by the Authority. The South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue notes that fire service access arrangements and water supplies will be designed in accordance with Approved Document B, Sections 13 and 14. The development will accommodate the loading and turning requirements of fire appliances, and consideration will be given to the provision of sprinkler protection as part of the detailed design process.

Finally, the proposal involves the diversion of a public right of way in order to accommodate the new platform for the substation. The Council Public Rights of Way Officer and the Trans Pennine Trail have no objections to the re-routing and the applicant has commenced the Public Path Diversion Order under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980. This process is separate to Planning is open to its own public consultation and can still be refused irrespective of Planning Permission being granted.

Conclusion

The proposed development represents a significant investment in strategic electricity transmission infrastructure that will support the resilience and future capacity of the national electricity network, contributing towards the transition to a low-carbon energy system and the delivery of net zero objectives. Having regard to the provisions of the Development Plan and all other material considerations, the principle of development is considered acceptable. The site is assessed as Grey Belt land for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework and the proposal is not considered to constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Furthermore, even if the proposal were to be considered inappropriate development, the substantial public benefits associated with the provision of critical National Grid infrastructure are considered to amount to very special circumstances sufficient to outweigh any Green Belt harm. The proposal has also been carefully assessed in relation to landscape impact, ecology, biodiversity net gain, flood risk, archaeology, highway safety, residential amenity and other environmental considerations, and no overriding technical objections have been identified by statutory consultees.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the development will result in the loss of some agricultural land and will introduce a new built form within a predominantly rural landscape, these impacts are considered to be localised and capable of being appropriately mitigated through the proposed landscaping, biodiversity

enhancements and planning conditions. The development will deliver significant biodiversity net gain, secure long-term habitat improvements and provide infrastructure of regional and national importance. Subject to the completion of the Section 106 Agreement to secure biodiversity net gain monitoring contributions and the imposition of the recommended planning conditions, the proposal is considered to accord with the relevant policies of the Rotherham Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. Accordingly, planning permission is recommended for approval.

Conditions

The Development Management Procedure Order 2015 requires that planning authorities provide written reasons in the decision notice for imposing planning conditions that require particular matters to be approved before development can start. Conditions numbered **05,07,10,15,17, 18 19, 20 & 21** of this permission require matters to be approved before development works begin; however, in this instance the conditions are justified because:

- i. In the interests of the expedient determination of the application it was considered to be appropriate to reserve certain matters of detail for approval by planning condition rather than unnecessarily extending the application determination process to allow these matters of detail to be addressed pre-determination.
- ii. The details required under condition numbers **05,07,10,15,17, 18 19, 20 & 21** are fundamental to the acceptability of the development and the nature of the further information required to satisfy these conditions is such that it would be inappropriate to allow the development to proceed until the necessary approvals have been secured.'

01

The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason

In order to comply with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02

The permission hereby granted shall relate to the area shown outlined in red on the approved location plan and the development shall only take place in accordance with the submitted details and specifications and as shown on the approved plans:

Location Plan - PDD-203717-LAY-401 P01

Existing Site Plan - PDD-203717-LAY-441 P01

Proposed Site Layout (Block Plan) - PDD-203717-LAY-440 P02

Proposed Site Layout - PDD-203717-LAY-442 P02

Overall Elevations Long Lane 400kV Substation Sheet 1 - PDD-203717-ELE-415 P02
Overall Elevations Long Lane 400kV Substation Sheet 2 - PDD-203717-ELE-416 P02
Building Elevations North and South Elevations Long Lane GIS 400kv Substation - PDD-203717-ELE-417 P02
Building Elevations East and West Elevations Long Lane GIS 400kv Substation - PDD-203717-ELE-418 P02
GIS Hall Building Layout - PDD-203717-LAY-443 P01
Block Plan: Substation Works - PDD-203717-LAY-432 P01
Proposed Site Layout Substation Works - PDD-203717-LAY-433 P01
Typical Fencing Details - PDD-203717-LAY-446 P02
Junction Layout & Typical Details - PDD-203717-LAY-447 P02
Access Road Layout & Long Section - PDD-203717-LAY-448 P01
Drainage Layout - PDD-203717-LAY-409 P01
Landscape Mitigation Plan - 30184504-ARC-XX-LAN-DWG-00002 P4
External Lighting Plan - PDD-203717-LAY-431 P01
Cut And Fill General Arrangement and Sections - PDD-203717-LAY-421 P04
Overall Layout - PDD-203717-LAY-408 P01
Access General Arrangement Plan – EDEU-WSP-SS50-XXXXXX-DRW-CE-000004 P01

Reason

To define the permission and for the avoidance of doubt.

03

The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the buildings hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the construction of the buildings.

Reason

In order to ensure a satisfactory appearance in the interests of visual amenity

Highways

04

Prior to the first operation of the approved substation, that part of the site to be used by vehicles shall be properly constructed with either:

- a/ a permeable surface and associated water retention/collection drainage, or
- b/ an impermeable surface with water collected and taken to a separately constructed water retention / discharge system within the site.

All to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority and shall thereafter be maintained in a working condition.

Reason

In the interest of sustainable drainage.

05

The development shall not be commenced until details of the proposed alterations in the highway on Long Lane, indicated on plan reference EDEU-WSP-SS50- XXXXXX-DRW-CE-00 Rev P01 (new access), and EDEU-WSP-SS50-XXXXXXDRW-CE-000005 Rev P01 (reduction in the height of the hedgerow opposite the site entrance to 500mm above the adjacent carriageway) have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and the approved details shall be implemented before the development is brought into use.

Reason

In the interest of Highway Safety.

06

Before the development is brought into use the sight lines indicated on the Drg EDEU-WSP-SS50-XXXXXX-DRW-CE-000001 Rev P03. shall be rendered effective by removing or reducing the height of anything existing on the land between the sight line and the highway which obstructs visibility at any height greater than 900mm above the level of the nearside channel of the adjacent carriageway and the visibility thus provided shall be maintained.

Reason

In the interest of Highway Safety.

07

Prior to the commencement of works a Construction Method Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council and the approved statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall provide for; Storage / loading / unloading of materials / plant; and car parking facilities for the construction staff and include reference as to how the development will legally take access from the adjacent highway i.e. s278 or s184 agreement.

Reason

In the interest of Highway Safety.

Landscaping

08

Prior to the development being brought online, a revised landscape scheme for the existing landscape bund shall be submitted for approval by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include:

- A planting plan and schedule detailing the proposed species, siting, quality and size specification, and planting distances.
- A written specification for ground preparation and soft landscape works.
- The programme for implementation.
- Written details of the responsibility for maintenance and a schedule of operations, including replacement planting, that will be carried out for a period of 5 years after completion of the planting scheme.

The scheme shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved landscape scheme within a timescale agreed, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason

To ensure that there is a well laid out scheme of healthy trees and shrubs in the interests of amenity

09

Any plants or trees which within a period of 5 years from completion of planting die, are removed or damaged, or that fail to thrive shall be replaced. Assessment of requirements for replacement planting shall be carried out on an annual basis in September of each year and any defective work or materials discovered shall be rectified before 31st December of that year.

Reason

To ensure that there is a well laid out scheme of healthy trees and shrubs in the interests of amenity

Construction

10

Prior to the commencement of any works on site, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall describe in detail the actions that will be taken to minimise adverse impacts on occupiers of nearby properties by effectively controlling:

- Noise & vibration arising from all construction and demolition related activities – Contractors and site staff are expected to use the best practical means to minimise noise on site. Regard shall be had to the guidance detailed in BS5228 2009: 'Noise and Vibration Control on Construction Sites'.
- Dust arising from all construction and demolition related activities - Contractors and site staff are expected to use the best practical means to minimise dust on site. Regard shall be had to the guidance detailed in Institute of Air Quality Management- Guidance of the assessment of dust from demolition and construction 2014.
- Artificial lighting used in connection with all construction related activities and security of the construction site - Contractors and site staff are expected to use the best practical means to minimise light nuisance on site. Regard shall be had to the guidance detailed in the Institute of Lighting Professionals - Guidance Note 01/21 – Reduction of Obtrusive Light.

The CEMP to be submitted shall be in report format and as a minimum is to include the following details as specified in the subheadings below:

- Program and Phasing Details

- Site layout
- Operational hours
- Expected duration of demolition and construction work phases

- Site Management
 - Contact details of site manager for public liaison purposes
 - Complaints procedure
 - Roles and responsibilities

- Routes for Construction Traffic
 - Routes to be used for access onto site and egress
 - One way systems
 - Haul routes (onsite and delivery)

- Site Access, Storage and Movement of Materials
 - Delivery access point details
 - Location details of storage areas
 - Delivery times of materials and plant

- Dust, Debris and Mud
 - Screening and hoarding
 - Preventative measures
 - Dust suppression measures -General and machinery
 - Wheel wash facilities
 - Road sweeping facilities
 - Covering of dusty stockpiles
 - Vehicles carrying dusty loads
 - Dust monitoring
 - Boundary checks
 - Monitoring of weather including wind speed and direction, dry conditions etc
- Noise and Vibration Control
 - Silencing of vehicles, plant and machinery
 - Mitigation measures for noisy operations
 - Operational hours
 - One way systems
 - Vehicle reverse alarms
 - Leaflet drops to noise sensitive premises

- Artificial Lighting
 - Hours of operation of the lighting
 - Location and specification of all of the luminaires
 - Level of maintained average horizontal illuminance for the areas that needs to be illuminated
 - Predicted vertical illuminance that will be caused by the proposed lighting when measured at windows of any properties in the vicinity
 - Measures that will be taken to minimise or eliminate glare and stray light arising from the use of the lighting that is caused beyond the boundary of the site

- Waste Management
 - Waste storage
 - Waste collection
 - Recycling
 - Waste removal
- Biodiversity:
 - Identification of “biodiversity protection zones”.
 - Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements).
 - The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features.
 - The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works.
 - Responsible persons and lines of communication.
 - The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person.
 - Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.

The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason

To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties, and promote sustainable development, conserve and enhance protected and Priority species and allow the Local Planning Authority to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as amended, s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species) and in accordance with Part 15 of the NPPF and RMBC Policy SP52.

11

The combined noise from all fixed plant, machinery and equipment located on site shall be effectively controlled so that the combined Noise Rating Level of noise from all such plant, machinery and equipment does not exceed the representative background noise level as assessed in accordance with the methodology and principles set out in BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 Methods for Rating and Assessing Industrial and Commercial Sound at nearby dwellings as detailed in Table 4.7 of the Appendix P Noise Impact Assessment undertaken by National Grid dated 7th November 2025. All fixed plant, machinery and equipment located on site shall be maintained following installation and throughout the lifetime of the consent.

Reason

To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties in accordance with RMBC Policy SP52 and parts 12 & 15 of the NPPF.

12

Where a verified complaint is received by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council that suggests that the Noise Rating Level from all fixed plant, machinery and equipment located on site exceeds the background sound level at receptor locations as detailed in Table 4.7 of the Appendix P Noise Impact Assessment undertaken by National Grid dated 7th November 2025, the operator of the site shall complete an assessment in accordance with the methodology and principles set out in BS 4142:2014+A1:2019, to demonstrate that the Noise Rating Level does not exceed the background sound level. The combined Noise Rating Level of all fixed plant, machinery and equipment located on site should account for any reasonable character corrections, i.e., tonality, intermittency, impulsivity, and other sound characteristics. The assessment shall be completed by a competent person (see footnote) agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority in advance of the assessment. If the Noise Rating Level exceeds the background sound level a further scheme incorporating further measures to achieve a Noise Rating Level of no more than 0dB above background sound level at receptor locations as detailed in Table 4.7 of the Appendix P Noise Impact Assessment undertaken by National Grid dated 7th November 2025, shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. All works comprised within those further approved measures shall be completed.

Reason

To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties in accordance with RMBC Policy SP52 and parts 12 & 15 of the NPPF

Land Stability/Contamination

13

No development works involving cut and fill operations, excavation, regrading or the

importation/exportation or reuse of materials within the area shown outlined in red on the approved location plan shall commence until a detailed Earthworks and Materials Management Strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Earthworks and Materials Management Plan shall include details but not be limited to, details on the proposed earthworks and phasing, the excavation/handling/testing/storage/reuse and disposal of materials, measures to control dust /instability/impacts to the environment and verification testing and validation procedures. The approved works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Earthworks and Materials Management Plan. Following completion of the approved earthworks, a Verification Report demonstrating compliance with the approved plan, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason

To ensure the safe occupation of the site in accordance with Policy SP54 of the Rotherham Local Plan and paragraphs 196 and 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024.

14

In the event that contamination is found at any stage when carrying out the development that was not previously identified, it must be reported in writing within one working day to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must then be undertaken and where remediation is necessary, a remediation scheme shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Following completion, a Verification Report shall be submitted to demonstrate the effectiveness of the remediation works.

Reason

To ensure the safe occupation of the site in accordance with Policy SP54 of the Rotherham Local Plan and paragraphs 196 and 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024.

Archaeology

15

No development within the area shown outlined in red on the approved location plan, including any demolition and groundworks, shall take place until the applicant, or their agent or successor in title, has submitted a Written Scheme of

Investigation (WSI) that sets out a strategy for archaeological investigation and this has been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The WSI shall include:

- The programme and method of site investigation and recording.
- The requirement to seek preservation in situ of identified features of importance.
- The programme for post-investigation assessment.
- The provision to be made for analysis and reporting.
- The provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the results.
- The provision to be made for deposition of the archive created.
- Nomination of a competent person/persons or organisation to undertake the works.
- The timetable for completion of all site investigation and post-investigation works.

Thereafter the development shall only take place in accordance with the approved WSI and the development shall not be brought into use until the Local Planning Authority has confirmed in writing that the requirements of the WSI have been fulfilled or alternative timescales agreed.

Reason

To ensure that any archaeological remains present, whether buried or part of a standing building, are investigated and a proper understanding of their nature, date, extent and significance gained, before those remains are damaged or destroyed and that knowledge gained is then disseminated.

Ecology

16

Prior to the installation of any permanent external lighting within the area shown outlined in red on the approved location plan, the proposed lighting details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall identify those features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance along important routes used for foraging; and show how and where external lighting will be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting plans, drawings and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent bats using their territory.

The lamps shall be suitably angled and if necessary shielded[MP11.1] as to prevent glare and light trespass beyond the site boundary as per the guidance provided by the Institution of Lighting Professionals Guidance – Reduction of Obtrusive Light Guidance Note 01/21. The lighting shall be maintained following installation and throughout the lifetime of the consent.

All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the scheme and maintained thereafter in accordance with the scheme. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason

To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties in accordance with RMBC Policy SP52 and parts 12 & 15 of the NPPF and to allow the Local Planning Authority to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as amended and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species).[M

17

The development within the area shown outlined in red on the approved location plan shall not commence until a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall be prepared in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan and include:

- a) the roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering the HMMP;
- b) the planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan;
- c) the management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of development; and
- d) the monitoring methodology and frequency in respect of the created or enhanced habitat to be submitted to the local planning authority,

Reason

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition (the biodiversity gain condition), to ensure Biodiversity Net Gain.

18

Prior to commencement of development a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for protected and Priority species shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy shall include the following:

- a) Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures;
- b) detailed designs or product descriptions to achieve stated objectives;
- c) locations, orientations, and heights of proposed enhancement measures by appropriate maps and plans;
- d) persons responsible for implementing the enhancement measures;
- e) details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance (where relevant).

The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation and shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

Reason

To enhance protected and Priority species & habitats and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the NPPF 2025 and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species).

19

No development shall commence on site until:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The details shall be implemented in accordance with the timescales set out in the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan.

For guidance on the contents of the Biodiversity Gain Plan that must be submitted

and agreed by the Council prior to the commencement of the consented development please see the link: Submit a biodiversity gain plan - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Reason

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition (the biodiversity gain condition), to ensure Biodiversity Net Gain.

Employment

20

Prior to the commencement of development, the attached Local Labour Agreement pro forma for the construction phase of the development shall be completed in its entirety and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved Agreement and within 3 months of completion of the approved development, data shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority demonstrating how the indicators were met.

Reason

To improve skills in all of Rotherham's communities through the promotion of access to training, education and local employment opportunities, in accordance with Policy CS10 'Improving Skills and Employment Opportunities'

Trees

21

No development or site preparation works within the area shown outlined in red on the approved location plan (including demolition, groundworks or drainage) shall commence until a Tree Protection Plan (TPP) and Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS), in accordance with BS5837:2012, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

These documents shall include:

- Timing and phasing of all relevant works;
- Location and specification of tree protection fencing and ground protection;
- Construction Exclusion Zones;
- A schedule of tree works in accordance with BS3998;
- Details of access, storage areas, service routes, and proposed changes in ground levels;
- Specifications for works within Root Protection Areas (RPAs), including surfacing, foundation design and excavation methods;
- A supervision schedule, including the appointment of a qualified Arboriculturist at key inspection stages.

All approved tree protection measures shall be installed in accordance with the approved details prior to the commencement of any development or site works within the area shown outlined in red on the approved location plan.

Reason

To ensure appropriate tree protection in the interests of protecting the visual amenity of the area, contributing to the quality and character of Rotherham's environment, air quality and adapting to and mitigating climate change in accordance with Rotherham's Core Strategy Policies CS3: Location of New Development, CS19: Green Infrastructure, CS20 Biodiversity and Geodiversity, Policy CS21 Landscape, Policy CS28 Sustainable Design.

Drainage

22

Prior to the installation of the operational drainage system within the area outlined in red on the approved location plan, details of the operational surface water drainage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include:

- a) Design and layout of the drainage system;
- b) Location and design of the outfall (other than to the public sewer network); and
- c) Maintenance and management arrangements.

The drainage system shall be installed in accordance with the approved details and operational prior to the first operation of the substation.

Reason: To ensure the site is properly drained and to prevent overloading of the public sewer network, in accordance with Policy CS25 of the Local Plan.

23

No piped discharge of surface water from the application site shall take place until works to provide a satisfactory outfall, other than the existing local public sewerage, for surface water have been completed in accordance with details submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:

To ensure that the site is properly drained and in order to prevent overloading, surface water is not discharged to the public sewer network.

Informative

01

Condition 05 You will require an Agreement under S278 Highways Act, 1980 and involve the provision of a new vehicle access, a reduction in the height of the existing hedgerow opposite the site entrance as indicated over the length required to achieve forward visibility as shown on Drg EDEU-WSP-SS50-XXXXXX-DRW-CE-000005 Rev P01. Contact should be made with David Phillips david.phillips@rotherham.gov.uk as soon as is practical to commence this process.

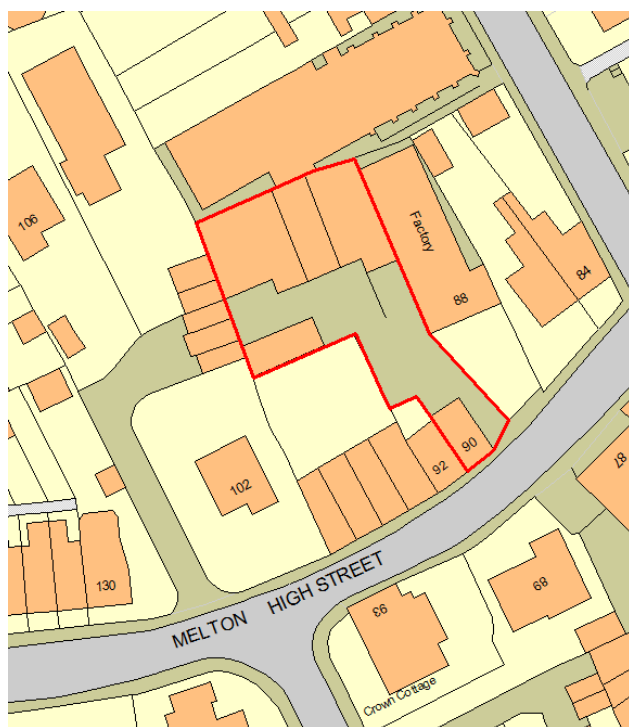
Please note that the Local Planning Authority will not discharge Condition 05 until the required works have received full technical approval from the Highway Authority. Applicants are therefore advised not to submit any application for the discharge of this/these condition(s) until written confirmation of technical approval has been issued by the Highway Authority.

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

During the determination of the application, the Local Planning Authority worked with the applicant to consider what amendments were necessary to make the scheme acceptable. The applicant agreed to amend the scheme so that it was in accordance with the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Application Number	RB2026/0241 - https://rotherham.planportal.co.uk/?id=RB2026/0241
Proposal and Location	Installation of steel roller shutter doors, galvanised steel palisade fence and gates, and replacement roof, Rear of 94 to 100, Melton High Street, West Melton, Rotherham
Recommendation	Grant subject to conditions

This application is being presented to Planning Board due to the number of objections received.



Site Description & Location

The application site comprises no. 90 Melton High Street and the land to the rear. The property was formerly a slaughterhouse in the 1960s.

The area surrounding the site is predominantly residential with approximately 4no. individual garden areas being directly adjacent to the boundary of the site. The area to the north is the West Melton Methodist Church and there is a long established industrial building immediately to the east.

No adverts of the business are currently visible from the Melton High Street.

Background

In terms of the previous and relevant site history, the site recently had a lawful development certificate refused for a continuation of a car repair garage at the site.

RB2026/0239 – Application for Lawful Development Certificate re: change of use to vehicle repairs (use class B2) – REFUSED

The reason for refusal was as follows:

01

The Council considers that the applicant has failed to provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that, on the balance of probability, the use of the land for a car repair business has been in place on a continuous basis for ten years prior to the submission of the current application. As such the Local Planning Authority is not satisfied that the use as described above is lawful.

Proposal

This application is retrospective and is to regularise the physical changes made to the existing building. These include the installation of steel roller shutter doors, galvanised steel palisade fence and gates, and replacement roof in the eastern part of the site.

Planning Statement

The application has been submitted by a short Planning Supporting Statement which can be summarised below:

- Steel Roller shutter doors were fitted to the Old Slaughterhouse, Bay 2 and the large storage unit in Late 2022, as the existing timber double doors were rotten and were presenting a security and safety issue.
- The roof to the L-shaped unit was also rotten and in danger of collapse and this was replaced in the latter half of 2024.

1. Installation of three Steel roller shutter doors

The roller shutter doors are galvanised steel doors installed to replace the former rotten timber double doors. The roller shutter doors on the L-shaped storage unit is finished in green, the other two are left in the original silver galvanised finish.

2. Roof replacement

The roof to the Old Slaughterhouse was replaced as it had become rotten, we are advised that it was replaced to the same configuration as the existing as well as a section of the side wall, that was rebuilt on the same footprint, as it had become unstable. Similarly, the roof to the L shaped storage unit was also replaced, however its height was raised during this process by approximately 1.5m to the rear and 400mm to the front, as can be seen on the associated drawings.

*3. Installation of palisade fence and gates in excess of 2m high
A galvanised steel palisade fence and pair of double gates were installed to improve security to the Site, from the Old Slaughterhouse adjacent to the shared car park to the Domestic dwellings across to the side of 88 Melton High Street. The fence and gates are 2460mm high (at their highest point).*

Development Plan Allocation and Policy

The site is allocated residential in the Local Plan. For the purposes of determining this application the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

Local Plan policies

CS28 'Sustainable Design'

CS33 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development'

SP11 'Development in Residential Areas'

SP26 'Sustainable Transport for Development'

SP52 'Pollution Control'

SP55 'Design Principles'

In addition the advice within the NPPF is also relevant.

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) - On 6 March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched this planning practice guidance web-based resource. This was accompanied by a Written Ministerial Statement which includes a list of the previous planning practice guidance documents cancelled when this site was launched. It was last updated on 17th September 2018.

The NPPF states that "due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with this framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)."

The revised NPPF came into effect in December 2024. It states that "Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

The Local Plan Policies referred to above are consistent with the NPPF and have been given due weight in the determination of this application.

Publicity

The application has been advertised by way of a site notice along with individual neighbour notification letters to adjacent properties. A total of 15 objections have been received and the following concerns have been raised:

Highway Safety & Access Obstruction

- Shared access obstruction — Gates and fencing installed across shared access land.
- Unsafe manoeuvring — Vehicles struggle to turn; access frequently blocked.
- Risky reversing — Residents forced to reverse onto the main road.
- Outward-opening gates — Reduce manoeuvring space and increase safety risks.

Residential Amenity Harm

- Visually intrusive fencing — 2.46m palisade fencing is overbearing and unattractive.
- Poor condition — Rusting, bent sections, temporary screening.
- Gates left open — Unsecured gates worsen visual and amenity impacts.
- Safety Concerns with unsecured gates — Held open with loose materials; risk of uncontrolled movement.
- Unsuitable design — Concerns about long-term safety in a constrained space.

Roof Alteration Issues

- Raised roof height — Increased by ~1.5m, making building more prominent.
- Industrial appearance — Visually incongruous with surroundings.
- Roller Shutters
- Noise disturbance — Opening/closing likely to disturb neighbours.
- Industrialisation — Adds to cumulative industrial character.

Drainage & Pollution

- Contaminated drainage — Evidence of oil and waste entering drains.
- Past blockages — Required Yorkshire Water intervention.
- Lack of safeguards — No evidence of oil interceptors or proper controls.
- Vehicle repair activity — Multiple vehicles, customer visits, noise, fumes.
- Extended hours — Activity beyond stated 09:00–16:00 hours.
- Access pressure — Site operating beyond capacity.
- Inaccurate/Misleading Information
- Incorrect site plan — Includes land not owned by applicant.
- Inaccurate operating hours — Application does not reflect real activity.
- Incomplete built-form description — Application does not match what is already built.

Existing Harm

- Damage to property — Residents had to install bollards.
- Noise & fumes — Frequent revving, exhaust fumes.
- Hazardous incidents — Fires and an explosive event observed.

It is understood that following the refusal of the LDC the car repair has ceased. However, objections have also raised concerns around the following:

- Submission of false information on application documents. Certificate A has been incorrectly submitted.
- Trespass and unauthorised attaching of the roof structure to a neighbouring commercial building.

A total of 1no. Right to Speak requests have been received.

Consultations

RMBC Transportation Infrastructure Service – no objections

Environmental Health – no objections, subject to condition

Appraisal

Where an application is made to a local planning authority for planning permission.....In dealing with such an application the authority shall have regard to -

- (a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application,
- (b) any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and
- (c) any other material considerations. - S. 70 (2) TCPA '90.

If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise - S.38 (6) PCPA 2004.

The main considerations in the determination of the application are:

- The principle of the development
- Impact on neighbouring properties
- Design and Appearance
- Transportation issues

The principle of the development

The proposal has a residential allocation in the Local Plan. Although this is a commercial property and there are non-residential uses in the surroundings, it is considered that the wider area is mainly residential and this is the predominant character.

The use of the building for car repair has now ceased. However, this planning application relates to a number of changes to the exterior of the existing building which have been completed and would still need to be considered on their own merits.

Design and Appearance and impact on neighbouring properties

Policy SP55 'Design Principles', states, in part, that: *"All forms of development are required to be of high quality, incorporate inclusive design principles and positively contribute to the local character and distinctiveness of an area and the way it functions. This policy applies to all development proposals including alterations and extensions to existing buildings"*.

Policy SP11 'Development in Residential Areas' states areas identified for residential shall be primarily retained for residential uses and all residential uses shall be considered appropriate in these areas and will be considered in light of all relevant planning policies.

Policy SP52 'Pollution Control' indicates that development proposals that are likely to cause pollution, or be exposed to pollution, will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that mitigation measures will minimise potential impacts to levels that protect health, environmental quality and amenity. When determining planning applications, particular consideration will be given to the detrimental impact on the amenity of the local area.

A number of the objections all raise the utilitarian structures that are present, the overbearing impact on residents and the poor design and appearance of the changes.

Roller shutter doors

The replacement roller shutter doors are considered to be similar in appearance to the original doors and are considered to represent an updated design to this building. This part of the site has a limited visibility from the street scene. Overall, this element is considered to be in conformity with the advice within policy SP55 'Design Principles'.

Fencing and gates

It is acknowledged that the palisade fencing has a moderately utilitarian appearance and design. However, it is limited in length being less than 10m in total and set well within the site area which minimises its visual impact on the street scene. The fencing is not easily visible from outside of the immediate site area and it is also noted that the total height, being under 2.5m in total is not considered to be excessive in scale and is not significantly above 2m which would be considered permitted development. Overall, it is not considered that a refusal could be justified and this is considered to adequately meet the criteria within SP55 'Design Principles'.

Replacement roof

The replacement roof structure, although approximately 1.5m higher than the existing roof is considered to be a more modern design and is understood to

have replaced a previous roof which was in a poor condition. In terms of appearance to the surroundings there are no immediately adjacent residential properties and the impact in terms of dominance is considered to be limited.

The attachment of the garage onto a neighbouring commercial building without obtaining the owners consent is also noted. However, this is a civil issue between the landowners and can only be given very limited weight in the determination of this application.

In terms of noise, the Councils Neighbourhoods Unit (Environmental Health) have not raised any objections from a residential amenity perspective, subject to a condition that the roller shutter door not be open between the hours of 08:00 – 20:00 Mondays to Saturdays and 10:00 – 20:00 on Sundays. The proposed use is not therefore considered to have significant new impact on residential amenity and is considered to be in conformity with policies SP11 'Development in Residential Areas' and SP52 'Pollution Control'.

Overall, the retrospective changes to the external appearance of the building are considered to be acceptable from a design perspective.

In summary, it is considered that the changes made would meet Local Plan Policies and SP55 'Design Principles' and the advice contained within the NPPF.

Transportation issues

The Transportation Unit note from the submitted details that the changes have already been carried out. There are no objections from a highway safety perspective.

Other issues

Landscaping and Biodiversity Net Gain

In terms of Biodiversity Net Gain, the application being a change of use does not have the statutory requirement to provide +10%. However, the development still needs to demonstrate no net loss, in accordance with Policy SP33 'Conserving and Enhancing the natural Environment'. There are no proposals to extend the built form or building footprint of the existing site and therefore no loss of biodiversity.

Drainage

There are no changes being proposed to the external building or drainage systems.

Conclusion

Overall and whilst noting the large volume of objections received, it is noted that a number of these relate to the previous car repair business which had recently started on the site. However, this is not under consideration in regards to this application.

The regularisation of the external changes is recommended for approval.

The unauthorised attachment of the roof structure onto a neighbouring building (no. 88 Melton High Street) is a civil matter which cannot be considered in the determination of the planning application.

The application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

Conditions

01

The permission hereby granted shall relate to the area shown outlined in red on the approved site plan and the development shall only take place in accordance with the submitted details and specifications as shown on the approved plans (as set out below)

(Drawing numbers location plan 25/3839/001/A, site plan 25/3839/002/A, Site Layout 25/3839/008/A, Floor plan 25/3839/009/A, elevations 25/3839/010/A and 25/3839/011/A)(received 16/03/26).

Reason

To define the permission and for the avoidance of doubt.

Hours of use

02

All roller shutter doors installed on the buildings shall only be opened and closed between the hours of 08:00 – 20:00 Mondays to Saturdays and 10:00 – 20:00 on Sundays.

Reason

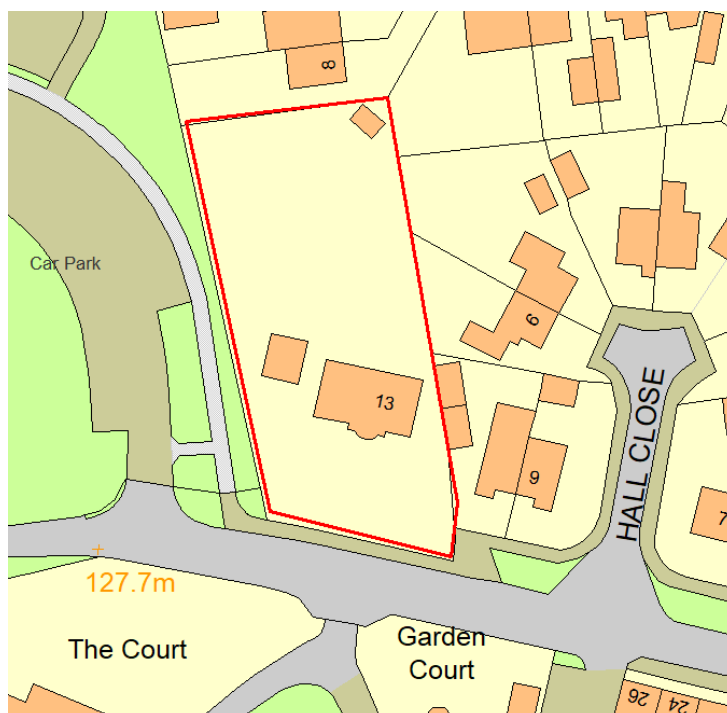
To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties and promote sustainable development in accordance with Part 15 of the NPPF and RMBC Policy SP52.

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

Whilst the applicant did not enter into any formal pre application discussions with the Local Planning Authority, the proposals were in accordance with the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework and did not require any further alterations or modification.

Application Number	RB2026/0371 https://rotherham.planportal.co.uk/?id=RB2026/0371
Proposal and Location	Demolition of existing dwelling and garage, and erection of 5 residential dwellings, at 13 Quarry Lane, North Anston
Recommendation	Granted Subject to conditions

This application is being presented to Planning Board due to the number of objections received.



Site Description & Location

This application relates to a large detached dormer bungalow constructed of artificial stone with a tiled roof located on Quarry Lane, North Anston. The site is located next to the car park for Greenlands Park. To the east of the site are a number of dwellings fronting Hall Close whilst to the north are residential properties on Greenland Close. The site is roughly rectangular in shape.

The area immediately adjacent to the site is predominately residential. There are a number of shops located across the road from the site to the south east on Quarry Lane.

The boundary of North Anston Conservation Area is directly to the south of the site.

Background

KP1962/1339: Outline app to erect dwelling

- GRANTED CONDITIONALLY 02/07/62

KP1963/1339A: Bungalow

- GRANTED 01/07/63

RB2009/0926: Outline application for demolition of existing bungalow and erection of 6 No. detached dwellinghouses

- GRANTED CONDITIONALLY 24/09/09

RB2012/1046: Outline application for demolition of existing bungalow and erection of 6 No. detached dwellinghouses (renewal of RB2009/0926)

- GRANTED CONDITIONALLY 11/09/12

RB2015/1258: Outline application for the demolition of existing bungalow and erection of 6 No. detached dwellinghouse with all matters reserved – GRANTED CONDITIONALLY 06/11/15

RB2020/1783: Outline application for the demolition of existing bungalow and erection of 6 No. dwellinghouses with all matters reserved - GRANTED CONDITIONALLY 09/04/21

CIL

The development is Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liable. CIL is generally payable on the commencement of development though there are certain exemptions. The payment of CIL is not material to the determination of the planning application. Accordingly, this information is presented simply for information.

Proposal

The application is for the demolition of the existing property and the erection of 5 No. dwellinghouses.

The development will comprise:

- 3 Three four Bed detached dwellings accessed from Quarry Lane on a private drive.
- 2 four bed link detached dwellings with attached single garages. The dwellings would be two storey with rooms in the roofspace. These properties would front Quarry Lane and would be accessed directly off Quarry Lane.

The dwellings would be constructed of brick with tiled roofs.

The layout of the proposals has been amended during the course of the application to overcome concerns raised by the Council's Highway Engineer.

Stage 1 Geo-Environmental Desk Study Report

The report sets out to identify feasible remediation options in respect of coal mining, gas protection and potential ground contamination.

Biodiversity Assessment

The purpose of the assessment is to determine the baseline biodiversity value of the Site and to assess if there are sufficient biodiversity enhancement opportunities available within the Site boundary to compensate for any residual biodiversity losses as a result of the Proposed Development. The report sets out potential mitigation measures.

Biodiversity Metric

The report submitted in March 2026 with the application provides the base line habitat value of the site of 0.25 Area habitat units and 0.42 Hedgerow units.

The report provides a preliminary post development assessment figure of -55.98% Area habitat units and -19.21% Hedgerow units resulting in a net change of -55.98% Area habitat units and -19.21% Hedgerow units.

To achieve a 10% net gain and satisfy the trading rules the development will need to provide 0.28 Area habitat units and 0.46 Hedgerow units off site.

The applicant is proposing to provide onsite mitigation, with offsite compensation to be purchased from a habitat bank.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

A desk study and field survey were undertaken in order to assess the potential of the site to support protected habitats and species and species of conservation concern. Recommendations for further survey, avoidance, mitigation and enhancement (where appropriate) have been made.

A Bat Roost Assessment and Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Survey Report has been submitted in support of the application. The Report concludes that there are no bats present at the property.

Development Plan Allocation and Policy

The Core Strategy was adopted by the Council on the 10th September 2014 and forms part of Rotherham's Local Plan together with the Sites and Policies Document which was adopted by the Council on the 27th June 2018.

The application site is allocated for residential purposes in the Local Plan. For the purposes of determining this application the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

Local Plan policy(s):

Core Strategy Policies

CS1 'Delivering Rotherham's Spatial Strategy'
CS3 'Location of New Developments'
CS6 'Meeting the Housing Requirement'
CS7 'Housing Mix and Affordability'
CS14 'Accessible Places and Managing Demand for Travel'
CS19 'Green Infrastructure'
CS20 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity'
CS21 'Landscapes'
CS23 'Valuing the Historic Environment'
CS25 'Dealing with Flood Risk'
CS27 'Community Health and Safety'
CS28 'Sustainable Design'
CS30 'Low Carbon and Renewable energy generation'
CS33 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development'

Sites and Policies Document Policies

SP26 'Sustainable Transport for Development'
SP32 'Green Infrastructure and Landscape'
SP33 'Conserving the Natural Environment'
SP35 'Protected and Priority Species'
SP41 'Conservation Areas'
SP47 'Understanding and Managing Flood Risk and Drainage'
SP52 'Pollution Control'
SP55 'Design Principles'

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) - On 6 March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched this planning practice guidance web-based resource. This was accompanied by a Written Ministerial Statement which includes a list of the previous planning practice guidance documents cancelled when this site was launched. It was last updated on 17th September 2018.

The NPPF states that "due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with this framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)."

The revised NPPF came into effect in December 2024. It states that "Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

The Local Plan policies referred to above are consistent with the NPPF and have been given due weight in the determination of this application.

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

The National Design Guide

National Internally Prescribed Internal Space Standards

South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide

Rotherham Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents:

- Air Quality and Emissions
- Transport Assessments, Travel Plans and Parking Standards
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Publicity

The application has been advertised by way of site notice along with individual neighbour notification letters to adjacent properties. Eight letters of representation have been received objecting to the application.

- Overdevelopment of the site which is harmful to the character of the immediate area and the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area.
- Concerns about the loss of green space and garden land.
- The proposal would increase on street parking and traffic on Quarry Lane.
- The access point is dangerous and would lead to reduced visibility for local residents entering Greenlands Park.
- Construction traffic could damage the road surface and create issues with access and parking.
- The proposed dwellings would overlook the children's play area in Greenland's Park which raised safeguarding concerns.
- The proposed dwellings would overlook neighbouring properties and appear overbearing and harm the outlook of neighbouring residents.
- Concerns about noise and dust during the construction phase.
- Need for a traffic management plan and restrictions on working hours.
- Potential health risks from asbestos within the property.
- Concerns about the loss of this attractive property.
- Concerns about the loss of a 200 year old stone wall fronting the site.
- Concerns about potential damage to the historic environment such as potential damage to Anston Hall gate piers.
- Concerns about potential habitat loss for wildlife.
- The proposal should have an Environmental Impact Assessment.

- Concern about increased carbon footprint from the demolition of the building and construction of new dwellings.
- The site is at risk from historic quarrying and mine workings and the ground may not be stable.
- Potential ground contamination.
- Concerns raised that all neighbours weren't correctly notified in accordance with national and local guidelines.
- The proposal could be amended to retain the existing property and build fewer dwellings to the rear or the layout could be reconfigured to protect heritage features and reduce traffic impact.

A total of 2no. Right to Speak requests have been received.

Consultations

RMBC Transportation Infrastructure Service: No objections to the amended layout subject to conditions.

RMBC Environmental Health: No objections.

RMBC Drainage: No objections subject to conditions.

RMBC Land Contamination: No objections subject to conditions.

RMBC Ecology: No objections subject to conditions.

The Coal Authority: No objections.

SY Police Designing Out Crime Officer: The scheme should be developed to secured by design standards.

Appraisal

The main issues in the determination of the application are considered to be:

- Principle
- Design, Size, Scale, Appearance
- Impact on existing residents
- Highways
- Air Quality and Emissions
- Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain
- General Amenity
- Land Contamination and ground stability
- Other issues raised by objectors

Principle

The application site is located within an area identified as 'Residential' within the Council's adopted Local Plan Policies map.

Policy SP11 'Development in Residential Areas' states that: "Residential areas identified on the Policies Map shall be retained primarily for residential uses. All residential uses shall be considered appropriate in these areas and will be considered in light of all relevant planning policies." The proposed residential development meets this Policy.

Policy SP12 'Development on Residential Gardens' states: "Proposals involving development on a garden or group of gardens, including infill of corner plots, will only be permitted where:

- a. The proposals would allow for a comprehensive scheme in the wider area to be achieved in the future; and
- b. The proposal does not harm the amenity of existing properties by overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of light or obtrusiveness; and
- c. Development would not result in harm to the character of the area."

In respect of criteria (a) listed above, no adjoining land is available for potential residential development so the scheme is considered to be comprehensive.

In terms of criteria (b) and (c) these will be assessed in greater detail in the following sections of this report.

Core Strategy Policy CS1 - Delivering Rotherham's Spatial Strategy states that: "Most new development will take place within Rotherham's urban area and at Principal Settlements for Growth. At Principal Settlements and Local Service Centres development will be appropriate to the size of the settlement, meet the identified needs of the settlement and its immediate area and help create a balanced sustainable community. Our strategy will make the best use of key transport corridors, existing infrastructure, services and facilities to reduce the need to travel and ensure that wherever possible communities are self-contained."

The NPPF notes at paragraph 68 that: "Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly. To promote the development of a good mix of sites local planning authorities should: (amongst other things) c) support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions – giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes."

This is also supported by Core Strategy Policy CS33 'Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development' states that for existing communities to grow in a sustainable way new development should, wherever possible, be located where accessibility between new housing, existing centres, facilities and services can be maximised.

In this instance, Table 1 of the Sites and Policies Local Plan 'Distribution of housing, employment and retail growth' identifies Dinnington, Anston and

Laughton Common as a 'Principal settlement for growth' and notes that they will provide 9% of the Borough's housing requirements during the Plan period. It adds that this figure is not a ceiling and that windfalls will provide additional flexibility.

It is considered that the site is within a sustainable location, given the site's close proximity to local amenities including medical centre and local shops, and being sited close to a bus route. In addition, the scheme amounts to a windfall site providing valuable additional housing within the Borough.

As such the site is within a highly sustainable location and would accord with the requirements of CS33 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development' and SP64 'Access to Community Facilities'.

Design, Size, Scale, Appearance

The NPPG notes that: *"Development proposals should reflect the requirement for good design set out in national and local policy. Local planning authorities will assess the design quality of planning proposals against their Local Plan policies, national policies and other material considerations."*

The NPPG further goes on to advise that: *"Local planning authorities are required to take design into consideration and should refuse permission for development of poor design."*

SP55 'Design Principles' states: *"All forms of development are required to be of high quality, incorporate inclusive design principles, create decent living and working environments, and positively contribute to the local character and distinctiveness of an area and the way it functions. This policy applies to all development proposals including alterations and extensions to existing buildings"*.

This approach is echoed in National Planning Policy in the NPPF.

Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states: *"The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities."*

Paragraph 139 states *"Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:*

- a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or*

- b) *outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.*"

In addition, CS21 'Landscapes' states new development will be required to safeguard and enhance the quality, character, distinctiveness and amenity value of the borough's landscapes. Furthermore, CS28 'Sustainable Design' indicates that proposals for development should respect and enhance the distinctive features of Rotherham and design should take all opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

The South Yorkshire Residential Design aims to provide a robust urban and highway design guidance. It promotes high quality design and development which is sensitive to the context in which it is located.

With regard to the site layout, it has been sympathetically designed taking account of existing dwellings and the character of the immediate surrounding area. It is noted that the site is directly to the north of the North Anston Conservation Area. However, it is considered that the proposals would not harm the setting of the Conservation Area.

All the proposed properties have been provided with their own garden space, and the new dwellings all have their own parking space next to or in front of the individual dwellings. There is also an area of soft landscaping retained to the front elevations of each Plot.

The boundary treatments have been put forward and are considered sympathetic and appropriate for the site and its surroundings.

With regard to the house types hereby proposed, they are different to the existing surrounding dwellings but have drawn some design features from the existing properties and thus the proposed design and would not be out of keeping and would enhance the character and appearance of the area.

Further to the above, whilst the design of the dwellings is different to that of the existing neighbouring properties, they do incorporate some design elements and would be constructed of similar materials to ensure that they amalgamate into the fabric of the area. Furthermore, the proposal is considered not to harm the setting of the adjacent North Anston Conservation Area.

It is therefore considered that the design of the properties is acceptable and raise no design issues. In addition, the size, scale, form and proposed materials will ensure the development would not be at odds with the character of the immediate surrounding area and would not introduce an incongruous feature.

It is noted that neighbouring residents raised concerns that the loss of the property would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Whilst this is noted, the property is not considered to have any architectural or historic merit and therefore its loss is considered to be acceptable in this instance. A neighbouring resident also raised concerns about the loss of an historic stone boundary wall to Quarry Lane. Whilst this is regrettable it is not considered to be sufficiently harmful to justify a reason for refusal in this instance.

Impact on existing residents

The South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide sets out appropriate spacing distances between properties. The SYRDG states that there should be a minimum of 21m between principal elevations or elevations with habitable room windows; and that an elevation with a habitable room window should be a minimum of 10m from a boundary with another property.

The development site has been designed to ensure there is minimal impact on existing residents to the north and east of the site.

Further to the above, the rear elevation of plots 2 would be 12m from the side elevation of plot 3 and a section drawing has been submitted which shows a 25 degree horizontal sight line would clear the ridge line.

With regard to the neighbouring property to the north No. 8 Greenland Close, the applicant has submitted a 45 degree line from the nearest habitable room window on the rear elevation of this property. The 45 degree line comfortably clears the nearest proposed dwelling Plot 5.

Therefore, having regard to the above it is considered that given the distance of the proposed properties from the rear gardens of neighbouring properties and between the proposed properties, they will not appear overbearing or oppressive and would not impact on outlook from these properties. It is also considered that due to the orientation of the site and relationship with existing neighbouring and proposed properties, the proposal would not result in any loss of direct sunlight or natural daylight to habitable rooms or rear gardens.

Accordingly, by virtue of the distance between properties, proposed boundary treatments, land levels and orientation of the site there would be no overlooking or privacy issues between new properties and there would be no detrimental overshadowing of habitable room windows or proposed private rear amenity spaces.

Highways

Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states: *“Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.”*

CS14 'Accessible Places and Managing Demand for Travel' states the Council will work on making places more accessible and that accessibility will be promoted through the proximity of people to employment, leisure, retail, health and public services by, amongst other things, locating new development in highly accessible locations such as town and district centres or on key bus corridors which are well served by a variety of modes of travel.

SP26 'Sustainable Transport for Development' states development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposals make adequate arrangements for sustainable transport infrastructure; local traffic circulation, existing parking and servicing arrangements are not adversely affected; the highway network is, or can be made, suitable to cope with traffic generated, during construction and after occupation; and the scheme takes into account good practice guidance.

The application will result in each dwelling having a parking allocation which is in accordance with the Council's parking standards. No concerns are raised with regards to visibility at the junction or any highway concerns. Therefore, in light of the above there are no objections to the granting of the application in a highway context subject to the recommended condition.

Air Quality and Emissions

Policy CS30 'Low Carbon & Renewable Energy Generation' states: *"Development must seek to reduce carbon dioxide emissions thorough the inclusion of mitigation measures..."* In addition, regard will be had to the guidance contained within Council's adopted SPD 'Air Quality and Emissions'.

NPPF states at paragraph 117 that amongst other things applications for development should be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

The SPD notes that there should be 1 charging point per space (unallocated parking). Details have been submitted that show each space will be provided with a charging point and this will be secured via condition.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (amongst other things) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.

Policy CS20 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' states: *"The Council will conserve and enhance Rotherham's natural environment. Biodiversity and geodiversity resources will be protected, and measures will be taken to enhance these resources ..."*

Policy SP33 'Conserving the Natural Environment' states: *"Development will be expected to enhance biodiversity and geodiversity on-site with the aim of contributing to wider biodiversity and geodiversity delivery..."*

Policy SP35 'Protected and Priority Species' states: *"Planning permission for development likely to have a direct or indirect adverse impact on the following will only be granted if they can demonstrate that there are no alternative sites with less or no harmful impacts that could be developed and that mitigation and / or compensation measures can be put in place that enable the status of the species to be conserved or enhanced."*

Ecological reports and surveys including a BNG metric have been submitted in support of the application and have been assessed by the Council's Ecologist. Who has commented as follows:

A bat survey report has been submitted and confirms that no bats were observed emerging from any of the buildings site. The survey was undertaken within the survey season and the conditions were suitable. As such, I am content with the results.

The majority of habitats on site will be removed to accommodate the proposal; this will result in the loss of grassland and hedgerows resulting in a net loss of habitat and hedgerow units. Therefore, the metric indicates that 0.17 habitat units and 0.12 hedgerow units are required to ensure a minimum 10% gain and meet the trading rules. However, please note that an area of modified grassland is noted as being retained within the BNG assessment, however this grassland is not shown on the site plan. If the grassland is to be removed then it should be accounted for within the metric. This will impact the total net loss of habitats on site. This can be clarified when the biodiversity gain condition on is discharged. As no significant habitats are being proposed on site a HMMP is not required.

As it is intended to purchase off-site biodiversity units to meet the developments BNG requirements, these would ideally be purchased within the Rotherham LPA boundary, where possible.

If it is intended to purchase statutory biodiversity credits to meet the developments BNG requirements, the applicant should refer to government advice (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/statutory-biodiversity-credits>). As the advice states the developer should discuss use of credits with the LPA prior to purchasing them. If a development needs less than 0.25 biodiversity units (area or linear) to achieve 10% net gain, statutory credits can be purchased without having to give evidence that insufficient off-site options (i.e. habitat banks) are available.

The Council's Ecologist has raised no objections to the proposals and has confirmed that the proposals are acceptable in ecology terms, subject to conditions relating to the development being in accordance with the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and the Roost Assessment and Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Survey Report. A condition is also recommended that a Biodiversity Mitigation Scheme to be submitted, which should include protection of retained features and retention and/or enhancement of habitats.

It is considered that the proposal is acceptable in ecology terms subject to the recommended conditions.

Land Contamination and Ground stability

The submitted Geoenvironmental Risk Assessment and Coal Mining Risk Assessment document identified contamination within 'Parcel 2', following the site investigation that has been undertaken on the development area. The report has provided a comprehensive assessment of the site, and the sampling results show elevated contamination within the site area.

As such it is considered that there will be the requirement for remediation measures to be undertaken on the proposed development site, and this will require conditions attaching to the application to address these requirements.

With regards to ground stability, the Coal Authority have confirmed that *"We have reviewed the site location plan provided and can confirm that the site falls within the Coal Authority's defined Development Low Risk Area. On this basis we have no specific comments to make."*

As such, it is considered that no concerns are raised about ground stability and the Coal Authority's Standing Advice Note should be relayed to the applicant in terms of an informative.

Other issues raised by neighbouring residents

It is noted that neighbouring residents raised concerns about potential safeguarding issues from the proposed dwellings overlooking Greenland's Park play area. Whilst this is noted, it is considered that the dwellings themselves are located at a significant distance from the children's play area and as residential properties would not lead to any safeguarding concerns. Furthermore, it is noted that a number of other existing dwellings also directly overlook the park and the playground which are located closer than the proposed.

Neighbouring residents raised concerns about the potential noise and disturbance from construction traffic during the construction phase. They also raised concerns about the risks from asbestos in the property. Whilst this is noted, the removal of asbestos is covered by separate regulations. Furthermore, the proposed Construction Environmental Management Plan should mitigate the impacts on neighbouring residents during the construction phase.

Concerns were raised about potential damage to the historic environment including potential damage to the gate piers at the entrance to Anston Hall. Whilst this is noted, any damage to neighbouring buildings or structures would be a civil matter and cannot be taken into consideration with regard to this application.

Neighbouring residents requested that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) should be submitted with the application. Whilst this is noted, it is

considered that the small scale of the scheme does not represent EIA development and therefore an EIA would not be required in this instance as the impacts are only local.

Concerns were raised about the embedded carbon and increased carbon generated by the development. Whilst this is noted, the new dwellings would all be constructed to modern building regulations which require a high degree of insulation and therefore the new dwellings would be more energy efficient than the existing dwelling. Whilst the loss of the dwelling on the site would lead to loss of embodied carbon the proposal would provide net increase of 4 dwellings which is a public benefit which is considered to outweigh the impact of the embodied carbon from the loss of this existing dwelling.

A neighbour raised concerns that neighbouring residents weren't properly notified of the application. However, this was not the case as the publicity was carried out in accordance with our scheme of notification with all adjoining neighbours being notified in writing and a site notice posted near the site.

Conclusion

Having regard to the above it is concluded that for the reasons set out in this report, the development for the demolition of the existing dwelling and erection of 5 No. dwellings complies with the relevant national and local planning policies and thus outweighs the objections raised and is subsequently recommended for approval.

Conditions

The Development Management Procedure Order 2015 requires that planning authorities provide written reasons in the decision notice for imposing planning conditions that require particular matters to be approved and/or carried out before development can start. Conditions number 06 of this permission requires matters to be approved and/or carried out before development works begin; however, in this instance the conditions are justified because:

- i. In the interests of the expedient determination of the application it was considered to be appropriate to reserve certain matters of detail for approval by planning condition rather than unnecessarily extending the application determination process to allow these matters of detail to be addressed pre-determination.
- ii. The details required under condition numbers 06 is fundamental to the acceptability of the development and the nature of the further information required to satisfy these conditions is such that it would be inappropriate to allow the development to proceed until the necessary approvals have been secured, or matters carried out.'

General

01

The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason

In order to comply with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02

The permission hereby granted shall relate to the area shown outlined in red on the approved location plan and the development shall only take place in accordance with the submitted details and specifications and as shown on the approved plans

EC-83-10 – Location Plan (received 07/07/2026)

EC-83-30 Rev B (received 10/03/2026)

EC-83-10 – Site Plan Rev D (received 24/06/2026)

EC-83-15 Rev D1 – Boundary Treatment (received 07/07/2026)

EC-83-40 – Fire Appliance Plan (received 24/06/2026)

EC-83-60 (received 07/07/2026)

Reason

To define the permission and for the avoidance of doubt.

Materials

03

No development above ground level shall take place until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted have been submitted or samples of the materials have been left on site, and the details/samples have been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details/samples.

Reason

To ensure that appropriate materials are used in the construction of the development in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS28 Sustainable Design.

Highways

04

Before the development is brought into use, that part of the site to be used by vehicles shall be constructed with either

a/ a permeable surface and associated water retention/collection drainage, or;

b/ an impermeable surface with water collected and taken to a separately constructed water retention/discharge system within the site. The area shall thereafter be maintained in a working condition.

Reason

To ensure that surface water can adequately be drained and that mud and other extraneous material is not deposited on the public highway and that each dwelling can be reached conveniently from the footway in the interests of the adequate drainage of the site, road safety and residential amenity.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points

05

Prior to the occupation of each dwelling, details of one vehicle charging point per dwelling shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The dwelling shall not be occupied until the charging point has been provided and shall thereafter be retained.

Reason

In the interests of sustainable development and air quality.

General Amenity

06

Prior to the commencement of any works (including demolition) on site, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The plan shall describe in detail the actions that will be taken to minimise adverse impacts on occupiers of nearby properties by effectively controlling:

- Noise & vibration arising from all construction and demolition related activities - Contractors and site staff are expected to use the best practical means to minimise noise on site. Regard shall be had to the guidance detailed in BS5228-1:2009+A1:2014: 'Noise and Vibration Control on Construction Sites'.
- Dust arising from all construction and demolition related activities - Contractors and site staff are expected to use the best practical means to minimise dust on site. Regard shall be had to the guidance detailed in Institute of Air Quality Management- Guidance of the assessment of dust from demolition and construction 2014.
- Artificial lighting used in connection with all construction related activities and security of the construction site - Contractors and site staff are expected to use the best practical means to minimise light nuisance on site. Regard shall be had to the guidance detailed in the Institution of Lighting Professionals - Guidance Note 01/21 – Reduction of Obtrusive Light.

The CEMP to be submitted shall be in report format and as a minimum is to include the following details as specified in the subheadings below:

- Program and Phasing Details
 - Site layout
 - Operational hours
 - Expected duration of demolition and construction work phases
- Site Management
 - Contact details of site manager for public liaison purposes –
 - Complaints procedure
 - Roles and responsibilities
- Routes for Construction Traffic
 - Routes to be used for access onto site and egress
 - One way systems
 - Haul routes (onsite and delivery)
- Site Access, Storage and Movement of Materials
 - Delivery access point details
 - Location details of storage areas
 - Delivery times of materials and plant
- Dust, Debris and Mud
 - Screening and hoarding
 - Preventative measures
 - Dust suppression measures General and machinery
 - Wheel wash facilities
 - Road sweeping facilities
 - Covering of dusty stockpiles
 - Vehicles carrying dusty loads
 - Dust monitoring
 - Boundary checks
 - Monitoring of weather including wind speed and direction, dry conditions etc
- Noise and Vibration Control
 - Silencing of vehicles, plant and machinery
 - Mitigation measures for noisy operations
 - Operational hours
 - One way systems
 - Vehicle reverse alarms
 - Leaflet drops to noise sensitive premises
- Artificial Lighting
 - Hours of operation of the lighting
 - Location and specification of all of the luminaires
 - Level of maintained average horizontal illuminance for the areas that needs to be illuminated

- Predicted vertical illuminance that will be caused by the proposed lighting when measured at windows of any properties in the vicinity
 - Measures that will be taken to minimise or eliminate glare and stray light arising from the use of the lighting that is caused beyond the boundary of the site
- Waste Management
 - Waste storage
 - Waste collection
 - Recycling Waste removal

Reason:

To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties and promote sustainable development in accordance with Part 15 of the NPPF and RMBC Policy SP52.

Contaminated Land

07

Prior to any ground works commencing, a Phase 2 Intrusive Site Investigation shall be undertaken to assess the geotechnical and geo-environmental constraints at the site complete with ground gas monitoring. A detailed scope of works including the methodology for investigation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Authority prior to any site investigation works commencing. The site investigation shall thereafter be undertaken in accordance with the approved details. The investigation and subsequent risk assessment must be undertaken by competent persons, and a written report of the findings must be produced and will be subject to approval in writing by this Local Planning Authority. The above should be conducted in accordance with the new guidance document 'Land Contamination Risk Management' (June 2025) and predecessor guidance 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11 (Environment Agency, 2004) and BS10175:2011+A2 2017 (BSI, 2017)

Reason

To ensure the safe occupation of the site in accordance with Policy SP54 of the Rotherham Local Plan and paragraph numbers 187, 196 and 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024.

08

Subject to the findings of item 1 above and prior to above ground works commencing, a Remediation Method Statement shall be provided for the approval of this Local Authority prior to any remediation/ground improvement works commencing on site. The works shall be of such a nature as to render harmless any possible identified contamination given the proposed end use of the site and surrounding environment including any controlled waters, the site must not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environment Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation. The approved Remediation works shall be carried out in full on site under a quality assurance scheme to demonstrate compliance with the

proposed methodology and best practice guidance. The Local Authority must be given two weeks written notification of commencement of the remediation scheme works.

Reason

To ensure the safe occupation of the site in accordance with Policy SP54 of the Rotherham Local Plan and paragraph numbers 187, 196 and 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024.

09

If virgin material, subsoil/topsoil materials are required to be imported to site for remedial works, then these materials will need to be tested at a rate and frequency to be agreed with the Local Authority to ensure they are free from contamination and will not present a risk to future users of the site and the environment.

Reason

To ensure the safe occupation of the site in accordance with Policy SP54 of the Rotherham Local Plan and paragraph numbers 187, 196 and 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024.

10

If during development works unexpected significant contamination is encountered, the local planning authority shall be notified in writing immediately. Any requirements for remedial works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Authority. Works thereafter shall be carried out in accordance with an approved Method Statement. This is to ensure the development will be suitable for use and that identified contamination will not present significant risks to human health or the environment.

Reason

To ensure the safe occupation of the site in accordance with Policy SP54 of the Rotherham Local Plan and paragraph numbers 187, 196 and 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024.

11

Following completion of any required remedial/ground preparation works a Verification Report should be forwarded to the Local Authority for review and comment. The Verification Report shall include details of the remediation works and quality assurance certificates to show that the works have been carried out in full accordance with the approved methodology. Details of any post-remedial sampling and analysis to show the site has reached the required clean-up criteria shall be included in the Verification Report together with the necessary documentation detailing what waste materials have been removed from the site. The site shall not be brought into use until such time as all verification data has been approved by the Local Authority.

Reason

To ensure the safe occupation of the site in accordance with Policy SP54 of the Rotherham Local Plan and paragraph numbers 187, 196 and 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

12

The development shall be completed in line with the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment and the Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Survey Report, and the conditions of the planning permission. All the recommendations in the reports shall be implemented in full according to the timescales laid out, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and thereafter permanently maintained for the stated purposes of biodiversity conservation.

Reason

To protect species protected by law.

13

Notwithstanding the submitted details, no development shall take place (including demolition, ground works and vegetation clearance) until a Biodiversity Mitigation Scheme (BMS) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The BMS will set out any precautionary measures to be adopted on site during construction, such as protection of retained features, reasonable avoidance measures for protected and priority species and appropriate removal of non-native invasive species. Incorporation of features such as creation, retention and/or enhancement of habitats, integral bat and bird boxes (minimum of one of each per dwelling) on proposed buildings and hedgehog access points within proposed fencing.

Reason

In the interests of biodiversity and ecology.

Drainage

14

Prior to the commencement of ground works, details of the, surface water and all related works necessary to drain the site shall have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. These works shall be carried out concurrently with the development and the drainage system shall be operating to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority prior to the occupation of the development.

Reason

To ensure that the site is connected to suitable drainage systems and to ensure that full details thereof are approved by the Local Planning Authority before any works begin and in accordance with Policy CS25 of the Local Plan.

Informative(s)

01

Biodiversity Net Gain

Unless an exception or a transitional arrangement applies¹, the effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition “(the biodiversity gain condition”) that **development may not begin** unless:

- a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan in respect of this permission would be Rotherham MBC. Failure to submit a Biodiversity Gain Plan prior to the commencement of development will lead to formal enforcement action being considered, which could be in the form of a Temporary Stop Notice (that will require all development on site to stop, for a period of 56 days).

Biodiversity Gain Plan

The biodiversity gain plan must include/accompanied by:

- a) information about the steps taken or to be taken to minimise the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the onsite habitat and any other habitat;
- b) the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;
- c) the post-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;
- d) any registered offsite biodiversity gain allocated to the development and the biodiversity and the biodiversity value of that gain in relation to the development;
- e) any biodiversity credits purchased for the development;
- f) any information relating to irreplaceable habitat making up onsite habitat
- g) information about steps taken or to be taken to minimise any adverse effect of the development on, and arrangements for compensation for any impact the development has on the biodiversity of, any irreplaceable habitat⁴ present within the onsite baseline.
- h) any additional information requirements stipulated by the secretary of state.

The effect of section 73D of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

If planning permission is granted on an application made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (application to develop land without compliance with conditions previously attached) and a Biodiversity Gain Plan was approved in relation to the previous planning permission (“the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan”) there are circumstances when the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan is regarded as approved for the purpose of discharging the

biodiversity gain condition subject to which the section 73 planning permission is granted.

Those circumstances are that the conditions subject to which the section 73 permission is granted:

1. do not affect the post-development value of the onsite habitat as specified in the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan, and
 2. in the case of planning permission for a development where all or any part of the onsite habitat is irreplaceable habitat the conditions do not change the effect of the development on the biodiversity of that onsite habitat (including any arrangements made to compensate for any such effect) as specified in the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan.
- Listed exemptions from Statutory BNG and transitional arrangements can be found at Biodiversity net gain: exempt developments - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
 - The Statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan template can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-gain-plan>
 - Minimum legal requirements for the Biodiversity Gain plan can be found at [https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/schedule/14#:~:text=paragraph%2015\).-,Biodiversity%20gain%20plan,-14](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/schedule/14#:~:text=paragraph%2015).-,Biodiversity%20gain%20plan,-14)
 - Irreplaceable habitats for the purposed of Biodiversity Net Gain are defined by Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024. A full list of irreplaceable habitats can be found at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/48/schedule/made>
 - Additional information required is outlined by Articles 37C(2) [Non Phased] 37C(4) [Phased] of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 and may be subject to the nature of your application <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/595#:~:text=Additional%20content%20of%20plan>
 - Where a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan is required: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5813530037846016>

02

You should note that the Council's Neighbourhood Enforcement have a legal duty to investigate any complaints about noise or dust which may arise during the construction phase. If a statutory nuisance is found to exist they must serve an Abatement Notice under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Failure to comply with the requirements of an Abatement Notice may result in a fine of up to £20,000 upon conviction in the Magistrates' Court. It is therefore recommended that you give serious consideration to reducing general disturbance by restricting the hours that operations and deliveries take place, minimising dust and preventing mud, dust and other materials being deposited on the highway.

03

These are new residences and as such must comply with approved document Q of the Building Regulations, this is exactly the same standard as required by Secure by Design but using Police approved products. This being the case there is no additional financial cost to the development being built to Secure by Design, but it will add significant value to the properties and to the quality of life for the future residents. As such the development should be designed and built to **Secured by Design** www.securedbydesign.com. The following is recommended:

Defensible Space

Each dwelling should have a front boundary to a height of 1 metre to allow for visible surveillance into and from the dwellings in question.

Boundary Treatment

All rear gardens should be secured with a min 1.8m high fence.
A 1.8m lockable gate should be fitted as close the front boundary line as possible to secure the rear of the dwellings.

Surveillance

Any landscaping and front boundaries should be kept low at no more than 1 metre high and any trees to have no foliage below 2m to aid natural surveillance. Positioning of trees should be careful not to mask any Lighting Column's.

Lighting

Any external paths and car parking areas should be well lit with an LED lighting scheme to standard BS5489 with no dark areas.
All front and rear doors should be lit with a wall mounted luminaire to provide lighting in line with standard BS5489 which should operate on a dusk to dawn sensor and spread the light downward.

Security of Dwellings

In line with SBD standards, all front / rear doors and ground floor windows should comply with PAS 24:2022.

04

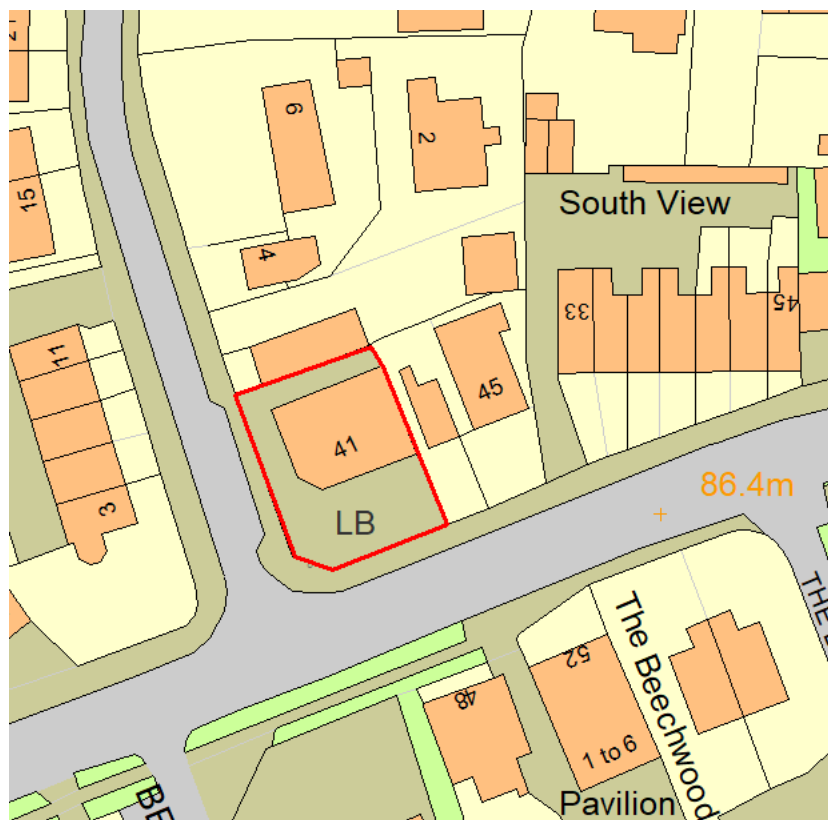
Development Low Risk Area - Standing Advice The proposed development lies within a coal mining area which may contain unrecorded coal mining related hazards. If any coal mining feature is encountered during development, this should be reported immediately to the Mining Remediation Authority on 0345 762 6846 or if a hazard is encountered on site call the emergency line 0800 288 4242. Further information is also available on the Mining Remediation Authority website at: Mining Remediation Authority - GOV.UK

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

During the determination of the application, the Local Planning Authority worked with the applicant to consider what amendments were necessary to make the scheme acceptable. The applicant agreed to amend the scheme so that it was in accordance with the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Application Number	RB2026/0480 https://rotherham.planportal.co.uk/?id=RB2026/0480
Proposal and Location	Construction of 4 apartments over existing buildings with rooms in roofspace, balconies to front and stairs and access balcony to rear, conversion of laundrette to cycle/bin store and erection of 2.1m high fence to rear at 41 Worksop Road Swallownest Rotherham S26 4WA
Recommendation	Grant with conditions

This application is being presented to Planning Board due to the number of objections received.



Site Description & Location

The site occupies a corner plot at the junction of Worksop Road and Manvers Road in Swallownest. It currently comprises two commercial units: a main building, which is occupied by a bathroom sales company and will be retained, and a smaller unit, which is presently vacant and will be incorporated into the proposed development.

There are other retail premises located to the rear of the site and a health centre and church further to the east on Worksop Road. The building to the rear on Manvers Road (the former post office) is indicated to be in the applicant's ownership and now consists of a hairdressers with a flat above which has an external terrace.

The site itself, whilst relatively level is located on a hill with the properties on Manvers Road to the western side being located at a much lower level and those to the east being considerably higher.

The existing commercial unit has a car parking area to the front accessed from Worksop Road.

Background

There have been several applications relating to this site and the adjacent former post office on Manvers Road:

RB2004/2519	Change of use to beauty salon – Granted (former post office)
RB2006/0694	Change of use from A1 (retail) to A5 (hot food takeaway) -Granted (No. 41)
RB2007/1459	First floor extension over existing beauty salon to form flat – Granted conditionally (former post office)
RB2008/0181	Change of use from shop to hot food restaurant (use class A3) – Granted conditionally (No.41)
RB2010/1499	First floor extension over existing beauty salon to form flat – Granted conditionally (former post office)
RB2022/0833	Siting of storage container and erection of 2.8m high gates – Granted conditionally (No. 41)

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

With regard to CIL, the Council have now adopted its charging strategy which came into force on 3rd July 2017, full details of which are available at: www.rotherham.gov.uk/cil

CIL is generally payable on the commencement of development though there are certain exemptions, such as for affordable housing and self-build developments. It should be noted that the payment of CIL is not material to the determination of the planning application or to the viability of a project.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The development being located above existing properties will not impact on biodiversity by way of any loss of existing habitat and as such is exempt from the BNG +10% requirements.

Proposal

The proposed development is for the construction of 4no. duplex apartments above the existing retained ground floor commercial unit. This will include the

provision of a rear external staircase to provide access via an external walkway to each apartment. The walkway is indicated to be screened by a 2.1m high latted fence.

Each apartment provides an open plan living area with a balcony fronting onto Worksoy Road to provide external amenity space and two bedrooms in the roof space. Additional shared external amenity space is provided to the rear of the development via a gated entrance.

Car parking is provided to the front of the property with 4 spaces allocated for the apartments which include EV charging points in addition to 2 parking spaces for the commercial unit/visitors.

A bin and cycle store will also be provided through the former small commercial unit

The following documents have been submitted in support of the application:

A Planning Statement which includes the following:

- The proposal has been carefully designed with regard to the scale, massing, height, and grain of surrounding development
- The height is appropriate to the street scene and will not be overly dominant or incongruous in this setting
- The proposal incorporates a palette of high-quality, durable materials that reflect local character
- The mixed-use format contributes to a vibrant streetscape, supporting active frontage at ground level while residential uses above add vitality and natural surveillance
- The development will contribute positively towards local housing delivery, which is of particular importance given that the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a full five-year housing land supply.

Development Plan Allocation and Policy

The Core Strategy was adopted by the Council on the 10th September 2014 and forms part of Rotherham's Local Plan together with the Sites and Policies Document which was adopted by the Council on the 27th June 2018.

The application site is allocated for retail purposes within a District Centre in the Local Plan. For the purposes of determining this application the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

Local Plan policy(s):

CS3: Location of New Development

CS14 'Accessible Places and Managing Demand for Travel,

CS27 'Community Health and Safety'

CS33 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development'

CS28 'Sustainable Design.'

SP 19 'Development Within Town, District and Local Centres'
SP26 'Sustainable Transport for Development'
SP55 'Design Principles'

SPD no.2 – Air Quality and Emissions
SPD 12 Transport Assessments Travel Plans and Parking Standards June 2021
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Nationally Prescribed Space Standard
South Yorkshire Residential Design Guidance (SYRDG)

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) - On 6 March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched this planning practice guidance web-based resource. This was accompanied by a Written Ministerial Statement which includes a list of the previous planning practice guidance documents cancelled when this site was launched.

National Planning Policy Framework: The revised NPPF came into effect in February 2019. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It sits within the plan-led system, stating at paragraph 2 that "Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise" and that it is "a material consideration in planning decisions".

The Local Plan policies referred to above are consistent with the NPPF and have been given due weight in the determination of this application.

Publicity

The application has been advertised by way of site notices along with individual neighbour notification letters to adjacent properties. 11 letters of representation have been received. The objections received can be summarised as follows:

- Loss of privacy due to overlooking of home and garden;
- It will block views from nearby homes and create a closed in feeling;
- The building would dominate the surrounding properties as well as over shadowing them;
- The tall buildings on Manvers Road replaced existing tall buildings therefore these do not set a precedent;
- Building would be dominant and out of keeping with area;
- Increased demand for on street parking which is already limited;
- Additional vehicles could contribute to congestion and reduced road safety;
- Safety of pedestrians due to illegal parking;

- Goods vehicles already block Manvers Road when making deliveries;
- The removal of greenery and soil could result in flooding;
- Potential damage to utility pipes during construction;
- Hygiene issues from bin storage area;
- May obstruct legally protected drainage easements;
- Current issues of storage and disposal of commercial waste; and
- Construction noise

At the time of writing this report there has been one Right to Speak request from the applicant's agent.

Consultations

RMBC Transportation Unit: Raise no objections to the proposal subject to conditions regarding the marking out and formation of the parking spaces.

RMBC Environmental health: No objections.

RMBC Drainage: No objections.

Yorkshire water: No objections.

Appraisal

Where an application is made to a local planning authority for planning permission.....In dealing with such an application the authority shall have regard to -

- (a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application,
- (b) any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and
- (c) any other material considerations. - S. 70 (2) TCPA '90.

If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise - S.38 (6) PCPA 2004.

The main considerations in the determination of the application are:

- The principle of the proposal
- Design and Layout
- Residential Amenity
- Highways issues
- Drainage
- Air Quality
- Other Issues raised by objectors

The principle of the proposal

The site has been identified for retail use in the adopted Local Plan and the existing building has a retail/business use. The site is located within the Swallownest District centre.

Local Plan Policy SP 19 'Development Within Town, District and Local Centres' states that proposals for residential use above ground floors will be supported providing that the development would not compromise the successful operation of the ground floor premises for commercial uses.

The proposal maintains the main commercial use within the majority of the ground floor, with the change of use of the former small laundrette to incorporate the area into the proposal as a bike and bin storage area and access to the external stairs.

Residential use is listed as an acceptable use within the designated district centre. The supporting text to Policy SP 19 states that the policy sets out the uses which will be acceptable in principle within town, district and local centres. It recognises the role that housing can play in supporting the vitality and viability of centres by supporting residential proposals within centres.

Housing will be limited to above ground floor level within Main Shopping Areas, recognising the importance of these areas as the focus for shopping facilities. This also recognises the need to support mixed use development within centres, with active uses at ground floor level."

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that development plans include policies that will promote sustainable development in economic, social and environmental terms. They should provide improved access for all to jobs, services, shops, and facilities, by ensuring that new development is located where possible to allow access to services or facilities on foot, bicycle and should aim for a balance of land uses within the area so that people are encouraged to minimise journey lengths.

The proposal retains the primary commercial use at ground floor level and provides four additional residential units above. It is located in a sustainable area with shops and services within walking distance and is therefore considered acceptable in principle.

Design and layout

Local Plan policy CS28 'Sustainable Design' indicates that proposals for development should respect and enhance the distinctive features of Rotherham. They should develop a strong sense of place with a high quality of public realm and well-designed buildings. Development proposals should be responsive to their context and be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping. Moreover it states design should

take all opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

Policy SP55 'Design Principles' states development is required to be of high quality and incorporate inclusive design principles and positively contribute to the local character and distinctiveness of an area and the way it functions. These policies and guidance are backed up by the NPPF and the NPPG which both support good design.

Representations have been received raising concerns that the proposed development would result in a building that is out of keeping with the character of the surrounding area, appearing unduly dominant within the street scene and giving rise to overshadowing of neighbouring properties.

In assessing the proposal, it is acknowledged that the development would increase the height of the existing building through the addition of a further full storey above the current single-storey structure. However, the proposed design incorporates a hipped roof form, with the upper-floor accommodation largely contained within the roof space. This approach reduces the perceived bulk of the building and moderates its visual impact when viewed from the surrounding area.

The resultant scale and massing are considered comparable to Pavilion Apartments located on the opposite side of Worksop Road, which provides an established example of a similarly scaled residential development within the locality. As such, the proposal would not appear incongruous within the wider context of the area.

In terms of appearance, the use of rendered wall finishes with brick detailing, together with a slate roof, reflects materials commonly found within neighbouring residential properties and more recent developments along Worksop Road. The proposed palette of materials is therefore considered appropriate and sympathetic to the prevailing character of the area.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal would maintain and enhance the character and appearance of both the host site and the wider street scene. The design, scale, massing and choice of materials are therefore regarded as acceptable and compliant with Policies CS28 and SP55 of the adopted Local Plan.

Residential Amenity

With regard to the impact of the proposals on residential amenity, Local Plan Policy SP55 states: "Proportionate to the scale, nature, location and sensitivity of development, regard will be had to the following when considering development proposals: (amongst others):

- a) the setting of the site, including the size, scale, mass, volume, height, orientation, form, and grain of surrounding development;
- g) the design and layout of buildings to enable sufficient sunlight and daylight to penetrate into and between buildings and ensure that adjoining land or properties are protected from overshadowing.”

There are residential properties to the side across Manvers Road, on the opposite side of Worksop Road and further up on Worksop Road and to the rear on Manvers Road.

Objections have been received regarding the potential for overlooking and loss of privacy. The nearest residential property to the rear is located in excess of 21 metres from the proposed development and is positioned at an offset angle to the north-east rather than directly opposite the site. Whilst there may be some limited views from the second-floor bedroom windows towards neighbouring properties, it is considered that the separation distance, together with the relationship and orientation between the buildings, would ensure that any overlooking would not result in an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers or a significant loss of privacy.

With regard to the properties located opposite the site on Manvers Road, these dwellings are situated at a considerably lower ground level than the application site. Whilst the proposed side-facing bedroom window would be located at a distance below the 21-metre separation generally sought between opposing habitable room windows, the significant difference in levels between the properties means that views would be directed predominantly over, rather than into, neighbouring dwellings. As such, it is not considered that the proposal would result in unacceptable overlooking or a material loss of privacy for the occupants of these properties.

The residential properties on Worksop Road are located at a sufficient distance from the proposed development such that no adverse impacts are anticipated in terms of overlooking or loss of privacy.

With regard to the potential impact on daylight and outlook, the applicant has submitted a 25-degree assessment measured from the habitable room windows of properties on Manvers Road. The South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide (SYRDG) advises that, for daylighting purposes, development facing neighbouring windows should generally remain below the 25-degree line and also recommends a minimum separation distance of 12 metres between a habitable room window and a blank elevation (or an elevation containing only non-habitable room windows).

Whilst the proposed development does not fully comply with the 25-degree guideline, this assessment is intended as a tool to assist in evaluating potential impacts on daylight and outlook and should be considered in the context of the specific site circumstances. In this instance, the proposed

building is separated from the affected dwellings by the full width of Manvers Road and there is also a notable difference in site levels. Furthermore, the proposed separation distance between the nearest habitable room windows on Manvers Road and the blank elevation of the development is approximately 16.6 metres, which exceeds the SYRDG's recommended minimum separation distance of 12 metres. Taking these factors into account, it is considered that the degree of separation is sufficient to ensure that the development would not result in a materially harmful overbearing effect, unacceptable loss of outlook, or significant loss of daylight to neighbouring occupiers.

Finally, the NPPF at paragraph 135 (f) states that Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

The proposed apartments meet the prescribed internal size as set out in the nationally described space standards. The SYRDG advises on garden space and for this type of development there needs to be at least 50 sq m of shared private amenity space with an additional 10 sq m per unit either as balcony space or added to shared private space. The submitted plans address this by the inclusion of balconies to the front of each apartment and a shared amenity space to the rear.

The apartments are therefore considered to be of an appropriate design and layout to ensure the standard of amenity for future occupiers

Detrimental impacts caused by construction noise and disturbance have been raised by nearby residents and Environmental Health officers have also raised concerns that there could be the potential for disturbance during the construction phase due to noise and dust. To minimise any disturbance, they recommend that conditions are imposed on any permission granted to advise the applicant how to mitigate against this.

Highways

Local Plan Policy SP26 'Sustainable Transport for Development' states that: "Development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that: (amongst others);

- b. local traffic circulation, existing parking and servicing arrangements are not adversely affected;
- c. the highway network is, or can be made, suitable to cope with the traffic generated in terms of the number, type and size of vehicles involved, during construction and after occupation;

The NPPF at paragraph 109 states that "Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that: (amongst others)

- c) understanding and addressing the potential impacts of development on transport networks;
- e) identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use;

At paragraph 116 the NPPF further adds that: "Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe."

Objections have been received from nearby residents with regard to existing parking problems on Manvers Road causing congestion and difficulty at the junction with Worksop Road.

The proposal includes parking to the front of the building. Highways officers have assessed the proposals and note that 4 parking bays are proposed for the residential units and 2 for the commercial building.

Cycle storage facilities are to be provided, and the site is close to local amenities such as a health centre, local shops and bus stops the site is therefore considered to be in a sustainable location.

Highways officers note that there is a layby adjacent to the site on Manvers Road without any parking restrictions which is available to visitors, residents or for loading and unloading.

Whilst highways officers note the concerns raised by residents in terms of congestion and illegal parking in the area they state that there are significant lengths of 'no waiting at any time' restrictions at the junction of Worksop Road and Manvers Road to prevent vehicles obstructing the visibility at the junction and any illegal parking is a matter for highways enforcement.

Drainage

Concerns have been raised that removal of soil could cause increased flooding, the Councils drainage engineer has assessed the proposal and considers that there is no increase in flood risk and no increase in surface water run off.

Further concerns with regard to potential damage to utility pipes during construction

and obstruction of legally protected easements have also been received. Yorkshire Water have raised no objections to the development and any damage or obstruction would be a civil matter that the applicant would need to address.

Air Quality

Supplementary Planning Document No. 2 Air Quality and Emissions aims to assist in reducing emissions to air in Rotherham. New developments have the

potential to affect air quality and local planning policy will play a significant role in ensuring that development schemes are designed to be sustainable.

The NPPF at paragraph 117 states that applications for development should :

- a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;
- e) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

A secure covered bike store is to be provided to encourage cycling and minimise car usage and the proposal includes 4 new EV charging points for the proposed apartment parking spaces and as such complies with the SPD which recommends the provision of one charging point per parking space for flats.

Other Issues raised by objectors

Damage to gas and water pipes from construction work

The liability for any damage to utilities lies with the construction company that carries out the work.

Hygiene issues from bin storage area

The proposed bin storage is within the area of the previous small retail unit, and it would be the tenants responsibility to maintain this area as per any other residential property.

Construction noise

There is always the potential for noise and disturbance from any new development, conditions are being recommended to advice best practice to address this but ultimately any serious issues of this nature would be investigated by Environmental health officers

Conclusion

The proposed development would provide four new residential apartments above an existing commercial unit within the Swallownest District Centre, retaining the established commercial use at ground floor level and supporting the vitality and viability of the centre. The proposal represents an appropriate form of mixed-use development in a sustainable location with good access to local services, facilities and public transport.

The scale, design and appearance of the development are considered to be sympathetic to the character of the surrounding area and would not result in harm to the visual amenity of the street scene. Furthermore, having regard to the separation distances, the difference in ground levels, the relationship with

surrounding properties and the submitted daylight assessment, it is considered that the proposal would not result in unacceptable overlooking, loss of privacy, overbearing impact, loss of outlook or significant loss of daylight to neighbouring occupiers. Future residents would also benefit from accommodation that meets nationally prescribed space standards together with private and shared amenity space in accordance with the South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide.

The proposal provides an appropriate level of parking, cycle storage and electric vehicle charging infrastructure and raises no objections from the Council's Transportation, Drainage or Environmental Health consultees. Subject to the recommended conditions, the development would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety, drainage, residential amenity or air quality.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to accord with the relevant policies of the Rotherham Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework, and approval is therefore recommended subject to the conditions set out in this report.

Conditions

01

The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason

In order to comply with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02

The permission hereby granted shall relate to the area shown outlined in red on the approved location plan and the development shall only take place in accordance with the submitted details and specifications and as shown on the approved plans

Drawing numbers:

- 1164-A1.1B Location Plan and Site Plan
- 1164-A2.1C GF Proposed Ground Floor Plan
- 1164-A2.2C FF Proposed First Floor Plan
- 1164-A2.3C SF – Proposed Second Floor Plan
- 1164-A1.4C Parking Area – Proposed Car Parking Plan
- 1164-A3.1A EI – Proposed Elevations
- 1164-A3.3A Street Scene – Existing and Proposed Street Scene Plans
- 1164-A4.1 A-A – Building Section A-A
- 1164-A4.2 B-B – Building Section B-B
- 1164-A4.3 C-C – Building Section C-C
- 1164-A2.0 FD Foundations and Drainage Plan

- 1164-A1.8 Shading – Shading Analysis Plan
- 1164-A1.4A GF Area – Areas for Proposed Ground Floor
- 1164-A1.5B FF Area – Areas for Proposed First Floor
- 1164-A1.6C SF Area – Areas for Proposed Second Floor
- 1164-A1.2 - Vision Lines at 25 Degrees
- 1164-A2.3B SF – Vision Lines at 25 Degrees to Second Floor
- 1164-A3.3C Street Scene – Vision Lines at 25 Degrees on Street Scene Plan

Reason

To define the permission and for the avoidance of doubt.

03

The construction of the apartments shall not commence until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted have been submitted or samples of the materials have been left on site, and the details/samples have been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details/samples.

Reason

To ensure that appropriate materials are used in the construction of the development in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Local Plan Policy CS28.

04

Before the development is brought into use, that part of the site to be used by vehicles shall be constructed with either;

- a) a permeable surface and associated water retention/collection drainage, or;
- b) an impermeable surface with water collected and taken to a separately constructed water retention/discharge system within the site. The area shall thereafter be maintained in a working condition.

Reason

To ensure that surface water can adequately be drained and that mud and other extraneous material is not deposited on the public highway and that each dwelling can be reached conveniently from the footway in the interests of the adequate drainage of the site, road safety and residential amenity.

05

Before the development is brought into use the car parking area shown on the approved plan shall be provided, marked out and thereafter maintained for car parking.

Reason

To ensure the provision of satisfactory garage/parking space and avoid the necessity for the parking of vehicles on the highway in the interests of road safety.

06

The development shall be completed in accordance with the approved electric vehicle charging details shown on plan ref: 1164.A2.1C and retained in perpetuity. Each dwelling shall not be occupied until the charging point is provided.

Reason

In the interests of sustainable development and air quality in accordance with the Local Plan and the NPPF.

07

Except in case of emergency, no operations shall take place on site other than between the hours of 0800 to 1800 hours Monday to Friday and between 0900 to 1300 hours on Saturdays. There shall be no working on Sundays or Public Holidays. At times when operations are not permitted work shall be limited to maintenance and servicing of plant or other work of an essential or emergency nature. The Planning Authority shall be notified at the earliest opportunity of the occurrence of any such emergency and a schedule of essential work shall be provided.

Reason

To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties in accordance with RMBC Policy SP52 and Part 15 of the NPPF.

08

All machinery and vehicles employed on the site shall be fitted with effective silencers of a type appropriate to their specification and at all times the noise emitted by vehicles, plant, machinery or otherwise arising from on-site activities, shall be minimised in accordance with the guidance provided in British Standard 5228 Code of Practice; 'Noise Control on Construction and Open Sites', and Minerals Planning Guidance Note 11 (1993) 'The Control of Noise at Surface Mineral Workings'.

Reason

To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties in accordance with RMBC Policy SP52 and Part 15 of the NPPF.

09

At all times during the carrying out of operations authorised or required under this permission, best practicable means shall be employed to minimise dust. Such measures may include water bowsers, sprayers whether mobile or fixed, or similar equipment. At such times when due to site conditions the prevention of dust nuisance by these means is considered by the Planning Authority in consultations with the site operator to be impracticable, then movements of soils and overburden shall be temporarily curtailed until such times as the site/weather conditions improve such as to permit a resumption.

Reason

To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties in accordance with RMBC Policy SP52 and Part 15 of the NPPF.

10

Effective steps shall be taken by the operator to prevent the deposition of mud, dust and other materials on the adjoining public highway caused by vehicles visiting and leaving the site. Any accidental deposition of dust, slurry, mud or any other material from the site, on the public highway shall be removed immediately by the developer.

Reason

To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties in accordance with RMBC Policy SP52 and Part 15 of the NPPF.

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

The applicant and the Local Planning Authority engaged in pre application discussions to consider the development before the submission of the planning application. The application was submitted on the basis of these discussions; or was amended to accord with them. It was considered to be in accordance with the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework.

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To the Chairman and Members of the
PLANNING BOARD

Date 16th July 2026

Report of the Service Director of Planning, Regeneration and Transportation
Service

<u>ITEM NO.</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>
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1	Whitestone Solar Farm – Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
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ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING BOARD

PLANNING, REGENERATION AND
TRANSPORT SERVICEREPORT TO COMMITTEE
16TH JULY 2026**ITEM NO: 1****NO. OF APPENDICES: 3****Adequacy of Consultation Response
Parish Council and Landowner Comments
PINS Decision Letter to Accept DCO****Ref: RB2025/0603****Report Title****Whitestone Solar Farm – Nationally Significant
Infrastructure Project****1.0 Background**

- 1.1 Members will recall that the Whitestone Solar Farm proposal is being progressed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), requiring a Development Consent Order (DCO) from the Secretary of State under the Planning Act 2008 rather than determination by RMBC. As a host authority, RMBC is a statutory consultee throughout the NSIP process and not the decision maker.

2.0 Adequacy of Consultation Submission

- 2.1 The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) received an application from Whitestone Net Zero Limited for development consent for the Whitestone Solar Farm on 10 June 2026. A decision on whether the application would be accepted for examination was required to be made by 8 July 2026. As part of this process, PINS sought views from local authorities on whether the applicant had met the statutory pre-application consultation requirements, specifically the duties to consult prescribed bodies, engage with the local community, and publicise the project. Authorities were asked to submit their views using a standard proforma by 25 June 2026, a copy of which is appended to this report.
- 2.2 At that stage, the Inspectorate was not requesting comments on the merits of the proposal itself, only on the adequacy of the consultation undertaken. The applicant's Consultation Report had been shared for this purpose but was not made publicly available.

3.0 RMBC Review of the Adequacy of Consultation

- 3.0 RMBC acknowledged that the Applicant had carried out a range of consultation activities in line with the agreed Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC), including leaflet distribution, in-person events, online

tools, and accessibility measures, and therefore considered that procedural requirements had been met.

- 3.1 However, several Parish Councils raised significant concerns regarding the quality and effectiveness of the consultation, indicating it was perceived as insufficient despite meeting statutory requirements. These representations were included for consideration.
- 3.2 In addition, while the Applicant has sought to meet its obligations under Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008, the Council were made aware of an apparent failure to properly serve notice on occupiers of several properties. In the absence of evidence confirming lawful service, RMBC concluded that statutory consultation requirements had not been fully satisfied. Relevant representations on this matter are also appended.

4.0 **PINS Decision of Adequacy of Consultation**

- 4.1 On the 3rd of July 2026, the Council were notified by PINS that the consultation was adequate, and the Development Consent Order has been accepted.
- 4.2 A copy of the letter is also appended for information.

5.0 **Programme and Key Milestones**

- 5.1 Following acceptance of the application for examination, the Development Consent Order (DCO) process is expected to progress through the following stages, although these dates could change:

1. Pre-Examination Stage (July – October 2026)

During the pre-examination stage, the Council will undertake a number of activities to prepare for participation in the examination process.

Early Pre-Examination

- Opening of the Relevant Representation period.
- Registration of the Council as an Interested Party.
- Preparation and submission of the Council's Relevant Representation.

Mid to Late Pre-Examination

- Ongoing engagement with the applicant and other key stakeholders.
- Preparation of key examination documents, including:
 - Local Impact Report (LIR);
 - Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs); and
 - Any additional technical submissions required to support the Council's position.

2. Examination Stage (Expected October – December 2026)

The examination stage will be led by the appointed Examining Authority (PINS) and is expected to involve the following activities:

- Submission of written evidence and responses to questions issued by the Examining Authority.
- Participation in issue-specific, compulsory acquisition and/or open-floor hearings, where required.
- Submission of the Council's Local Impact Report.
- Ongoing negotiation and finalisation of Statements of Common Ground with the applicant.
- Continued engagement throughout the examination process to ensure that local impacts and Council interests are appropriately represented.

The Council will continue to monitor the progress of the application and provide updates to Members at key milestones throughout the examination process.

6.0 Key Examination Documents and Processes

6.1 Relevant Representations (RR)

6.2 Relevant Representations are the first formal submission made following acceptance of the application. They are required to participate in the examination process and confirm the Council's status as an Interested Party. Their purpose is to:

- Set out the Council's overall position;
- Identify the key issues and concerns;
- Ensure those issues are captured by the Examining Authority at the outset.

6.3 They are generally strategic and concise, not detailed technical documents and are used by the Examining Authority to help define the main matters for examination. They also provide the framework for subsequent submissions, including the Local Impact Report and Statements of Common Ground

6.4 Local Impact Report (LIR)

6.5 The Local Impact Report is the Council's principal and most influential submission. It is a statutory document that the Examining Authority (PINS) must invite and take into account when considering the proposals.

6.6 Its purpose is to provide a comprehensive, evidence-based assessment of the impacts of the development on the local area and will typically include:

- Topic-based assessments (e.g. highways, landscape, ecology, noise, socio-economics, cumulative impact);
- Assessment of significance of impacts;

- Consideration of local policy compliance;
- Review of mitigation measures and their adequacy

- 6.6 The LIR is required to be submitted to PINS early in the Examination (July to October) and in accordance with approved governance requirements, be approved by The Executive Director for Regeneration and Environment and Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Economy.
- 6.7 Statement of Common Ground (SoCG)
- 6.8 Statements of Common Ground are live, structured documents agreed between the Council and the applicant. They are strongly encouraged as part of best practice to support an efficient examination. They set out:
- Matters agreed;
 - Matters not agreed;
 - Matters under discussion;
 - Actions to resolve outstanding issues.
- 6.9 Their purpose is to narrow areas of disagreement and focus the examination on key unresolved issues. They are developed iteratively throughout the pre-examination and examination, are topic based and are also a key tool in demonstrating progress.
- 6.10 Examination Process and Hearings
- 6.11 The Examination is led by the Examining Authority (PINS) and lasts up to six months. It is primarily written, supplemented by hearings and governed by a timetable issued by the Inspector.
- 6.12 Generally, there will be three types of hearings:
- Issue Specific Hearings, which are topic focused (e.g. transport and environmental issues);
 - Open Floor Hearings, where members of the public are allowed to speak; and
 - Compulsory Acquisition Hearings, which focus on land and acquisition matters.
- 6.13 At these hearings, the Inspector leads structured discussions, the Council and Applicant present and explains its evidence, questions are asked to clarify positions, and the discussions will generally be focussed upon:
- Local Impact Report Findings;
 - Statements of Common Ground; and
 - Key areas of disagreement.

- 6.14 Hearings are generally, evidence based, recorded as part of the examination and used to refine and test positions on both sides.
- 6.15 Written Submissions and Questions
- 6.16 Alongside Hearings, PINS will issue Written Questions, which the Council must provide by set deadlines. These submissions will also form part of the core evidence base in which the Inspector will base his/her recommendation on.

8.0 Summary

- 8.1 This report outlines the current position in respect of the Whitestone Solar Farm proposal, which is being progressed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and is subject to determination through the Development Consent Order process.
- 8.2 At the time PINS sought the Council's views, it was requesting comments solely on the adequacy of the applicant's pre-application consultation. The Council's review concluded that, whilst the applicant had undertaken a wide-ranging programme of engagement with statutory consultees and the local community, there remained an identified deficiency relating to the non-service of a Section 42 notice on relevant land interests.
- 8.3 On that basis, the Council was unable to confirm that all statutory consultation requirements had been fully satisfied at the time its response was submitted to PINS. Notwithstanding the Council's observations, PINS subsequently accepted the Development Consent Order application for examination.
- 8.4 The report further set out the anticipated stages of the Development Consent Order process and the Council's ongoing role, including participation in the examination through Relevant Representations, the preparation of a Local Impact Report, and continued engagement with the applicant.
- 8.5 Members are requested to note the contents of this report, the Council's submitted position on the adequacy of consultation, and the subsequent acceptance of the application for examination by PINS. Further updates will be provided to Planning Board on a quarterly basis as the examination progresses.

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Adequacy of Consultation Representation Proforma

Under *Section 55(4)(b) of the Planning Act 2008* (PA2008) the Planning Inspectorate, on behalf of the Secretary of State, must take any adequacy of consultation representation (AoCR) received from a local authority consultee into account when deciding whether to accept an application for development consent, and this will be published should the application be accepted for examination.

An AoCR is defined in s55(5) in PA2008 as “a representation about whether the applicant complied, in relation to that proposed application, with the applicant’s duties under sections 42, 47 and 48”.

Project name	Whitestone Solar Farm
Date of request	11 June 2026
Deadline for AOCR	25 June 2026
Return to	whitestonesolarfarm@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Please complete the proforma outlining your AoCR on the above NSIP.

Local Authority	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
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In the opinion of the local authority, has the applicant complied with the legislative requirements listed below?

Please note that this is specifically about the statutory consultation(s) undertaken.

Assessment of Compliance - Required	
S42 Duty to consult	No
S47 Duty to consult local authority	Yes
S48 Duty to publicise	Yes

If you would like to give more detail on any of the above, please do so below.

Please keep it as succinct as possible and refer to facts and evidence related to consultation, rather than the merits of the application.



Additional comments - <i>Not compulsory</i>	
S42 Duty to consult	RMBC acknowledges that the Applicant has undertaken a programme of consultation activities, including the distribution of leaflets, in-person engagement events, the use of online consultation tools, and the implementation of accessibility measures. On this basis, the Council considers that the Applicant has complied with the procedural requirements set out within the agreed Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC). Notwithstanding the above, the Council notes that significant concerns have been raised by a number of Parish Councils, Ward Councillors, local residents and MP's. These concerns suggest that the quality and effectiveness of the consultation has been perceived by these stakeholders as insufficient. The relevant representations from affected Parish Councils are appended for consideration. Furthermore, whilst the Council recognises that the Applicant has sought to discharge its statutory obligations under Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008, it has been made aware of an apparent failure to serve the requisite notice on the occupiers of Springvale Farm, Springvale House, Morthen House, and New Sycamore Farm. In the absence of evidence demonstrating that such service has been lawfully affected, the Council's position is that the statutory consultation requirements may not have been fully satisfied. Representations in respect of this matter are likewise appended to this submission.
S47 Duty to consult local authority	No additional comments
S48 Duty to publicise	No additional comments
Any other comments	No additional comments



ANSTON PARISH COUNCIL – ADEQUACY OF CONSULTATION

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Whitestone Solar Farm – Adequacy of Consultation

Anston Parish Council writes to formally raise concerns regarding the adequacy of consultation undertaken by Whitestone Solar Farm Ltd across both the earlier statutory consultation and the recent targeted consultation.

In assessing adequacy, it is essential to consider whether affected communities have been properly informed and given a genuine opportunity to understand the proposals and respond to them. The Parish Council does not consider that this has been achieved.

The impacts identified within this response relate directly to Anston and its residents.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Whitestone Solar Farm proposals will have direct and significant impacts on residents of Anston Parish.

At present, insufficient information has been provided across the consultation process to enable these impacts to be properly understood or assessed. The nature and extent of the proposed works are not clearly defined, including a lack of detail on traffic management, construction activity, environmental effects and the precise routing of infrastructure.

In addition, the consultation material does not reflect the scale and complexity of key elements of the scheme, including trenchless crossings beneath major infrastructure such as the railway and canal, or the introduction of construction access within sensitive residential locations such as Crowgate. The absence of this information further prevents a clear understanding of the nature and extent of the proposed works.

There is also a lack of clarity and consistency in the information presented, creating uncertainty as to how the proposals affect Anston and its residents. This is particularly concerning given the absence of any dedicated consultation engagement within Anston, despite the scale and proximity of the proposed works.

While the applicant states that statutory consultation requirements have been met, compliance with minimum legal duties does not in itself demonstrate that consultation has been adequate. In Anston, where the proposals will have direct and significant impacts, there has been no dedicated engagement and many residents remain unaware of the scheme. Under the Planning Act 2008, there is a clear requirement to consult the local community in a way that is proportionate to the scale and impact of the development.

The Parish Council therefore considers that the consultation has not been proportionate to the level of impact on the community and does not meet the requirements of the Planning Act 2008 or the Government Guidance on the Pre-application Process Consultation.

1. Lack of effective engagement and coverage

Whitestone Solar Farm is a project of significant scale, extending across a wide geographic area. However, the consultation has not effectively reached affected communities, including the local area.

No consultation event was held within Anston at any stage of the process, despite the clear and direct impacts on the parish. This has limited the ability of residents to engage with the proposals, and many remain unaware of how they may be affected.

More broadly, consultation coverage has been limited, with no clear explanation of how event locations were selected and no evidence of effective engagement within the local area. The consultation material also does not clearly explain how consultation notification areas were determined or how communities affected by traffic, visual and infrastructure impacts beyond the immediate site boundary were identified and included.

The suggestion that consultation events were held within a 15-minute drive of affected communities does not demonstrate effective engagement. Proximity alone does not ensure awareness, accessibility or meaningful participation — particularly where no direct consultation engagement has taken place within Anston despite the scale of impact.

The applicant has stated that approximately 718 people attended consultation events across the wider Whitestone 1, 2 and 3 area. Given the scale of the project, this figure appears low, and no breakdown has been provided to demonstrate whether the local area was meaningfully engaged.

The Parish Council therefore considers that the consultation has not been proportionate to the scale or distribution of impacts and has not effectively engaged affected communities.

2. Targeted Consultation – lack of clarity, accessibility and fairness

The Parish Council has significant concerns regarding the clarity, accessibility and fairness of the recent targeted consultation process.

Public-facing information suggested that residents were able to submit feedback. However, it was indicated separately that responses may only be considered from defined stakeholders. This creates a clear inconsistency between what has been presented publicly and how the consultation appears to have been applied in practice.

Residents have also reported difficulty obtaining consultation materials, including paper copies, and uncertainty as to whether their responses would be considered. This has caused confusion within the community and undermined confidence in the consultation process.

The Parish Council also objects to the limitation placed on this consultation which seeks to restrict responses to specific numbered changes. For a statutory consultation, this approach prevents consultees from raising wider material considerations and undermines the ability to respond fully to the impacts of the development.

Directing consultees to access key information via a project website does not in itself discharge the duty to consult, particularly where information is complex, fragmented or not clearly signposted.

Important supporting information and consultation materials were not consistently provided directly to affected parties, despite being necessary to understand and assess the proposals. This limited the ability of residents and stakeholders to properly review the information within the consultation period.

The time frame provided for responses was also very limited, with the final submission date falling on a bank holiday (Good Friday), further restricting the ability of consultees to engage meaningfully. Concerns regarding the limited consultation period and requests for additional time from Parish Councils were not accommodated, despite the scale and complexity of the material being consulted upon.

In addition, the targeted consultation has resulted in changes to the scheme that have not been clearly identified within the numbered consultation areas. This includes the apparent removal of alternative cable route options and the removal or downgrading of previously proposed screening and mitigation measures.

These changes materially affect the impact of the proposals, particularly in relation to proximity to residential properties, visual effects, impacts during construction and landscape impact. However, they have not been presented in a clear or transparent way within the consultation material.

As a result, consultees have not been given a clear opportunity to understand or comment on these changes, which further undermines the adequacy and fairness of the consultation process. This has created a situation where material changes affecting residents have not been subject to clear or effective consultation.

It is also not clear how the adequacy of consultation can be considered established while further statutory consultation is ongoing and while material changes and new information continue to emerge.

3. Inconsistency between consultation stages

There is a clear inconsistency between earlier consultation material and the proposals now being progressed.

While earlier consultation material presented more than one potential cable route linking Whitestone 2 and 3, it did not clearly explain how a preferred route would be selected or the relative impacts of each option.

The Parish Council has been informed by a resident who attended the Todwick consultation event that attendees were advised the cable route further from residential properties, between the A57 and Kiveton/Harthill, would be taken forward. The route now presented in the targeted consultation instead follows the alignment directly behind the houses to the west of South Anston and at the top of Crowgate. No explanation has been provided as to why this route has been selected or whether alternatives have been properly considered. This represents a clear and material shift in impact which has not been transparently communicated.

The Parish Council also notes the removal of previously proposed tree planting mitigation opposite Penny Piece Lane and Cramfit Road, which has now been downgraded to grass.

Grass provides no meaningful visual screening and does not mitigate the visual impact on elevated properties overlooking the site. The original tree planting recognised the need to reduce visual intrusion from higher ground, break up views of infrastructure, and provide long-term landscape integration.

The removal of this mitigation represents a clear reduction in environmental and visual protection and materially increases the level of visual harm. No explanation has been provided for this change.

These are material changes in impact that have not been transparently presented or justified.

4. Lack of clarity and evolving proposals

Across all consultation stages, key elements of the scheme remain unclear or subject to change.

These include:

- cable routes
- construction access routes

- traffic management arrangements
- construction methods
- environmental mitigation measures

In addition:

- environmental assessments remain ongoing
- information relevant to specific areas is spread across multiple documents

Residents are therefore being asked to comment on proposals while elements of the environmental assessment and supporting evidence remain incomplete or subject to ongoing revision. The proposals are not sufficiently defined to allow a clear understanding of their impacts.

The use of undefined cable corridors means the actual working width and extent of land required is unclear. This makes it impossible to determine the true extent of land take, disruption and environmental impact.

The consultation material presents cable installation as relatively limited trenching works. However, the scale of temporary works required to facilitate construction is not clearly communicated. This is likely to include haul roads, material import and export, plant access and ground reworking across substantial lengths of the route and will involve substantial vehicle movements, land disturbance and construction activity. The true extent of construction activity, land disturbance and disruption has not been clearly communicated to consultees.

There is also no information provided on the location of construction compounds, storage areas or site logistics. These elements can have significant additional impacts in terms of land take, traffic and disturbance, and without this information the overall impact cannot be fully understood.

There is no clear information provided on how key road crossings, including the A57 and Crowgate, will be undertaken, whether by trenching, directional drilling or other methods. Without this detail, it is not possible to understand the extent of disruption, traffic management requirements or safety implications.

There is also insufficient information provided on the impact of the proposals on public rights of way. This includes the bridleways around Axle Lane, the bridleway from South Anston to the canal, and the footpath running alongside the canal, all of which are heavily used by residents for both recreation and everyday access between communities.

The consultation material does not clearly explain whether these routes will remain open, be diverted or closed during construction, how users will be safely managed, or the duration of any disruption. Given the scale of works and plant movement likely to be involved, it is probable that these routes will be significantly affected or unusable during construction. This level of disruption has not been clearly communicated.

There is also no information provided on how proposed works will interact with existing underground services, including gas, water, electricity and telecommunications infrastructure. Without this detail, it is not possible to assess the extent of additional works, disruption or risk.

The consultation material does not clearly set out the extent of hedgerow removal required to facilitate the works, or how this loss will be mitigated.

There is also limited information on the long-term impact of buried cables on agricultural land use, including potential restrictions on cultivation, drainage and land management.

It is also not clear that the claimed reduction in the scheme represents a reduction in the extent or intensity of infrastructure, particularly where generating capacity remains unchanged. This creates further uncertainty as to the true scale of the development.

The proposed cable route will require crossings beneath significant infrastructure, including a railway line, canal and associated watercourses. These are likely to require trenchless methods such as horizontal directional drilling at depth.

No information has been provided on the proposed method, depth, alignment or ground conditions for these crossings. Works of this nature are specialist engineering operations requiring significant plant, large working areas and detailed design. The consultation material does not reflect the likely scale or complexity of these works, including the need for launch and reception pits, plant access and working space.

In an area with known mining legacy and variable geology, this raises further concerns regarding ground stability, settlement risk and potential impacts on critical infrastructure. In the absence of this information, it is not possible to understand or assess the risks or impacts associated with these crossings.

Key information is therefore either missing, unclear or dispersed across multiple documents, making it difficult for residents to understand the proposals in a clear and coherent way.

5. Lack of information regarding the A57 and impacts on Villages

The Parish Council has significant concerns regarding the limited information provided in relation to the A57.

The consultation material identifies land along this corridor for access and works, with solar panels also shown in close proximity to the A57. However, there is no clear detail on:

- how access onto the A57 will be designed or managed
- the scale and routing of construction traffic
- the extent of traffic management measures

Given that the A57 is a busy strategic route, this lack of information prevents any meaningful assessment of potential impacts on safety and congestion.

The introduction of construction traffic, temporary speed restrictions and access points on the A57 is likely to result in increased congestion. As a result, traffic is likely to divert onto surrounding local roads through Anston and neighbouring villages.

The village roads are not designed to accommodate increased traffic volumes or heavy goods vehicles. The introduction of construction traffic through residential areas raises significant concerns regarding:

- road safety for pedestrians, including children
- increased interaction between vehicles and vulnerable road users
- the suitability of local roads for large construction vehicles
- noise, disturbance and general disruption to residents

This represents a clear and direct impact on the local community, which has not been properly assessed or communicated within the consultation material.

No updated glint and glare assessment has been provided for panels located adjacent to the A57. Without this information, it is not possible to understand the potential effects on driver visibility and road safety.

The consultation material also does not address foundation design, piling requirements, ground investigations, or how risks associated with mining legacy and potential subsidence have been assessed. In the absence of this information, it is not possible to understand whether there is any risk to the stability or integrity of the A57 or associated infrastructure.

In addition, the proposed construction access points at the top of Crowgate raise specific concerns. This is a residential area with regular pedestrian activity, including children accessing adjacent recreation areas and school transport routes.

The introduction of construction access and associated vehicle movements in this location will significantly increase the interaction between construction traffic and pedestrians. This creates a clear safety risk, particularly for children and other vulnerable users.

The consultation material does not provide sufficient detail on how access will be designed, how traffic will be managed, or what measures will be put in place to ensure safety in what is a sensitive residential environment.

In the absence of this information, it is not possible to assess the extent of disruption, the level of risk, or the suitability of this location for construction access.

This represents a clear example of how key impacts on residents have not been properly explained within the consultation.

The consultation material also does not clearly explain how cumulative impacts arising from traffic, construction activity and other committed developments in the wider area have been assessed.

6. Lack of information on ecology and wildlife impacts

The Parish Council also has concerns regarding the limited information provided on ecological impacts.

The consultation material does not provide sufficient detail to understand the potential effects on local habitats and species.

For example, records indicate that around 30 red-listed bird species, together with bats and barn owls, have been observed at Axle Lane and the surrounding area. Barn owl boxes are also located within areas identified for solar panels along the A57 corridor. The Axle Lane area, Anston Brook and the canal and railway corridor together function as important wildlife corridors containing established hedgerows, woodland, watercourse habitats and ecological connectivity which may be affected by the proposals and associated construction activity.

However, there is no clear information on:

- How these species and habitats have been assessed
- the extent of potential disturbance, fragmentation or habitat loss
- how impacts during construction and operation will be avoided or mitigated

This lack of detail prevents any meaningful understanding of the potential ecological effects of the proposals.

7. Lack of information on flood risk and drainage

Insufficient information has been provided in relation to flood risk and drainage.

The consultation material does not clearly explain:

- existing drainage conditions
- how construction activities may affect surface water flow
- what mitigation measures are proposed

There is also insufficient information regarding potential impacts on groundwater and underlying aquifers arising from deep trenchless crossings, drilling activity or ground disturbance.

Given the scale of ground disturbance proposed, including trenching and the introduction of imported materials, this prevents any meaningful assessment of flood

risk. There is also a risk that such works could alter natural drainage patterns or create preferential pathways for water movement through the ground.

This is of particular concern in relation to Anston Brook, which receives drainage from surrounding land. Changes to runoff rates, infiltration or subsurface flow could increase flood risk or affect water quality downstream.

The Parish Council also notes that recent tree planting has been undertaken along Anston Brook by Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust in partnership with Anston Parish Council, specifically to help reduce downstream flood risk, including in Worksop. The consultation material does not explain how the proposed works will interact with or potentially undermine these measures.

In addition, the Anston Stones Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is hydrologically connected to the brook and may be sensitive to changes in water flow and quality. No clear assessment has been provided of the potential effects on this designated site.

8. Ground conditions, mining legacy and subsidence risk

There is insufficient information provided on ground conditions and the implications of historic mining across the area.

The consultation material does not clearly explain:

- how mining legacy has been assessed
- what ground investigations have been undertaken
- how foundation design responds to these conditions
- the potential effects of excavation, trenching and vibration

There is also no evidence that sufficient feasibility assessment has been undertaken to demonstrate that proposed construction methods are suitable for the ground conditions present.

The local geology, including limestone, Coal Measures and historic mining activity, may significantly affect the feasibility and complexity of trenching and trenchless crossing methods. However, no clear information has been provided on how these constraints have informed the proposed construction approach.

In the absence of this information, it is not possible to assess the risk of ground movement, subsidence or impacts on infrastructure.

9. Lack of information on fire risk and emergency response

No clear information has been provided regarding fire risk or fire management.

The proposals involve extensive electrical infrastructure across a wide area, yet there is no detail on:

- fire risk assessment
- prevention or containment measures
- emergency access
- incident response

This omission prevents any assessment of risks to public safety, infrastructure and the surrounding environment.

10. Volume and complexity of documentation

The consultation is supported by a large volume of technical documentation.

However:

- information is spread across multiple documents
- local impacts are not clearly summarised

The Non-Technical Summary does not sufficiently explain in plain language how the proposals may affect residents, communities and day-to-day life within affected areas. The scale, technical complexity and fragmented nature of the documentation creates a practical barrier to participation for ordinary residents without specialist knowledge or professional support. This limits meaningful engagement.

11. Accuracy of consultation information

There are concerns that elements of the consultation material may not fully reflect current conditions or likely impacts.

This includes:

- reliance on potentially outdated baseline information
- mitigation presented without clear supporting detail
- limited representation of residential viewpoints

Conclusion

For these reasons, Anston Parish Council considers that the consultation process is inadequate.

The proposals have not been presented in a way that allows affected communities to clearly understand or respond to them. This is particularly evident in relation to key issues such as A57 highway impacts, safety and impact on village roads, fire risk and emergency response, ecology, flood risk and ground stability, where insufficient information has been provided to enable proper assessment.

The selection of the cable route closest to residential properties, without explanation, represents a clear and material change in impact that has not been transparently presented or justified.

The level of technical detail provided does not demonstrate that the proposed construction methods are feasible within the constraints of the site. In particular, there is no clear evidence that complex works such as trenchless crossings beneath the railway and canal, or construction access within constrained residential locations, can be delivered safely or without significant impact. This further limits the ability of consultees to understand the true extent of the works or their potential impacts.

These concerns are not isolated. Similar issues have been raised more widely, including by the local Member of Parliament, particularly in relation to incomplete environmental assessments, highway safety risks and the adequacy of the evidence base. This reinforces the view that the consultation has not provided a sufficiently clear, robust or transparent basis for informed engagement.

Taken together, the absence of key information, the inconsistency between consultation stages, and the lack of meaningful local engagement mean that affected residents have not been given a fair, proportionate or effective opportunity to understand or respond to the proposals. This has significantly limited the ability of many affected residents to participate meaningfully in the consultation process.

The Applicant should be required to have regard to these concerns and ensure they are accurately reflected in the Consultation Report. The Parish Council therefore requests that:

- full and finalised details of the scheme are provided;
- all changes between consultation stages are clearly explained;
- the rationale for key decisions, including route selection, is clearly set out; and
- proper and accessible consultation is undertaken with affected communities, including within Anston, before the proposals are progressed further.

The Parish Council reserves the right to provide further comments should additional information or amendments emerge.

Yours faithfully

Anston Parish Council

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To: Rotherham Council – Lisa Brookes
South Yorkshire Mayor – Oliver Coppard
Member of Parliament – Jake Richards

Date: 19th May 2026

Whitestone Solar Farm – Targeted Consultation Response (Anston Parish Council)

Whitestone 2 - Changes 19a, 19b, 20, 21, 22, 23 and Associated Cable Routes

Executive Summary

The proposed changes affecting Anston Parish will have direct and significant impacts on residents, including increased traffic and safety risks, disruption to residential areas, loss of environmental mitigation, and effects on ecology and wildlife.

At present, there is insufficient information provided within the targeted consultation to enable these impacts to be properly understood or assessed, and the nature and extent of the proposed works within each change area are not clearly defined. This includes a lack of detail on traffic management, construction activity, environmental effects and the exact routing of infrastructure.

There is also a clear inconsistency between the consultation information presented publicly and the approach being applied in practice, which is resulting in confusion and uncertainty as to whether responses from affected residents will be taken into account. This is particularly concerning in Anston, where there has been no dedicated consultation engagement at any stage of the process, despite the significant and direct impacts on the area.

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are writing to set out our concerns in relation to the current targeted consultation where the proposed changes affect Anston and its residents.

The proposed changes will have direct and significant impacts on the parish, including increased traffic and safety risks, effects on residents, and environmental and ecological harm. However, there is insufficient information provided to properly assess these impacts, and the consultation process itself lacks clarity and transparency.

Our concerns are set out in detail below.

1.0 Change 19a & 19b – Cable Routes West of North Anston

The proposed cable routes to the west of North Anston will bring construction activity into the area and increase pressure on the local road network. This will inevitably lead to increased congestion and traffic diverting onto roads that are not suitable for that level or type of use.

In particular, roads such as Penny Piece Lane and Cramfit Road are likely to be affected. These are narrow roads with limited visibility and are regularly used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. They are not suitable for increased traffic, particularly HGVs, and the likely diversion of vehicles onto these routes creates a clear safety concern.

These roads also experience ongoing infrastructure issues, including water main failures that require excavation and temporary closures. Increasing traffic and pressure on these routes increases the risk of disruption and access problems for residents.

There is also existing pressure on the local road network in this area associated with the Magilla Waste Recycling Centre on Common Road, where traffic regularly queues in both directions to access the site. As Cramfit Road connects directly into Common Road, this demonstrates that the surrounding network is already operating under significant strain. Additional traffic associated with the proposed development will exacerbate congestion and increase safety risks on roads that are not suitable for increased volumes.

There are also concerns about the impact on historic parts of Anston.

Main Street is a historic part of the village, with listed buildings and a designated conservation area. Many of these buildings are very old and were not built to withstand modern traffic, particularly heavy vehicles.

If traffic is pushed onto these routes as a result of congestion on the A57, it is likely to increase vibration and place additional stress on these buildings, with potential for structural damage. The narrow nature of the road and the proximity of buildings to the carriageway also increases the risk of vehicles passing too close to buildings or struggling to pass safely.

This is a foreseeable consequence of increased traffic and has not been properly considered.

There are also ecological concerns in this area. Barn owl boxes are located nearby, indicating the presence of protected and sensitive species. Construction activity has the potential to disturb these habitats and affect wildlife. More generally, the impact on ecology and biodiversity has not been properly assessed.

In addition, Changes 19a and 19b require the use of additional land for access, resulting in further loss of high-grade agricultural land. This represents a permanent loss of productive farmland and raises concerns as to whether the extent of land take has been minimised or appropriately justified.

2.0 Change 20 – A57 Access

The A57 is a major trunk road and a key commuter route, used by a high volume of traffic travelling through and around Anston. It is already a very busy and constrained route, with congestion a regular issue, particularly at peak times.

The proposed access arrangements and construction activity will make this worse. Reduced speed limits and traffic management measures will slow traffic down and reduce the capacity of the road. On a road that is already under pressure, this will lead to longer queues and increased delays.

As congestion builds, traffic will look for alternative routes, which will push more vehicles onto local roads within and surrounding Anston. This will increase pressure on roads that are not designed for that level of traffic and create further safety issues.

There are also existing road safety concerns on this stretch of the A57, with a number of serious accidents having occurred. This shows that the road is already a higher-risk environment.

Introducing construction traffic, together with traffic management measures such as reduced speeds, will increase congestion on an already constrained route and increase the risk of further incidents on a route that is already known to experience serious accidents. This has not been properly assessed.

In addition, the A57 is already under increasing pressure from other developments. The new distribution warehouse at Gateford will bring additional HGV traffic, and housing growth in nearby areas will increase the number of vehicles using the road. These combined impacts have not been properly considered.

There are also environmental impacts linked to this, including increased noise, poorer air quality and disturbance to nearby habitats.

The proposed access works will also require the removal of sections of established hedgerow. These hedgerows currently provide natural screening and form part of the existing landscape, as well as acting as wildlife habitat.

Their removal will increase the visual impact of the development and result in a loss of habitat. This is a further reduction in environmental value that has not been clearly set out or assessed.

It is also not clear how the cable will cross the A57. There is no information provided on whether this will involve trenching, directional drilling or other methods. Without this detail, it is not possible to understand whether the works will require excavation within the carriageway, road closures or temporary traffic management. Given the importance of this route and existing traffic pressures, this creates significant uncertainty around disruption and safety and has not been properly assessed.

There is no information provided on how the proposed crossing will interact with existing underground services within the highway, including gas, water, electricity and telecommunications infrastructure. Any crossing of a road of this nature is likely to encounter existing services, and without this detail it is not possible to understand whether diversions, protection works or additional excavation will be required. This has clear implications for disruption, safety and the duration of works, and has not been properly assessed.

There is no information provided on the type, scale or configuration of the solar panels in this location, and no glint and glare assessment has been presented. Without this information, it is not possible to assess the potential impact on drivers using the A57 or the effectiveness of any proposed mitigation, including landscaping or screening. The potential safety implications of glint and glare on a major and heavily used route have therefore not been properly assessed.

3.0 Change 21 – Crowgate Access

The proposed works at Crowgate are particularly concerning because of how this area is used.

Crowgate is a residential area, but it is also where there is a recreation ground that is regularly used by children and families. There are pedestrian routes through the area and a school bus stop used by children.

The introduction of construction activity and additional traffic in this area creates a clear safety risk. Children are regularly moving around this area, whether going to the recreation ground, walking locally or using the bus stop. Bringing in larger vehicles and increasing traffic movements significantly increases the risk of accidents involving vehicles and pedestrians.

Crowgate also serves as a key route from Anston towards Kiveton Park and Wales, including the route to Wales High School. It is regularly used for school-related journeys, particularly during peak morning and afternoon periods.

Any disruption or additional congestion in this location will therefore have wider impacts beyond the immediate area, affecting daily travel patterns for residents across Anston. The introduction of construction activity, together with any restrictions on vehicle movement, is likely to increase congestion along this route and surrounding roads.

Residents in this area will also be directly affected by noise, dust, vibration and general disruption from the works.

As with other access points, this is also likely to involve the removal of existing hedgerow, resulting in further loss of natural screening and habitat.

Despite how sensitive this location is, there is no clear assessment of the impact on safety, on the recreation ground, or on residents. The environmental and wildlife impacts have also not been properly assessed.

It is also not clear how the cable will cross the road at this location. There is no information provided on whether this will involve trenching, directional drilling or other methods. Without this detail, it is not possible to understand the extent of disruption or the impact on traffic and safety in an area regularly used by residents and children.

There is also no information provided on how the proposed crossing will interact with existing underground services within the road, including gas, water, electricity and telecommunications infrastructure. Without this detail, it is not possible to understand the extent of works required or the resulting impact on disruption and safety.

Prolonged disruption to local routes also has the potential to affect local businesses and services which rely on access through the area. This has not been considered.

4.0 Cable Route Between Changes 20, 21 and 22

The cable route between the A57, Crowgate and through to Change 22 is one of the most concerning elements of the proposal.

In places, this route runs directly behind residential properties, bringing construction activity very close to homes. This will result in noise, dust, vibration and prolonged disruption, directly affecting residents' day-to-day lives as well as having a detrimental visual impact.

This route also crosses Axle Lane, which is a well-used bridleway used by walkers, dog walkers, horse riders and cyclists. The area also includes a fishing pond and woodland, making it an important recreational and ecological space.

Construction activity in this location raises clear safety concerns for users of the bridleway and will significantly disrupt its use.

There are important landscape features along Axle Lane, including established dry stone walling and mature hedgerow. These are long-standing features of the local landscape and provide both natural screening and valuable wildlife habitat. Local bird groups have also undertaken additional planting in this area to support bird populations.

There is no clear assessment of how these features will be affected or how any loss will be mitigated.

There are also clear ecological impacts, with the presence of almost 30 red-listed bird species and deer. The area functions as a wildlife corridor, and the proposed works risk disturbing these habitats and fragmenting wildlife movement.

Furthermore, there are known historic mining activities in this area. In the absence of any assessment of ground conditions, it is not clear whether vibration associated with construction activity could give rise to ground instability or subsidence risk. This represents a potential risk to nearby infrastructure, landscape features and residential areas which has not been addressed, particularly in relation to the stability of ground beneath roads, utilities and nearby residential properties.

There is also no information provided to confirm whether areas affected by ground disturbance, including cable installation and access works, have been subject to any archaeological assessment. Given the extent of excavation and the use of wide and undefined working corridors, it is not possible to determine whether previously unidentified archaeological features could be affected. This has not been addressed.

Importantly, it is not clear why this route has been selected. The alternative route presented in the previous consultation moved the cable route further away from residential properties, where it would have been more effectively screened by existing landform and topography. This would have reduced both visual and residential impact.

No explanation has been provided as to why the route was not taken forward, or whether alternative options were properly considered. As it stands, the chosen route results in direct and avoidable impacts on residents.

It is also understood that at a consultation event in Todwick, residents were advised that the cable corridor would follow the alternative route located further towards Todwick. On that basis, concerns were not raised at the time, as the route presented did not directly affect nearby housing. The alignment now proposed runs significantly closer to residential properties. This raises concerns that information provided during earlier consultation events did not reflect the scheme now being progressed, and that residents have not had a clear and consistent understanding of the proposals.

There is also a lack of detail about the exact route, how the works will be carried out and how long they will take. The use of undefined cable corridors means the actual working width and extent of land required is unclear. This makes it impossible to determine the true extent of land take, disruption and environmental impact. Without this information, it is not possible to properly understand or assess the full impact.

There is also no information provided on whether public rights of way and permissive routes will be retained, diverted or temporarily closed during construction, or the duration of any such disruption. This limits the ability to assess the impact on public access and connectivity.

5.0 Changes 22 & 23 – Additional Land and Infrastructure

These changes extend the footprint of the development and increase its impact on Anston.

There is insufficient detail on the extent of the land involved, the nature of the works and the likely resulting impacts on residents and the environment.

There is also a well-used bridleway in this area connecting down towards the canal. This route is regularly used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The proposed changes have the potential to affect access and safety along this route, both during construction and potentially longer term.

These impacts have not been clearly assessed or explained.

6.0 Removal of Tree Mitigation

A further concern is the removal of the proposed tree mitigation opposite Penny Piece Lane and Cramfit Road, which now appears to have been reduced to grass.

This materially increases the visual impact of the development, particularly for elevated properties overlooking the site, and removes previously identified mitigation.

It also has implications for surface water management and flooding, particularly given existing local issues. Tree planting plays an important role in slowing runoff, and its removal risks exacerbating these issues.

This is particularly concerning given local tree planting efforts undertaken by Anston Parish Council and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust to support flood mitigation in the area.

This change has a clear and direct impact on nearby residents, yet it is not clearly identified within the listed consultation changes. At the same time, it has been confirmed that feedback at this stage will only be considered from a defined group of stakeholders. This creates a situation where a material change affecting residents is not clearly presented as part of the consultation, while those same residents are not being given a meaningful opportunity to comment on it.

There are also concerns that landscape and visual assessments may be based on outdated or inaccurate baseline conditions, particularly where existing vegetation previously assumed to provide screening is no longer present.

7.0 Common Issues

Across all of these changes there are consistent and significant impacts on residents, including increased traffic, safety risks, noise, dust, vibration and visual impact.

These proposals will directly affect people living in the area through disruption to daily life, particularly where works are taking place close to residential properties and along well-used local routes and bridleways. The safety of residents, including children, pedestrians and other vulnerable road users, is a key concern and has not been properly assessed.

There are also clear and recurring impacts on the local highway network, including increased congestion, diversion of traffic onto unsuitable roads and wider effects on surrounding routes.

In addition, there are ongoing concerns regarding impacts on ecology and wildlife. These include the loss of hedgerows and habitat, disturbance to protected and sensitive species, and disruption to established wildlife corridors.

There is no information provided on how surface water, drainage and potential pollution risks will be managed during construction. Ground disturbance and excavation have the potential to alter drainage patterns and increase runoff or sediment transfer. In the absence of this information, the impact on the local water environment cannot be assessed.

There is also no information on the location of construction compounds, storage areas or site logistics. These elements can have significant additional impacts in terms of land take, traffic and disturbance, and without this information the overall impact cannot be fully understood.

In relation to the proposed cable routes, the presence of buried cables is likely to impose long-term restrictions on agricultural use, including limitations on deep cultivation, drainage works and the planting of deep-rooted crops. This raises concerns as to whether land can genuinely be returned to its previous use.

Despite the consistency and significance of these impacts, there is a lack of key information across all changes, including traffic management plans, construction detail, environmental assessments and cumulative impact assessments.

Without this information, it is not possible to properly understand or assess the full extent of the impacts on residents, the local environment or the wider area. This includes uncertainty around construction methods, ground disturbance and interaction with existing infrastructure, which further limits the ability to assess potential risks and impacts.

8.0 Consultation Concerns

The way this consultation has been carried out raises significant concerns.

The information presented on the Whitestone website gives the clear impression that members of the public are able to participate, including through the use of an online feedback form. There is no clear statement that responses from the wider public will not be considered.

However, it has been confirmed through correspondence with RMBC and Jake Richards MP that feedback at this stage will only be considered from a defined group of stakeholders. Residents who have contacted Whitestone directly have also been told that paper copies are only available to those on a designated list and that members of the general public are not entitled to receive them.

This approach also creates a practical barrier to participation for those who are less able to engage digitally, and limits the ability of affected residents to take part in the consultation in a meaningful way.

This creates a clear inconsistency between what is being presented publicly and how the consultation is being applied in practice.

As a result, residents are being led to believe they can submit feedback, when in reality it may not be taken into account. This is causing confusion locally, with both residents and Parish Councils unclear as to who is able to respond and whether those responses will be taken into account.

It is also evident that changes have been made which are not clearly identified within the listed consultation changes or numbered areas. As a result, it is not clear whether all amendments to the scheme have been presented, including changes that have a direct impact on residents but are not explicitly identified or presented for consultation.

This creates further uncertainty as to the full extent of what is being proposed and limits the ability of residents and stakeholders to understand and respond to the proposals in a meaningful and informed way. The consultation therefore does not provide a clear or complete picture of the changes that have taken place since the previous stage.

In addition, there has been no dedicated consultation engagement in Anston at any stage of the process, despite the scale of the impact on the area. Many residents remain unaware of the proposals and how they may affect them.

This is particularly concerning given that some of the changes now being proposed have direct impacts on residents, including changes that have not been clearly identified as part of the consultation.

Taken together, this does not represent a consultation process that is clear, transparent or proportionate to the level of impact on the community.

9.0 Conclusion

The proposed changes will have significant and cumulative impacts on Anston, including increased traffic and safety risks, disruption to residents, environmental harm, loss of mitigation, and impacts on ecology and wildlife.

The proposed changes also represent an expansion of the scheme into additional areas and introduce new impacts that have not been clearly explained or assessed.

Many of these impacts appear to be avoidable, yet no clear justification has been provided for the approach taken, particularly where alternative options may have reduced the effects on residents and the local environment.

There is also insufficient information available to properly assess the proposals, including a lack of detail on traffic management, construction activity, environmental impacts and the full extent of the works.

Without this information, the proposals cannot be properly understood or assessed. In order to allow a proper assessment, the following information is required:

- Clear and precise details of access arrangements and the alignment of cable routes, including their relationship to residential properties, local roads and public routes.
- Full details of the proposed solar infrastructure, including panel type, height, scale and layout.
- A detailed explanation of how road crossings will be carried out, including at the A57 and Crowgate, and the resulting impact on traffic, safety and road users.
- Information on the location of existing underground services and how these will be managed or protected during the works.
- Confirmation of the extent of hedgerow removal and loss of established landscape features, together with full details of replacement planting and mitigation.
- A comprehensive construction traffic strategy, including routes, expected vehicle numbers and measures to manage impacts on local roads and communities.

- Updated environmental information covering noise, dust, vibration, visual effects, ecology and wildlife.
- An updated assessment of glint and glare, taking account of panel design and the potential impact on users of the A57 and surrounding areas.
- Visual information demonstrating how the development and mitigation will appear in practice, including views from residential properties and higher ground.
- An assessment of cumulative impacts, including existing traffic pressures and other committed development in the area.

It is also not clear that the claimed reduction in the scheme represents a reduction in the extent or intensity of infrastructure, particularly given that the overall generating capacity remains unchanged. This raises questions as to whether the actual impacts have been reduced in practice.

In addition, there has been no meaningful or dedicated consultation engagement in Anston at any stage of the process, despite the scale of the impact on the area. This, combined with the lack of clarity in the current consultation approach, means that affected residents have not been given a clear or effective opportunity to understand or respond to the proposals.

For these reasons, we consider that the current consultation is inadequate and that the proposals affecting Anston cannot be properly understood or assessed in their current form, and the proposed changes cannot be meaningfully assessed in isolation from the wider scheme. Further work is required, together with clear and complete information, and meaningful engagement with affected residents.

Yours sincerely

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of the Clerk to Anston Parish Council.

Clerk to Anston Parish Council.



ASTON-CUM-AUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL



Parish Council Office
Parish Hall Rosegarth Ave
Aston SHEFFIELD S26 2DD

Clerk & Financial Officer
[REDACTED]

Tele/Fax 0114 2879008
E-mail – admin@aston-pc.gov.uk

19 May 2026

Ms L Brooks,
RMBC,
Riverside House,
Rotherham.

Dear Ms Brooks,

Whitestone Solar Farm – Adequacy of the Statutory Consultation Process

Aston-cum-Aughton Parish Council writes to express serious concerns regarding the adequacy of the consultation process undertaken for the proposed Whitestone Solar Farm development.

In considering the statutory consultation under Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008, the Parish Council believes the key issue is not simply whether consultation has taken place procedurally, but whether affected communities have been given a fair, accessible and meaningful opportunity to understand the proposals and provide informed comment.

The Parish Council does not object to renewable energy in principle. However, we share the view that the consultation process for a project of this scale has fallen short of what would reasonably be expected for a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project.

1. Accessibility and Awareness of Consultation

The Council is concerned that the consultation has not been sufficiently accessible or effective in reaching all affected communities. Communication methods relied heavily on leaflet distribution and online materials, which many residents may not have engaged with or may have mistaken for commercial advertising.

Public engagement events were limited in number relative to the geographic scale of the scheme, which spans a wide area across multiple parishes. The distribution of events did not appear proportionate to the number of communities affected, and some areas with clear potential impacts were not provided with dedicated events.

Event timing also restricted participation, with limited evening and weekend availability and no formal presentations or structured question-and-answer sessions.

2. Geographic Scope and Notification Methodology

The Parish Council has concerns regarding how consultation zones were defined and how residents were identified for direct notification. A proximity-based approach appears to have been used, which does not fully account for the wider impacts of a development of this scale, including traffic routes, landscape and visual effects, and associated infrastructure.

As a result, it is likely that some residents and neighbouring communities who may experience material impacts were not adequately informed or engaged.

3. Clarity and Completeness of Information

The information presented during consultation has lacked clarity and consistency. Key elements of the development—including cable routes, substations, access routes and other infrastructure—have not been clearly defined, leaving residents unable to fully understand the extent and impact of the proposals.

In addition, there have been inconsistencies between information presented at public events and other materials, contributing to uncertainty within the community regarding the final extent of the scheme.

The heavy reliance on digital documentation, combined with the complexity and volume of technical material, has created further barriers to meaningful engagement, particularly for residents without easy access to online resources.

4. Adequacy of Engagement with Local Communities

The Council is concerned that engagement with local communities has not been meaningful or proportionate to the scale of the development. Reports from consultation events suggest that representatives were unable to adequately address local concerns or provide clear answers on key issues.

Furthermore, the limited time available within the consultation period, combined with the scale and complexity of the documentation, has placed an unreasonable burden on parish councils and residents attempting to respond in an informed manner.

5. Overall Adequacy of the Consultation Process

Taken together, these issues raise significant concerns as to whether the consultation process has met the standards required under the Planning Act 2008.

The Parish Council considers that the consultation has not provided a sufficiently clear, inclusive or proportionate opportunity for affected communities to understand the proposals and participate meaningfully in the process.

6. Construction Traffic and Local Highway Impacts

The Parish Council is particularly concerned about the lack of clarity regarding construction traffic routes and their potential impact on Aston-cum-Aughton and surrounding areas.

At the time of consultation, no definitive haul routes or construction access strategies were clearly identified. Instead, multiple potential routes were indicated as “under consideration”, limiting the ability of residents and the Parish Council to properly assess likely impacts.

However, it is evident that a development of this scale will generate significant volumes of construction traffic, including HGV movements transporting equipment, materials and infrastructure components. In the absence of confirmed routes, it is reasonable to anticipate that key local corridors within and around Aston-cum-Aughton may be affected.

Particular concern arises in relation to:

- Increased HGV movements through local residential roads and village centres
- Impacts on already congested routes linking Rotherham, Sheffield and surrounding settlements
- Road safety risks for pedestrians, cyclists and school traffic

- Potential damage to rural roads not designed for sustained heavy vehicle use
- Cumulative impacts where construction traffic coincides with other major developments in the area

The consultation materials do not provide sufficient detail to allow the Parish Council or residents to understand:

- Which roads will be used for construction access
- The frequency and duration of construction traffic movements
- Whether any mitigation measures (such as traffic management plans or routing agreements) will be implemented

Without this information, consultees are unable to form an informed view on one of the most significant and immediate impacts of the proposed development.

Given the scale of Whitestone Solar Farm and its geographic spread, the Parish Council considers that clear, route-specific traffic information should have been provided as part of the statutory consultation. The absence of this information represents a significant gap in the consultation process and further supports the view that consultation has been incomplete.

Conclusion

Aston-cum-Aughton Parish Council respectfully requests that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council give careful consideration to the matters set out above when forming its view on the adequacy of consultation under Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008.

Taken together, the issues identified including limitations in accessibility and geographic coverage, lack of clarity and completeness of information, uncertainty regarding infrastructure and construction impacts (including traffic and highway impacts), and the volume and complexity of documentation raise significant concerns as to whether affected communities have been provided with a fair, informed and proportionate opportunity to participate in the consultation process.

In particular, the absence of clearly defined construction traffic routes and associated highway impacts represents a material gap in the information presented to consultees, limiting the ability of the Parish Council and residents to fully understand and respond to the proposals.

The Parish Council therefore considers that the consultation has not met the standard required for a development of this scale and complexity and requests that these concerns are fully taken into account when determining whether the consultation process should be regarded as adequate.

We would welcome confirmation of how these matters will be addressed and whether further, more comprehensive consultation will be required prior to submission of any Development Consent Order application.

Yours sincerely,



Clerk to Aston-cum-Aughton Parish Council



24th March 2026

Ms Lisa Brooks
Development Manager – Strategic Applications
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Riverside House
Main Street
Rotherham
S60 1AE

Dear Ms Brooks

Whitestone Solar Farm – Inadequacy of the Consultation Process

Dear Ms Brooks

Bramley Parish Council wishes to make you aware of its concerns and issues about the adequacy of the consultation process undertaken by Whitestone (Green Nation) regarding the proposed Whitestone Solar Farm. The Councillors consider the process to be fundamentally flawed and inadequate, failing to meet the legal requirements for meaningful community engagement as set out under the Planning Act 2008. Their detailed position is as follows:

1. Systematic Exclusion of Affected Communities

The consultation systematically excluded the residents most affected by this development:

- **Prohibitive Costs:** The Non-Technical Summary states that hard copies of the full Environmental Statement cost "up to £750", creating an unacceptable financial barrier to accessing essential information.
- **Over-reliance on Digital Platforms:** The process relied heavily on online materials, excluding elderly residents in community.
- **Technical Complexity Barrier:** The Environmental Statement uses impenetrable technical jargon that the Non-Technical Summary fails to adequately translate for ordinary residents. For example, the Non-Technical Summary describes "Moderate to Major Adverse (Significant)" effects in technical language that obscures serious harm and fails to explain in plain English how residents' daily lives will be affected.
- **Local Experience:** In Bramley, many residents are elderly or lack reliable internet access, making it extremely difficult for them to participate meaningfully in a process so heavily dependent on digital communication. These points were brought to the attention of the Parish Council by residents who felt excluded and unable to access key documents or submit their views.

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tel: 01709 544590 email: clerk@bramleypc.gov.uk



2. Inadequate Consultation Programme

Insufficient Public Events: Only seven public events were held for a development affecting multiple communities across nearly 2,000 hectares.

- **Poor Geographic Coverage:** Residents had to travel significant distances.
- **Limited Accessibility:** Events were poorly timed for working families, with insufficient weekend options.
- **Bramley Impact:** The nearest event for many Bramley residents was held several miles away, with no provision for those with limited mobility or without private transport. This further disadvantaged those already struggling to access information.
- **Communications to residents via post in the parish were not consistent,** some received correspondence and details of consultation whilst others did not, parishioners reporting these concerns to Parish Councillors. This demonstrates exclusion of residents and inadequacy of their consultation and engagement, especially given that a number of elderly residents don't have access to electronic communication.
- **Consultation Response Time:** The consultation response time of six weeks during September and October 2025 was of great concern, given the volume and number of documents to consider, read, and process, in addition to the 'Consultation Booklet'. This is particularly pertinent when considering that the first consultation between November 2024 and January 2025 was eleven weeks with less information to read and process. This matter was brought to Whitestone's notice by numerous individuals and recognised organisations, including Ward Councillors and MPs. The Parish Council raised extreme concern that the time to read and process documents for the second consultation was far too short, not allowing for full discussion at meetings and to formulate this written response. As a Parish Council, Councillors requested an extension in a letter to Jonathan Thompson (CEO of Green Nation) earlier in the consultation (which was not responded to), and again in a letter in response to the consultation of 23rd October, specifically requesting that the consultation period be extended until 28th November 2025.

3. Failure to Provide Accessible and Complete Information

- **Non-Technical Summary Inadequacies:** The summary downplays significant impacts, describing "Moderate to Major Adverse (Significant)" effects in technical language that obscures serious harm. It fails to explain in plain English how residents' daily lives will be affected and omits key information about heritage impacts.
- **Technical Document Complexity:** The Environmental Statement chapters are impenetrable to ordinary residents, using expert-level language without adequate explanation. The volume and complexity, hundreds of pages, requires professional

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expertise to understand, and information is scattered across multiple volumes and appendices, making cross-referencing difficult.

- **Limited Information Provided:** The Parish Council did not receive all the documentation with information that needs consideration prior to this response. For example, the 'Draft Environmental Statement' was only available by request at an event, and refers to numerous appendices that have not been circulated by Green Nation. As a statutory consultee, the Parish Council did not receive some necessary documents despite written emailed requests. Most of the meaningful documents required for an informed consultation response were only available online and should have been provided free of charge to all statutory consultees, including this Parish Council. Furthermore, the consultation documents miss several points and there are many inaccuracies in the details and maps.
- **Bramley Experience:** Residents reported that even the so-called Non-Technical Summary was difficult to interpret, and that attempts to seek clarification from the developer were met with generic or unhelpful responses.

4. Dismissal of Community Expertise

Despite receiving 940 responses in the first consultation:

- **Substantive Concerns Dismissed:** Community objections about fundamental site unsuitability were treated as minor design issues.
- **Cosmetic Changes Only:** Claimed design changes failed to address core problems raised by residents.
- **No Genuine Dialogue:** Technical responses failed to engage with community concerns.

5. Legal Requirements Not Met (Section 47, Planning Act 2008)

The consultation fails to meet statutory requirements for meaningful community engagement:

- **Accessibility Failure:** Systematic exclusion through digital bias, cost barriers, and technical complexity.
- **Inadequate Opportunity:** Insufficient public meetings and rushed timelines prevent meaningful participation.
- **Information Failure:** Technical documents and incomplete surveys prevent informed community input.
- **Geographic Bias:** Poor coverage of smaller communities most affected by the development.



- Bramley View: The Parish Council believes these failures amount to a breach of both the letter and spirit of the Planning Act, and that the process has not enabled genuine participation by those most affected.

6. Procedural Inadequacies

- Premature Consultation: Consulting on incomplete surveys and outdated heritage assessments.
- Information Barriers: Financial and technical obstacles prevented community access to essential information.
- Timeline Inadequacy: Insufficient time for communities to coordinate responses to complex development.
- Local Impact: The Council notes that several key documents were updated or replaced during the consultation period, causing confusion and making it difficult for residents to know which information was current or relevant.

7. Impact on Democratic Decision-Making

These consultation failures undermine the entire planning process:

- Compromised Community Input: Affected residents could not provide informed responses due to accessibility barriers.
- Flawed Evidence Base: Decision-makers lack comprehensive information needed for balanced evaluation.
- Democratic Deficit: Systematic exclusion of communities violates principles of participatory planning.
- Bramley Perspective: The Parish Council is concerned that the voices of smaller, rural communities have been marginalised, and that the process has failed to uphold the standards of transparency and fairness expected in major infrastructure planning.

8. Freepost Address Errors and Reliability of Consultation

Concerns regarding the Freepost address were raised early in the second consultation period, yet no correction was issued. The address advertised by Whitestone — “Whitestone Solar Farm, Freepost SEC Newgate UK Local”, was confirmed by Royal Mail’s Response Services Team as non-compliant with the Freepost Name licence held by SEC Newgate UK. The correct format should have been “Freepost SEC NEWGATE UK LOCAL”, with the project name placed separately.

Royal Mail confirmed that items addressed using the incorrect format were initially flagged for surcharge or potential return, and delivery depended on manual intervention by Sheffield Mail Centre staff. This process relied on items being posted from the “local catchment”, even though the consultation area extends over 20 km and crosses multiple mail regions and counties. As a

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result, responses from some parts of the area or from national organisations may not have benefited from local intervention, risking lost or delayed submissions.

This administrative error undermines the accessibility and reliability of the statutory consultation process required under Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008 and raises serious doubt as to whether all public feedback has been properly received and recorded. Whitestone's unwillingness to acknowledge or correct the issue, even when alerted by Parish Councils and by Members of Parliament, suggests a dismissive approach to local engagement and procedural accuracy.

9. Failure to Extend Consultation Period

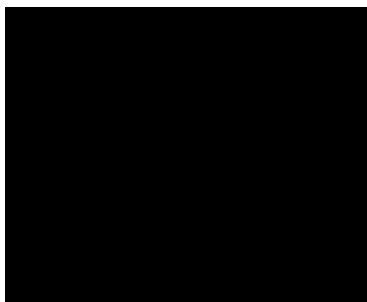
Despite requests from many Parish Council's including Bramley, Whitestone Net Zero Limited declined to extend the consultation period. Given the geographical scale of the proposed development and the number of communities affected, an extension would have been both proportionate and reasonable. The refusal to allow more time has limited the ability of residents and local councils to fully understand and respond to the proposals.

Conclusion

Whitestone's (Green Nation) consultation represents a fundamental failure to engage meaningfully with affected communities as required by law. The systematic exclusion of residents through cost barriers, technical complexity, incomplete information, and rushed timelines violates both the letter and spirit of democratic participation in planning decisions. A development of this scale, affecting multiple historic communities and heritage assets, deserved proper consultation that genuinely includes and engages with those whose lives will be permanently affected.

Bramley Parish Council urges Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council to take these serious procedural failings into account when providing feedback to the Planning Inspectorate on the adequacy of the consultation, and ask that a request is made to undertake a new, legally compliant consultation process.

Yours Sincerely



Clerk to Bramley Parish Council

Bill Chafer Youth & Community Centre, Flash Lane, Bramley, Rotherham, S66 1TS

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Harthill with Woodall Parish Council



Village Hall
Winney Hill
Harthill
Sheffield
S26 7YL

12th May 2026

Ms Lisa Brooks
Development Manager – Strategic Applications
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Riverside House
Main Street
Rotherham
S60 1AE

Dear Ms Brooks,

Whitestone Solar Farm – Additional comments on the adequacy of the Statutory Consultation Process following the further focused consultation (4th March 2026 to 3rd April 2026)

This letter should be read in conjunction with our letter dated 12th March 2026

Further to the Parish Council's letter dated 12 March 2026 regarding the adequacy of the statutory consultation process for Whitestone Solar Farm, the Parish Council wishes to submit the following additional observations arising from the subsequent focused consultation exercise undertaken between 4 March and 3 April 2026.

The Parish Council understands that its original adequacy submission is to be appended to RMBC's response to the Planning Inspectorate and respectfully requests that the following further comments are considered alongside that earlier representation.

The Parish Council acknowledges that continued engagement prior to submission of any Development Consent Order application is welcome. However, the focused consultation process and accompanying materials do not, in the Council's view, materially address a number of the concerns previously raised regarding accessibility, proportionality, transparency and the ability of affected communities to participate meaningfully in consultation on evolving proposals.

Nature and Scope of the Focused Consultation

The focused consultation leaflet stated that the consultation related to specific updated changes identified for comment and that the Applicant was "not consulting on the project as a

whole at this point.” The leaflet further stated that previous consultation responses had already been considered and that “there is no need to resubmit” earlier comments.

However, the focused consultation changes related to matters with potential wider community implications extending beyond directly affected land interests, including proposed cable route amendments, highway and road safety works, landscaping and mitigation measures, visibility and access works, and potential impacts on hedgerows and landscape features.

In the Parish Council’s view, these matters are not purely technical or administrative amendments but relate to infrastructure and environmental impacts capable of affecting wider communities, including residents who had not previously engaged with the consultation process.

The Parish Council is concerned that the targeted nature of the consultation, when combined with the continuing evolution of the scheme design, may have limited the opportunity for wider affected communities to comment on changes with potential implications for local amenity, movement corridors, landscape character and ecology.

The Parish Council recognises that the Applicant may consider that the focused consultation complied procedurally with statutory consultation requirements. However, the Parish Council respectfully considers that adequacy is not determined solely by whether minimum procedural steps have been followed, but also by whether affected communities were provided with a fair, clear and reasonably accessible opportunity to understand evolving proposals and participate meaningfully in the consultation process.

Accessibility of the Focused Consultation

The Parish Council also wishes to raise further concerns regarding the practical accessibility of the focused consultation exercise.

Unlike the earlier statutory consultation process, the focused consultation relied on a more limited process for obtaining paper response materials, requiring consultees to request forms separately through telephone or email contact.

The consultation materials and the applicant’s website stated that paper feedback forms could be requested via telephone or email. However, the Parish Council became aware of a number of instances where residents experienced difficulty obtaining those materials in practice, including repeated unsuccessful attempts to contact the published telephone number and occasions where forms requested were not subsequently received.

The Parish Council itself sought additional paper response forms in connection with a local meeting intended to assist residents in engaging with the consultation. The Parish Council was informed that the focused consultation was primarily seeking responses from stakeholders who had previously registered an interest or from the Parish Council itself.

Taken together, the targeted nature of the consultation, the reliance on digital engagement, the extended process involved in obtaining paper response materials through telephone or email requests, and the subsequent reliance on postal delivery arrangements for those materials created uncertainty locally regarding whether wider individual representations were genuinely intended to form part of the consultation process and whether the arrangements adopted were intended to encourage wider public participation. This concern was further reinforced by

reports from residents that, even where repeated attempts to contact the consultation line were eventually successful, requested materials were not always subsequently received.

The Parish Council notes that this is of particular relevance in a parish with a significant proportion of elderly residents and others less able or willing to engage digitally.

Continuing Evolution of the Scheme

The Parish Council is also concerned that the focused consultation appeared to identify only selected amendments to the scheme despite additional apparent changes becoming evident through comparison with earlier plans.

As identified within the Parish Council's response to the focused consultation, comparison of the March 2026 plans with earlier consultation material appeared to indicate further alterations to mitigation areas and landscape treatment which were not clearly identified within the numbered consultation changes.

The Parish Council is concerned that this creates a situation where consultees are asked to comment on selected amendments in isolation despite the wider scheme and mitigation strategy continuing to evolve.

Where material elements of the scheme continue to change between consultation stages, the Parish Council considers it important that affected communities are provided with a sufficiently clear and transparent explanation of:

- what has changed;
- why those changes have occurred;
- which matters remain under review; and
- how previous consultation responses have influenced the revised proposals.

Without such clarity, there is a risk that consultees are unable to fully understand the cumulative implications of ongoing amendments to the scheme.

Consultation on Incomplete or Evolving Information

The Parish Council also notes that many of the focused consultation changes continued to be presented at a high level and without sufficient technical detail to enable informed assessment of impacts.

For example, the consultation material frequently referred to:

- cable route amendments;
- road safety works;
- landscaping and mitigation measures;
- changes to the Order limits; and
- works and mitigation proposals which appeared subject to ongoing refinement or further assessment.

In many cases, consultees were not provided with sufficiently detailed information regarding:

- the precise location and alignment of proposed works;
- the extent of hedgerow and potential tree removal or vegetation;
- the scale and nature of highway intervention required;
- construction traffic routes and arrangements;
- visual representations of proposed mitigation; or
- detailed environmental assessment relating to the amended areas.

The Parish Council remains concerned that consultation on proposals which continue to evolve, without sufficient supporting detail, limits the ability of affected communities to provide informed and meaningful comment.

Conclusion

The Parish Council respectfully requests that RMBC take these additional matters into account when considering the adequacy of consultation undertaken in relation to Whitestone Solar Farm.

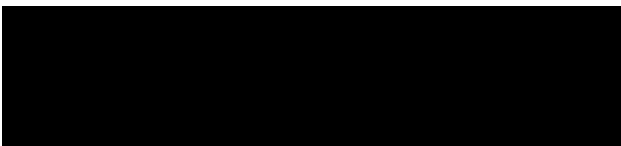
The Parish Council remains concerned that the focused consultation exercise did not materially resolve a number of the concerns previously identified regarding accessibility, transparency, proportionality and meaningful participation.

In some respects, the focused consultation process appears to reinforce earlier concerns regarding:

- reliance on digital engagement;
- practical barriers to participation;
- uncertainty regarding the scope of consultation and who was expected to respond;
- continuing evolution of the scheme during consultation; and
- the difficulty faced by affected communities in understanding and assessing changing proposals.

Taken cumulatively, the Parish Council considers that these matters remain relevant to any assessment of whether affected communities have been provided with a fair, proportionate and reasonably accessible opportunity to participate effectively in the pre-application consultation process.

Yours sincerely,



Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Harthill with Woodall Parish Council

Appendix A – Specific Record of Attempts to Obtain Consultation Materials

The following record was maintained by the Chair of Harthill with Woodall Parish Council following complaints received from residents regarding difficulties obtaining paper consultation materials during the focused consultation process.

Date	Action / Outcome
20 March 2026	Three telephone calls made to the consultation contact number. No answer received.
23 March 2026	Two further telephone calls made. Calls disconnected after approximately 45 seconds.
24 March 2026	Contact successfully made with a representative. Name, address and area of interest provided for paper consultation materials to be issued.
Up to close of consultation period	Requested consultation materials were not received.



Whitestone Solar Farm Consultation
c/o SEC Newgate UK
14 Greville Street
London
EC1N 8SB

Share your feedback

Targeted consultation

4 March – 3 April 2026



WHITESTONE
solar farm

We are currently conducting an additional round of consultation on proposed changes to the boundary of Whitestone Solar Farm, and we want to hear from you.

This questionnaire is designed to be used alongside the consultation leaflet which describes each change and is available on our website (whitestonesolarfarm.co.uk) or in printed copy by request.

All responses must be received by **11:59pm on 3 April 2026**. You can submit your feedback through the following methods:

- In the pre-paid envelope sent to your property
- Complete this questionnaire online at whitestonesolarfarm.co.uk or,
- Email your feedback to info@whitestonesolarfarm.co.uk

To ensure your feedback on these proposed changes is considered in this consultation, please include your name and the number of the change(s) you are providing feedback on. Any feedback on the project as a whole will not be considered in this consultation.

After this consultation, we will consider all the feedback that we have received, which will help inform the final proposals we submit in our application for development consent.

By submitting your feedback, you agree to our terms and conditions and that you have read our Privacy Notice available at our website whitestonesolarfarm.co.uk. All personal information will be stored in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

About you

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Email:

Feedback

Q1. Which change(s) are you providing feedback on? You can select more than one change.
Select from the following:

- ☐ **Change 1:** Cable Route
- ☐ **Change 2:** Landscaping
- ☐ **Change 3:** Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 4:** Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 5a:** Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 5b:** Cable Route
- ☐ **Change 6:** Cable Route and Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 7:** Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 8:** Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 9:** Cable Route
- ☐ **Change 10:** Cable Route
- ☐ **Change 11:** Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 12:** Road Safety

- ☐ **Change 13a:** Cable Route
- ☐ **Change 13b:** Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 13c:** Landscaping
- ☐ **Change 14a:** Drainage
- ☐ **Change 14b:** Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 14c:** Cable Route
- ☐ **Change 15:** Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 16:** Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 17:** Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 18:** Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 19a:** Cable Route
- ☐ **Change 19b:** Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 20:** Road Safety

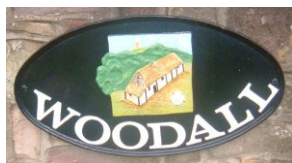
- ☐ **Change 21:** Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 22:** Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 23:** Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 24:** Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 25:** Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 26:** Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 27:** Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 28:** Landscaping
- ☐ **Change 29:** Cable Route and Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 30:** Road Safety
- ☐ **Change 31:** Road Safety

Q2. Please provide your feedback on our proposed change(s) you have ticked above. Please reference the change number(s) you are referring to in your response.

Get in touch

If you would like more information contact us via:

 Freephone 0800 688 9936  info@whitestonesolarfarm.co.uk  whitestonesolarfarm.co.uk



Harthill with Woodall Parish Council



Village Hall
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12th March 2026

Ms Lisa Brooks
Development Manager – Strategic Applications
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Riverside House
Main Street
Rotherham
S60 1AE

Dear Ms Brooks,

Whitestone Solar Farm – Adequacy of the Statutory Consultation Process

Harthill with Woodall Parish Council asks that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council take the following observations into account when forming its view on the adequacy of Whitestone Solar Farm's pre-application consultation under Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008.

In considering adequacy, the key question is not whether consultation was undertaken in a purely procedural sense, but whether affected communities were provided with a fair and reasonable opportunity to understand the proposals and provide informed comment. The observations below are intended to assist RMBC in considering whether that standard has been met in practice.

The statutory consultation stage is an important part of the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) process and is intended to ensure that:

- Local authorities, statutory consultees and affected communities are given a genuine opportunity to understand and comment on proposals.
- Consultation materials are clear and sufficiently detailed to allow meaningful engagement.
- The process is accessible and reliable for all consultees; and
- Issues raised during consultation can be considered before submission of any Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

For a project of this scale — approximately 750MW across three counties and numerous parishes — the Parish Council considers that a particularly high standard of clarity, consistency and accessibility in consultation would reasonably be expected. The scale and geographic

spread of Whitestone Solar Farm place a significant responsibility on the promoter to ensure that consultation is comprehensive, inclusive and technically accurate.

The Parish Council's concerns do not relate to the merits of renewable energy in principle. Rather, they relate to whether the consultation undertaken has provided affected communities with a clear, accessible and reliable opportunity to understand the proposals and provide informed comment.

The observations set out below relate to several aspects of the consultation process, including:

- Reliability and accessibility of consultation responses (Freepost address uncertainty);
- Limited geographic engagement and accessibility of consultation events;
- Inconsistency and lack of clarity in information presented to consultees;
- Insufficient certainty regarding access routes, infrastructure and future land requirements;
- The volume, structure and proportionality of documentation issued within the consultation window; and
- The accuracy and completeness of baseline and receptor information within the consultation materials.

Each of these matters is discussed in turn below. While some issues may appear administrative when viewed individually, taken together they raise broader questions regarding the overall adequacy and robustness of the consultation process.

1. Adequacy of Consultation – Freepost Address Reliability

During the consultation period the Parish Council sought clarification regarding the Freepost address provided for postal responses. The issue arose when the Council attempted to arrange printing of Freepost envelopes to assist residents in submitting consultation responses and the printing provider queried the address format.

Subsequent correspondence with Royal Mail indicated that the licensed Freepost NAME format differed from the address presented in the consultation materials. Royal Mail advised that many items might still be delivered but also explained that outcomes could vary depending on how individual mail centres processed the items. In some cases, items might be recognised and forwarded to the Freepost account, while in others they could require manual handling or potentially be treated as incomplete addresses.

The Parish Council raised this concern with the promoter during the consultation period and requested clarification and correction of the address format. The consultation materials were not amended, and the consultation deadline was not extended following this correspondence.

The Parish Council therefore considers that the address format used in the consultation materials did not fully reflect the licensed Freepost format for the service being used. While Royal Mail indicated that many items might still be delivered, the use of a non-standard format introduced an unnecessary margin for error and increased reliance on manual handling within the postal system. In the Council's view, this created avoidable uncertainty in what should otherwise have been a straightforward and reliable method for submitting consultation responses.

2. Limited Engagement and Accessibility of Consultation

Whitestone’s Consultation Booklet sets out a number of design principles, including commitments to “engage with stakeholders to develop the design” and to “find out what is important to people about the local area and seek to incorporate feedback” (Whitestone 3 Consultation Booklet p.8–9). The booklet also confirms that this stage constitutes statutory consultation under the Planning Act 2008.

For a development of this scale, Harthill with Woodall Parish Council is concerned that the consultation delivery does not reflect the scale and complexity of the proposal.

2.1 Geographic Distribution of Public Events

During the statutory consultation period, seven public information events were planned and held across a development corridor exceeding 20 kilometres in length. Only one event was held in Harthill. No dedicated event was held in Kiveton, despite parts of the settlement falling within or immediately adjacent to the defined WS3 inner consultation zone and its substantially larger population compared to Harthill. Given its immediate proximity to Whitestone 3, residents there are likely to experience direct landscape, visual and construction traffic impacts arising from the proposed development.

While consultation events were held in smaller neighbouring villages, no event was provided in Kiveton Park itself, despite it being one of the largest communities directly adjacent to the proposed development.

The limited geographic spread of events does not appear proportionate to the number of settlements materially affected. The consultation materials do not explain the rationale used to determine event locations or how decisions were made regarding which communities warranted direct engagement events, making it difficult to understand how equitable access to engagement opportunities was ensured.

2.2 Notification Methodology and Consultation “Zones”

The consultation booklet does not explain the methodology used to determine which households received direct notification of the consultation. From the information provided, the notification approach appears to have been primarily proximity-led rather than based on the likely extent of impacts.

While distance from panel arrays may have informed mailing zones, the impacts of a project of this scale extend beyond immediate site boundaries and include:

- Construction traffic corridors and haul routes
- Elevated viewpoints overlooking the valley
- Cable route options and crossing points
- Noise and operational infrastructure
- Cumulative landscape and visual effects

The consultation materials do not explain how these broader impact pathways were taken into account when defining the consultation notification area.

As a result, residents located outside narrowly defined proximity zones — but materially affected by traffic, visual or infrastructure impacts — may not have received direct notification. This raises concerns as to whether consultation was sufficiently inclusive of all affected communities.

The Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) confirms that the inner consultation zone was defined by drawing a boundary approximately 1 km from the site, expanded to include whole villages. However, the consultation materials do not clearly explain how this “whole village” approach was applied in practice or which settlements were ultimately included within the direct notification area. Nor do they explain how the consultation boundary accounted for potential construction traffic routes or other impact corridors extending beyond the immediate site boundary.

While a 1 km proximity band may be administratively convenient, its appropriateness must be considered in the context of the scale of the proposal. Whitestone Solar Farm is not a compact single-site development but a 750 MW scheme extending across approximately 20 kilometres. Landscape, visual, traffic and cumulative impacts are therefore likely to extend well beyond a 1 km radius. In this context, a fixed 1 km inner consultation zone appears narrow and insufficiently reflective of the project’s geographic and functional reach.

The Parish Council also notes that a number of residents attending the Harthill public event indicated that they had only recently become aware of the proposal. Following the event, the Parish Council hosted an additional information session at the Village Hall, where residents sought clarification on how to submit feedback and expressed concern that key aspects of the scheme remained unclear. While anecdotal, this suggests that awareness and understanding of the consultation may not have been as widespread as intended.

Taken together, these issues suggest that the consultation notification methodology may not have fully reflected the geographic extent of communities likely to experience impacts from the proposal. They also highlight the importance of direct notification for affected households, as reliance on general publicity, social media or local press coverage cannot reasonably be assumed to reach all potentially affected residents.

2.3 Event Timing and Accessibility

Event timing was limited primarily to weekday daytime and early evening hours. Only one Saturday event was provided, and no events extended beyond 7pm. No structured presentations or formal question-and-answer sessions were delivered.

For a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project of this scale, the consultation materials do not set out any assessment of potential accessibility barriers, including provision for residents without digital access or those unable to attend events during working hours.

The Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) also does not indicate whether any assessment was undertaken regarding the proportionality of seven events across a development corridor exceeding 20 kilometres, or whether event provision was benchmarked against the scale of the proposal.

The Harthill event was held in a village hall with a capacity of approximately 100 people and operated as a four-hour drop-in session. While drop-in formats do not require all attendees to be present simultaneously, the potentially affected population across Harthill, Woodall,

adjacent parts of Kiveton, and nearby cross-boundary settlements significantly exceeds the capacity of the venue.

The combination of limited venue capacity and a short event duration raises questions as to whether the consultation infrastructure provided sufficient opportunity for meaningful engagement for all potentially affected residents. The SoCC does not indicate whether venue size, anticipated attendance, or geographic catchment were assessed when determining appropriate locations and facilities for consultation events.

2.4 Conclusion on Accessibility

Taken together, the limited geographic distribution of consultation events, the lack of clarity regarding notification methodology, and the constraints on event timing and venue capacity indicate a consultation approach that appears limited relative to the geographic extent of communities potentially affected.

The Parish Council respectfully considers that, for a proposal of this scale and complexity, a broader and more clearly explained approach to community engagement would reasonably have been expected in order to ensure accessible and meaningful participation for all affected communities.

In combination, these factors raise questions as to whether the consultation approach adopted was proportionate to the geographic scale and potential impact of the proposed development.

3. Clarity of Information and Community Confidence

Beyond issues of geographic accessibility, the Parish Council is concerned about inconsistency and lack of clarity in the information presented during consultation.

3.1 Statements Regarding Finality of the Layout

At public events, members of the project team indicated that the current layout represented the “final” boundary for Whitestone 3. However, during the same consultation period residents observed landowner enquiries and notices placed in fields outside the published red-line boundary seeking ownership information.

This apparent inconsistency created uncertainty as to whether the published boundary represents a fixed proposal or remains subject to change. The Consultation Booklet does not explain whether discussions to secure additional land are ongoing or how such discussions relate to the published project boundary (“Order Limits”).

While the SoCC confirms that the design process is iterative and subject to refinement, this iterative nature was not consistently communicated at public events, where the project boundary was described as “final”. The presence of land ownership enquiries beyond the mapped boundary during the consultation period has therefore contributed to a perception within the community that additional land may still be under consideration.

For affected communities, clarity regarding the extent of the proposed development is fundamental to meaningful consultation.

3.2 Landowner Engagement and Perceived Pressure

The Parish Council has been informed by several landowners that approaches relating to cabling routes and land access have included references to potential compulsory acquisition powers. While compulsory acquisition is a lawful mechanism within the NSIP regime, discussion of such powers during pre-application consultation may reasonably be perceived as creating pressure if not carefully contextualised.

It is not the Council's role to adjudicate on individual interactions. However, the consistency of these reports has contributed to a perception within the community that consultation is occurring in parallel with efforts to secure land agreements.

Such perceptions, whether intended or not, have the potential to undermine confidence in the good-faith nature of the consultation process.

3.3 Accessibility of Information

Attendees at public events reported that a number of questions were answered with references to matters "still to be decided". While iterative design is expected in NSIP projects, meaningful consultation requires sufficient clarity for consultees to understand what is proposed and what remains flexible.

In addition, the Parish Council notes that:

- Printed copies of the full Draft Environmental Statement and supporting documents were not proactively distributed.
- The consultation relied heavily on online access to technical documents.
- No clear explanation was provided as to how residents without reliable internet access or those with accessibility needs could review the full documentation.

These factors suggest that greater provision for non-digital engagement would reasonably have been expected.

At the Harthill consultation event, copies of technical documents were present but held in multiple lever-arch files at the rear of the hall. Attendees were not actively directed to these materials, and their format made meaningful review during the event impractical.

The SoCC further states that hard copies of the Draft Environmental Statement may be subject to a charge of up to £750 to cover printing costs. While cost recovery may be lawful, such a charge represents a significant practical barrier for residents wishing to review the full documentation in printed form. Reliance on online access combined with high-cost printed copies raises questions as to whether the consultation materials were fully accessible in practice.

3.4 Impact on Community Confidence

Taken together, these issues have created uncertainty and reduced confidence locally in the consultation process.

Where clarity and consistency in consultation information are perceived to be lacking, this can affect the ability of residents to participate in the process with confidence and fully understand the proposals on which they are being asked to comment.

3.5 Transparency of the Promoter's Corporate Identity

Consultation materials refer to “Whitestone Solar Farm” and “Whitestone Net Zero Limited”, but the Statement of Community Consultation and Consultation Booklet do not prominently display the promoter's registered company number, registered office address or place of registration. While such information is publicly available via Companies House, it would reasonably be expected that the legally accountable entity is clearly identified within consultation documentation for a project of this scale. Clear corporate identification supports transparency and public confidence, particularly where long-term land use change and potential compulsory acquisition powers are proposed.

4. Insufficient Clarity Regarding Access Routes, Infrastructure and Future Land Requirements

While Section 3 addresses the clarity of information presented during consultation, the Parish Council is also concerned about the completeness of the technical information made available to consultees.

The Parish Council notes that several core infrastructure elements were described as provisional, indicative, or subject to ongoing refinement. While some degree of evolution is expected within Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) processes, consultation requires sufficient certainty for affected communities to understand the likely extent and nature of impacts.

At the time of consultation, a number of key elements of the scheme remained unclear or incomplete. In particular:

- Key construction access routes and haul corridors were not definitively identified, with several maps indicating that routes remained under consideration and representatives at consultation events indicating that routes were still under review.
- Cable corridors and associated infrastructure were presented with multiple potential alignments and options, without clarity as to final routing or land requirements.
- Buffer distances between panel arrays, Public Rights of Way and residential properties were described inconsistently within consultation documentation and at public events.
- Ecological surveys were stated to be ongoing, with further bat, bird and habitat assessments expected to be completed after the consultation period.
- The Draft Environmental Statement and associated figures present information for Whitestone 1, 2 and 3 within shared documents and appendices, requiring consultees to navigate across multiple volumes and figures to identify impacts relevant to their local area.

The absence of confirmed access routes, defined cable alignments, completed survey baselines and clearly separated site-specific information limited the ability of consultees to assess potential impacts in a meaningful and informed way. Consultation on evolving or incomplete information reduces the practical value of the opportunity to comment and raises questions as to whether the pre-application engagement provided consultees with sufficient clarity to respond effectively.

5. Volume and Complexity of Documentation

The statutory consultation was accompanied by a full Draft Environmental Statement and numerous supporting technical appendices covering landscape, transport, ecology, cultural heritage, noise, glint and glare, flood risk and other specialist disciplines. Collectively, these

documents represent a substantial volume of technical material for consultees to review within the consultation period.

While documentation was labelled to distinguish Whitestone 1, 2 and 3, understanding impacts specific to any one locality nevertheless required consultees to review multiple topic chapters, figures and appendices across the Draft Environmental Statement. Even where W1, W2 and W3 were separated, identifying parish-level effects involved extensive cross-referencing between chapters and technical drawings rather than reliance on clear, locally focused summaries. The practical task of extracting site-specific implications from the documentation was therefore complex and time-consuming.

Whitestone Solar Farm is a 750MW scheme extending across approximately 20 kilometres and three counties. This is around fifteen times the statutory 50MW threshold for a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project. Although the consultation period exceeded the statutory minimum of 28 days, proportionality remains a relevant consideration when assessing adequacy. A project of this magnitude required affected communities to review and interpret extensive technical documentation within a six-week consultation window, during which public events and presentations occurred part-way through the period.

The statutory consultation period ran from 16 September to 28 October 2025. Public consultation events were held between 2 October and 15 October, with the final event taking place on 15 October at Whiston Village Hall, only 13 days before the consultation closed. For many residents these events represented their first opportunity to view plans and ask questions about the proposals. Those attending the later sessions therefore had a limited period remaining in which to review the consultation documentation and prepare responses before the closing date. The Parish Council understands that several parish councils requested a short extension to the consultation period to allow communities additional time to consider the information presented at these events. The consultation period was not extended.

For small parish councils operating with limited administrative capacity, including part-time clerks and volunteer councillors, this level of documentation represents a significant practical burden. Adequate consultation under the Planning Act 2008 requires not merely the availability of information, but that information be presented in a manner that allows meaningful understanding and informed response. Where the scale and structure of documentation make it difficult for consultees to identify and assess impacts specific to their area within the consultation period, questions of adequacy legitimately arise.

In the context of the project's scale and geographic reach, it would have been reasonable to expect consultation materials structured in a way that facilitated straightforward parish-level scrutiny without extensive cross-referencing across technical disciplines. The cumulative volume and complexity of documentation, when considered alongside the limited number of engagement events and reliance on digital access, appear disproportionate to the consultation infrastructure provided.

6. Accuracy and Completeness of Consultation Information

The Parish Council is concerned that certain elements of the Draft Environmental Statement and associated consultation materials contain omissions or inaccuracies which materially affect the ability of consultees to understand likely impacts.

For example, the documentation does not clearly acknowledge an existing housing development, off Hard Lane, immediately adjacent to the proposed Whitestone 3 site. Given its proximity, such development is clearly relevant to the assessment of visual impact, traffic, residential amenity and cumulative effects. The absence or insufficient treatment of this receptor within consultation materials may reduce the reliability of the baseline against which impacts are assessed.

The Parish Council also notes that the consultation booklet includes illustrative diagrams of landscape mitigation and screening, including examples where solar panels are shown behind hedgerows or tree planting intended to reduce visual impact. These illustrations appear to represent idealised scenarios in which vegetation lies directly between residential properties and solar arrays. The Consultation Booklet states that solar panels are being assessed up to a maximum height of approximately 3.8 metres, yet this scale is not readily apparent from the visual illustrations presented.

In the case of Whitestone 3, however, parts of Harthill and Woodall are situated on elevated terrain overlooking sections of the proposed development area. In such circumstances, mitigation planting located within lower-lying fields is unlikely to materially screen views of solar arrays from higher residential properties. The consultation materials do not clearly explain how the proposed mitigation measures would function where residential receptors are positioned above the development site. This has contributed to concern within the community that the visual examples presented may not accurately reflect the likely experience of residents in elevated parts of the village.

The masterplan diagrams also depict proposed solar areas using uniform green shading similar to surrounding agricultural land. While this may reflect the existing land use, the presentation makes it difficult to distinguish between fields that would remain unchanged and those that would contain solar infrastructure. A clearer visual distinction within the diagrams may have assisted consultees in understanding the extent and visual presence of the proposed solar arrays within the landscape.

Meaningful consultation requires that information presented to consultees is sufficiently accurate and complete to enable informed comment. Where material receptors or developments are omitted or inadequately described, consultees may be placed at a disadvantage when attempting to evaluate potential effects.

These concerns are not raised in isolation. When considered alongside the infrastructure uncertainties described in Section 4 and the documentation complexity outlined in Section 5, such omissions reinforce the Parish Council's submission that the consultation materials did not always provide the clarity and completeness necessary to support fully informed engagement.

Conclusion

The Parish Council respectfully requests that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council give careful consideration to the matters set out above when forming its view on the adequacy of consultation under Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008.

Taken individually, some of the issues identified may appear administrative in nature. However, when considered cumulatively — including questions regarding consultation accessibility, geographic coverage of engagement events, clarity of infrastructure information,

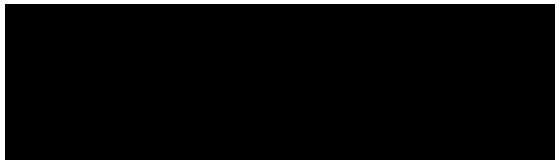
documentation complexity, and baseline omissions — they raise legitimate questions as to whether affected communities were provided with a fully informed and proportionate opportunity to participate in the statutory consultation process.

The Parish Council therefore asks that these matters be taken into account when determining whether the standards for adequate consultation have been met.

The Parish Council also notes that a further “targeted consultation” leaflet has recently been circulated electronically to parish councils and individuals who had previously registered interest in the project. The leaflet does not appear to advertise additional public events and appears primarily to rely on digital distribution. While any further engagement is welcome, such targeted communication does not address the Parish Council’s concerns regarding the accessibility and geographic reach of the original statutory consultation.

The recent communications issued in March 2026 indicate that aspects of the scheme design and layout continue to evolve prior to submission of the Development Consent Order application. While iterative design is expected in large infrastructure projects, these ongoing revisions further illustrate the challenges faced by consultees when attempting to comment on proposals that were still developing during the statutory consultation period.

Yours Sincerely,

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature of the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Harthill with Woodall Parish Council

HELLABY PARISH COUNCIL

Centenary Hall
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Clerk & Finance Officer
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Email: clerk@hellabyparishcouncil.gov.uk
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20 May 2026

To: Ms Lisa Brooks
Development Manager – Strategic Applications
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Riverside House
Main Street
Rotherham
S60 1AE

Dear Ms Brooks,

Whitestone Solar Farm – Adequacy of the Statutory Consultation Process in Relation to Hellaby and Surrounding Communities

This letter is submitted in relation to the Whitestone Solar Farm proposals and the adequacy of the statutory consultation undertaken under Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008.

While recognising the importance of renewable energy and the role it plays in supporting national climate objectives, significant concerns remain regarding whether the consultation process has provided communities within Hellaby and the wider Rotherham area with a fair, meaningful and proportionate opportunity to understand the proposals and respond in an informed manner.

The concerns set out below draw upon issues raised across a number of parish councils and local residents affected by the proposals, together with specific concerns relevant to Hellaby and its surrounding transport corridors.

1. Accessibility and Effectiveness of Consultation

There are serious concerns that the consultation process has not been sufficiently accessible or effective for many affected communities.

The consultation relied heavily on leaflet distribution, online materials and digital access to extensive technical documentation. Many residents reportedly mistook consultation leaflets for commercial advertising material relating to domestic solar installations and discarded them without recognising their significance.

For a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project of this scale, the consultation infrastructure appears limited and disproportionate to the geographic extent of the proposals and the number of communities potentially affected.

Only a small number of public engagement events were held across a development corridor extending across multiple parishes and local authority areas. Several communities likely to experience indirect impacts, including traffic, landscape and infrastructure effects, were not provided with dedicated consultation events.

Event timing also restricted participation:

Only limited evening and weekend availability was provided
No formal presentations or structured question-and-answer sessions were delivered
Some events were held in venues with limited capacity
The final events took place close to the consultation deadline, leaving insufficient time for residents and parish councils to review complex documentation and formulate responses

This raises legitimate concerns as to whether affected communities were provided with a genuinely accessible opportunity to participate in the consultation process.

2. Inadequate Geographic Scope of Consultation

The consultation methodology appears to have relied heavily on proximity-based consultation “zones”, rather than a realistic assessment of the wider impacts arising from a project of this scale.

A fixed distance-based approach does not adequately account for:

- Construction traffic corridors
- Access and haulage routes
- Landscape and visual impacts
- Cumulative environmental effects
- Infrastructure connections and cable corridors
- Operational impacts extending beyond immediate site boundaries

This is particularly important for Hellaby, which is already heavily impacted by motorway traffic, industrial development and transport-related environmental pressures associated with the M18 Junction 1 corridor.

Although Hellaby may not sit immediately adjacent to all proposed solar array areas, the community is likely to experience significant indirect impacts through construction traffic movements and cumulative environmental effects.

Residents and local councils therefore remain concerned that communities materially affected by the proposals may not have been fully identified or adequately engaged during the statutory consultation process.

3. Lack of Clarity and Completeness of Information

A recurring concern throughout the consultation process has been the lack of clarity and consistency in the information presented to consultees.

Key infrastructure components remained unclear or subject to ongoing revision during consultation, including:

- Construction access routes
- Cable corridors
- Substation locations
- Battery storage infrastructure
- Haulage routes
- Traffic management arrangements
- Associated construction compounds

Representatives at consultation events frequently indicated that significant aspects of the proposals remained “under consideration” or “still to be decided”.

While some degree of design evolution is expected in NSIP projects, meaningful consultation requires consultees to understand with reasonable certainty what is actually being proposed.

Without confirmed infrastructure layouts and route-specific information, communities such as Hellaby are unable to properly assess likely impacts on:

- Residential amenity
- Traffic congestion
- Road safety
- Air quality
- Noise exposure
- Ecology and landscape

The extensive reliance on online technical documentation also created significant barriers for many residents attempting to engage meaningfully with the process.

The volume and complexity of the consultation material placed an unreasonable burden on parish councils and residents, particularly given the limited consultation window.

4. Construction Traffic and Hellaby Highway Impacts

One of the most significant concerns for Hellaby residents relates to construction traffic impacts and the absence of clear route-specific information.

At the time of consultation, definitive construction haul routes and access strategies had not been clearly identified. Multiple routes remained under consideration, preventing residents and consultees from understanding the likely extent of impacts on local communities.

However, it is evident that a development of this scale will generate substantial HGV movements associated with:

- Solar panels and mounting systems
- Aggregate and construction materials
- Heavy plant and abnormal loads
- Cabling and substation equipment
- Construction workforce movements

Hellaby is already heavily affected by traffic congestion associated with:

- M18 Junction 1
- A631 Bawtry Road
- Denby Way
- Cumwell Lane
- Kingsforth Lane
- Existing industrial and logistics developments

Additional construction traffic associated with Whitestone would add further pressure to a corridor already experiencing:

- Daily congestion
- Elevated air pollution levels
- High transportation noise exposure
- Road safety concerns
- Significant HGV activity

There remains insufficient clarity regarding:

- Which roads would be used for construction access
- Frequency and duration of HGV movements
- Timing of vehicle movements
- Mitigation measures and enforcement mechanisms
- Potential cumulative impacts alongside other major developments

This lack of route-specific information significantly limits the ability of affected communities to provide informed comment.

5. Cumulative Impacts on Hellaby and Surrounding Areas

A major concern is the apparent failure to adequately assess cumulative impacts on Hellaby and neighbouring communities.

Hellaby is already subject to substantial cumulative environmental pressures arising from:

- Existing motorway infrastructure
- Logistics and industrial developments
- Ongoing and committed housing developments
- Freight and distribution sites
- Heavy vehicle movements associated with nearby industrial estates

The area surrounding M18 Junction 1 has experienced extensive industrial and logistics expansion over recent years, resulting in increased traffic volumes and associated environmental pressures.

The cumulative effect of additional construction traffic associated with Whitestone has not been properly assessed alongside:

- Existing committed developments
- Potential overlapping construction phases
- Existing transport congestion
- Existing air quality conditions
- Existing transportation noise exposure

This omission is particularly concerning given Hellaby's location adjacent to one of the borough's busiest transport corridors.

6. Air Quality and Public Health Concerns

Hellaby already experiences elevated levels of transport-related air pollution associated with the M18 corridor and surrounding industrial development.

Residents remain concerned that the consultation materials underestimate or fail to properly assess the cumulative health impacts of additional construction traffic and associated emissions.

Current concerns include:

- Elevated nitrogen dioxide levels
- Particulate matter exposure (PM2.5 and PM10)
- Existing traffic congestion
- Lack of comprehensive roadside monitoring
- Prolonged exposure for residents living close to key transport corridors

The consultation materials appear to dismiss the need for a full air quality assessment on the basis that construction impacts would be "temporary" or "short-term".

However, growing medical evidence demonstrates that even relatively short-term exposure to elevated pollution levels can have significant impacts on human health.

This is particularly important for communities such as Hellaby where residents are already exposed to prolonged periods of transport-related pollution and environmental noise.

The cumulative effects of additional construction activity therefore require far more robust assessment than has currently been provided.

7. Transportation Noise and Residential Amenity

Hellaby residents have longstanding concerns regarding high levels of transportation noise associated with:

- The M18 motorway corridor
- Heavy freight traffic
- Industrial developments
- Congestion along Bawtry Road and associated routes

The proposed development risks increasing these impacts during the construction phase through:

- Additional HGV movements
- Extended construction working hours
- Construction compounds and associated activity
- Increased traffic congestion and stop-start vehicle movements

Residents already experience substantial periods of road traffic noise affecting homes, gardens and wider residential amenity.

The consultation process did not provide sufficient information regarding:

- Predicted construction noise impacts
- Route-specific transportation noise assessments
- Mitigation measures
- Cumulative noise effects alongside existing developments

The absence of clear and detailed information on these matters further undermines the adequacy of the consultation process.

8. Adequacy of Community Engagement

Reports from public engagement events indicate that consultation representatives were frequently unable to provide clear answers to local concerns.

Communities sought clarification on issues including:

- Construction traffic
- Flooding
- Biodiversity impacts
- Highway safety
- Landscape impacts
- Community benefit
- Long-term land use change

In many cases, responses were vague or indicated that matters remained unresolved.

There is also concern that engagement appeared focused on meeting statutory requirements procedurally, rather than genuinely assisting communities in understanding the proposals and participating meaningfully in the process.

Where communities perceive consultation to be incomplete, inconsistent or unclear, confidence in the overall process is significantly undermined.

9. Overall Adequacy of the Consultation Process

Taken together, the issues identified above raise significant concerns as to whether the consultation process has met the standards required under the Planning Act 2008.

The concerns are not limited to isolated administrative matters. Rather, they collectively suggest a consultation process that has not provided communities such as Hellaby with:

- Clear and reliable information
- Sufficiently accessible engagement opportunities
- Adequate route-specific transport information
- Meaningful opportunity to assess likely impacts
- Sufficient time and clarity to respond effectively

In particular, the absence of confirmed construction traffic routes and cumulative environmental assessment represents a material gap in the information available to consultees.

For communities already experiencing substantial transport-related environmental pressures, these omissions are especially significant.

Conclusion

It is respectfully requested that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council carefully considers the concerns outlined above when determining whether the statutory consultation undertaken for Whitestone Solar Farm should be regarded as adequate under Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008.

In relation to Hellaby and surrounding communities, there remain serious concerns regarding:

- The accessibility and proportionality of the consultation process
- The adequacy of geographic engagement
- The lack of clarity regarding infrastructure and construction routes
- The cumulative impact of construction traffic and environmental effects
- The absence of detailed route-specific transport, air quality and noise assessments
- The ability of residents and parish councils to provide informed comment

The consultation process does not appear to have provided affected communities with a sufficiently clear, comprehensive or proportionate opportunity to understand the proposals and participate meaningfully in the process.

It is therefore requested that these concerns are fully taken into account when assessing the adequacy of consultation and determining whether further consultation and clarification should be required prior to submission of any Development Consent Order application.

Yours sincerely,



Clerk & RFO Hellaby Parish Council

FORMAL SUBMISSION**ADEQUACY OF CONSULTATION**

Report by Hooton Roberts and Firsby Parish Meeting to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

PROJECT	Whitestone Solar Farm NSIP (EN0110020)
APPLICANT	Whitestone Net Zero Ltd (Green Nation)
SUBMITTED BY	Hooton Roberts and Firsby Parish Meeting
SUBMITTED TO	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
DATE	May 2026
PURPOSE	To inform Rotherham MBC's Adequacy of Consultation Representation to the Planning Inspectorate at acceptance stage, and to be appended to that Representation as the Parish Meeting's evidence on the adequacy of the Applicant's pre-application consultation

This Report is submitted by Hooton Roberts and Firsby Parish Meeting, a civil parish authority and a statutory consultee in respect of the Whitestone Solar Farm Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project. It is provided to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council to assist the Council in the preparation of its Adequacy of Consultation Representation to the Planning Inspectorate. The Parish Meeting respectfully requests that the Council have regard to the analysis set out in this Report, draw upon it as the Council considers appropriate, and append the Report in full to the Council's Representation.

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- H.** Schedule of supporting documents

A. Purpose and standing of this submission

1. This Report is submitted by Hooton Roberts and Firsby Parish Meeting (“the Parish Meeting”) to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (“the Council”) in connection with the proposed application for a Development Consent Order in respect of the Whitestone Solar Farm Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (PINS reference **EN0110020**), promoted by Whitestone Net Zero Ltd (“the Applicant”). The Applicant’s stated programme is for submission of the application in late May 2026.
2. The Parish Meeting is the civil parish authority for the parish of Hooton Roberts and Firsby, one of three parish meetings within the democratic framework of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. It is a statutory body under the Local Government Act 1972 and a statutory consultee under section 42 of the Planning Act 2008 for this project. The parish lies immediately adjacent to the W1 solar generation area and the cable corridor route, and is directly affected by W1 in particular and by the development as a whole.
3. **Purpose of this Report.** This Report is provided to assist the Council in the preparation of its Adequacy of Consultation Representation (“AoCR”) to the Planning Inspectorate (“PINS”) at the acceptance stage of the proposed application. The Parish Meeting invites the Council to:
 - (a) have regard to the matters set out in this Report when forming the Council’s view on the adequacy of the Applicant’s pre-application consultation;
 - (b) draw upon any element of this Report — in full or in part — in the Council’s own AoCR; and
 - (c) append this Report in full to the Council’s AoCR as the Parish Meeting’s evidence on the adequacy of consultation.
4. **Approach.** The Parish Meeting has taken planning and legal advice in preparing this Report. It does not oppose renewable energy development in principle, and recognises the national policy framework for energy infrastructure. Its concern is narrower: an application for development consent of this scale and permanence - approximately 1,173 hectares for a generating capacity of up to 750 MW, with effects extending across at least sixty years - must be supported by a pre-application consultation that meets the standard required by the Planning Act 2008. The Parish Meeting’s view is that the consultation conducted by the Applicant does not meet that standard.

- 5. Realistic ambition.** The Parish Meeting recognises that most NSIP applications are accepted at the section 55 stage. It does not invite the Council to frame its AoCR around the unlikely outcome of outright non-acceptance. The realistic ambition is to ensure that the consultation adequacy concerns are placed formally before PINS at acceptance; that they are preserved as live matters for examination if acceptance is granted; and that the cumulative procedural fairness case in respect of this NSIP is built sustainably across the acceptance, Relevant Representations and examination stages.

B. The proposed development and consultation history

The proposed development

6. The Applicant proposes a solar generating station with associated battery energy storage and grid connection infrastructure, comprising three geographically distinct solar generation areas designated W1, W2 and W3 totalling approximately 1,173 hectares, for a stated generating capacity of up to 750 MW. The three areas are linked by cable corridor infrastructure and associated substations, and span the administrative areas of three local planning authorities: Rotherham MBC, the City of Doncaster Council, and North East Derbyshire District Council.
7. The W1 area lies immediately to the west of the civil parish of Hooton Roberts and Firsby. The cable corridor connecting W1 to the wider grid connection infrastructure passes within or adjacent to the parish boundary. The Parish Meeting and its community are directly affected by W1, by the cable infrastructure within the parish, and by the cumulative effects of the development as a whole.

Consultation chronology

8. The Applicant's statutory consultation under sections 42, 47 and 48 of the Planning Act 2008 closed on 28 October 2025. A targeted consultation on described changes to the draft Order Limits ran between 4 March and 3 April 2026. A Programme Document, a Community Update Newsletter setting out revised masterplans for W1, W2 and W3, and a Targeted Consultation Leaflet running to 43 pages and 31 numbered changes were published in March 2026. The Environmental Statement supporting the application was finalised in April 2026 — approximately six months after the close of statutory consultation.
9. That sequence matters. Between the close of statutory consultation in October 2025 and the intended May 2026 submission, the scheme has evolved materially, the environmental evidence has been completed, and the heritage baseline at W1 has been further investigated. The community has not been the subject of a further statutory consultation under sections 42, 47 and 48 in that period. The targeted consultation between March and April 2026 was, in its own terms, limited to a defined set of described changes - not a further statutory consultation.
10. The Parish Meeting responded to the statutory consultation, responded to the targeted consultation, and engaged with the Applicant through correspondence during the pre-application period. The Parish Meeting also raised matters of concern with the Planning Inspectorate directly during the pre-application period on issues going to the adequacy of consultation rather than to the merits of the application.

C. The adequacy framework in outline

- 11.** PINS may only accept an NSIP application for examination if it is satisfied that the applicant has complied with the pre-application duties in Chapter 2 of Part 5 of the Planning Act 2008 - in particular the section 42 duty to consult prescribed consultees, the section 47 duty to consult the local community, the section 48 duty to publicise the proposed application, and the section 49 duty to have regard to the responses received. Section 55(4) of the Act gives Adequacy of Consultation Representations from local authorities a particular status in that assessment: PINS is required to have regard to them.
- 12.** The decisive statutory question is whether the consultation undertaken complied with those duties in relation to the application *as submitted*. Earlier or provisional iterations of the scheme are not the test. Pre-application consultation is intended to be “front-loaded” - it is the stage at which the community can influence the scheme - and the statutory guidance issued in 2024 expressly anticipates that the design will evolve up to submission. The corresponding limit, which the same guidance recognises, is that the scheme as submitted must still be one whose likely effects have been “fully consulted upon”.
- 13.** The Parish Meeting accepts that scheme evolution between consultation and submission is lawful in principle and does not argue otherwise. The question in any individual case is one of degree: where the scheme has evolved materially in respect of its nature, its scale, its location, the identity of the communities affected, the likely environmental effects, or the substance of the planning judgment to be made, the earlier consultation may no longer satisfy the statutory duties. The courts have made clear in the planning context that the question is one of substance, not of how the applicant chooses to label the changes - the test is whether consultees had a fair opportunity to engage with the scheme actually being submitted.
- 14.** The common law adds two further requirements that have long been settled in consultation law generally. First, consultation must be undertaken on the basis of sufficient information to enable consultees to make an intelligent response; that requirement is reinforced in the NSIP context by the EIA Regulations, which require the Preliminary Environmental Information published during consultation to contain what is “reasonably required” for an informed view of the proposal’s likely significant effects. Second, the responses received must be conscientiously taken into account by the applicant.

- 15.** The five concerns the Parish Meeting raises in Sections D and E below are framed against that statutory and common law backdrop. Each goes to whether the consultation, in respect of the application that the Applicant now intends to submit, met the standard required.

D. Summary of the Parish Meeting's concerns

- 16.** The Parish Meeting raises five concerns. The first four are primary concerns: each, in the Parish Meeting's view, is independently material to the adequacy of the consultation. The fifth concern brings together a series of further matters about how the consultation was operated which are most usefully understood cumulatively rather than as freestanding grounds. The strongest framing of the Parish Meeting's case, however, is the cumulative one: the concerns set out below are mutually reinforcing, and the case is stronger taken as a whole than as the sum of its parts.
- 17. Concern 1 — The submitted scheme is not the scheme that was consulted upon.** The Applicant's March 2026 revised masterplan - which the Applicant describes as the submission masterplan - differs from the scheme that the community was consulted upon in respects that affect where the impacts fall, which communities are affected, the configuration of associated infrastructure, and the planning balance overall. The community has not had a fair opportunity to comment on the scheme that is actually being submitted.
- 18. Concern 2 — The environmental evidence was incomplete during consultation.** The Environmental Statement was not finalised until April 2026, around six months after the consultation closed. Major elements - including the Agricultural Land Classification survey for W1, the Coal Mining Risk Assessment, the outline Construction Traffic Management Plan, the Flood Risk Sequential Test, and parts of the ecology and cumulative effects work - were either incomplete or absent from the consultation materials. The community was being asked to comment without the evidence it needed.
- 19. Concern 3 — Heritage and archaeology at W1 remain unresolved.** Archaeological trial trenching at W1 was still ongoing in March 2026 - after the statutory consultation had closed. The trial trench findings, which may identify previously unknown remains or require further mitigation and design changes, were not before consultees during the consultation. This concern is particularly acute for the Parish Meeting because of the proximity of W1 to the Conisbrough Parks Romano-British Villa (Scheduled Monument SM1491751, designated July 2025) and to other heritage assets in and around the parish.

- 20. Concern 4 — A targeted consultation cannot stand in for statutory reconsultation.** The Applicant has chosen to address the post-consultation changes through a targeted consultation rather than a fresh round of statutory consultation. It describes the changes as “minor proposed changes to the draft Order Limits”. The Applicant’s own materials make that characterisation difficult to sustain: the changes include the removal of entire solar field areas around multiple settlements, the removal of a substation, a 37% reduction in the developable solar area, the introduction of new contingency Brinsworth substation infrastructure with acknowledged flood, heritage and coal mining implications, and a dual-substation contingency arrangement. The question is one of substance, not labels.
- 21. Concern 5 — Cumulative concerns about the consultation process.** Three further matters about how the consultation was operated — the inconsistent Freepost address, the accessibility of the consultation for the most directly affected rural communities, and the Applicant’s treatment of the responses received - do not, individually, necessarily rise to the level of independent failings. Taken together with the primary concerns, however, they materially strengthen the picture that the consultation did not provide affected persons with a fair, stable and intelligible opportunity to engage with the scheme that is actually being submitted.

THE PARISH MEETING’S SUBMISSION

The Parish Meeting’s view is that Concerns 1, 2, 3 and 4 are each, individually, capable of supporting a finding that the pre-application consultation has not met the standard required by the Planning Act 2008 in relation to the application as submitted.

More importantly, these concerns are mutually reinforcing. The scheme has evolved materially after consultation; the environmental evidence available during consultation was incomplete; the heritage baseline at W1 was unresolved; the targeted consultation does not, in substance, substitute for fresh statutory consultation. Taken together with the Concern 5 process matters, the case is significantly stronger than the sum of its parts.

The Parish Meeting asks the Council to advance the case cumulatively in its AoCR - not as a series of discrete technical defects, but as a single procedural fairness narrative that the consultation, viewed as a whole, did not give the community a fair opportunity to participate in the scheme actually being submitted.

E. The concerns in detail

E1. The submitted scheme is not the scheme that was consulted upon

- 22.** The statutory consultation closed on 28 October 2025. The materials before the community at that stage included a draft Order Limits boundary, draft masterplans for W1, W2 and W3, and supporting environmental and design information. It is on the basis of those materials that the Parish Meeting and other consultees formulated their responses.
- 23.** In March 2026 the Applicant published a Community Update Newsletter including revised masterplans for W1, W2 and W3 and a stated preferred cable route map. The Applicant's own description makes clear that the changes include the removal of entire solar field areas around multiple settlements; the removal of at least one substation from the consulted masterplan; a 37% reduction in the developable solar area; and the introduction of a dual-substation contingency arrangement. The revised March 2026 masterplan is described by the Applicant as the submission masterplan.
- 24.** The Parish Meeting accepts, as set out in Section C, that scheme evolution between consultation and submission is anticipated and lawful in principle. The Parish Meeting does not argue that any post-consultation change requires fresh statutory consultation. The narrower point is this: each of the changes summarised above goes to the substance of the proposal as it affects communities and environment. Removing solar field areas changes where the landscape, visual, heritage, glint-and-glare and ecological impacts fall, and shifts which communities are most directly affected. Removing a substation changes the location and configuration of infrastructure of high environmental significance. A 37% reduction in developable area is not a matter of micro-siting. The dual-substation contingency introduces alternative operational configurations of a kind consultees were not invited to consider during the consultation.
- 25.** Taken together, the changes affect each of the categories that the law treats as material: the nature of the project, its scale, its location, the identity of affected persons, the likely environmental effects, and the substance of the planning judgment to be made. The submitted scheme is not, on the face of the Applicant's own materials, the scheme the community was consulted upon.

PARISH MEETING'S VIEW

The strongest formulation of this concern is not that “the scheme changed”. Schemes evolve. The point is that the changes go to the substance of where and how the development’s impacts will fall, and the community was not given the opportunity to engage with the scheme actually being submitted.

E2. The environmental evidence was incomplete during consultation

- 26.** This concern is analytically separate from Concern 1. The first concern is about whether the project ultimately submitted differs from the project consulted upon. This concern is about whether the community had enough environmental evidence during the consultation to engage with the project at all.
- 27.** The Environmental Statement was not finalised until April 2026 — around six months after the close of the statutory consultation. The Environmental Statement material before the community during the statutory consultation was drawn from preliminary environmental information and described by the Applicant as such.
- 28.** In the intervening months, on the Applicant’s own account, the following work has been completed or substantially completed: archaeological trial trenching at W1; the outstanding part of the Agricultural Land Classification survey for W1 (the Applicant’s materials acknowledged that the survey covered around 45% of the W1 area at the close of consultation); ecology surveys including breeding bird, badger and bat work; landscape and visual assessment based on the revised masterplan; the transport assessment, including the outline Construction Traffic Management Plan; the Coal Mining Risk Assessment; the Flood Risk Sequential Test; and the Cumulative Effects Assessment. None of this completed work has been the subject of a statutory consultation.
- 29.** The Parish Meeting recognises that environmental statements are not required to be perfect at submission - the EIA regime allows for deficiencies to be identified and remedied during examination. The Parish Meeting does not contend that the Applicant’s Environmental Statement is so deficient that it ceases to qualify as an environmental statement at all. The concern is the more focused one: that the environmental information available *during the consultation* was not what is reasonably required for consultees to develop an informed view of the proposal’s likely significant effects. The categories of incompleteness - landscape, heritage, cumulative impacts, flooding, ecology - are precisely those that bear most heavily on the planning judgment for a scheme of this nature.

PARISH MEETING'S VIEW

Even if the masterplan had not changed at all between October 2025 and May 2026, the fact that the environmental evidence supporting the submission masterplan was finalised six months after the close of consultation would raise an adequacy issue in itself.

This concern is independent of, and additional to, the material divergence point at E1. Taken together, the two are mutually reinforcing: the community was consulted on a scheme the Applicant has now changed, on the basis of environmental information the Applicant itself acknowledged was incomplete and that has now been completed without the community being reconsulted.

E3. Heritage and archaeology at W1 remain unresolved

- 30.** The W1 area sits within a landscape of substantial archaeological sensitivity. The Conisbrough Parks Romano-British Villa was scheduled by the Secretary of State as Scheduled Monument SM1491751 in July 2025 - after the Applicant's draft Environmental Statement was finalised. The scheduling itself is significant: it is evidence that the heritage baseline relied upon during consultation was incomplete, in a way subsequently confirmed by the Secretary of State's designation decision. The wider W1 area contains a substantial range of further heritage assets, including the Firsby Lane medieval pottery industry, the Conisbrough Deer Park, a Roman drain (HER 02566/01), Iron Age enclosures, and a number of other recorded archaeological remains.
- 31.** On the Applicant's own Programme Document, archaeological trial trenching at W1 was due for completion in March 2026 - some five months after the close of the statutory consultation. The trial trench findings, which may identify previously unknown remains, alter the assessed significance of known remains, require further mitigation, or precipitate consequent design amendments, were not available to consultees during the statutory consultation period.
- 32.** Historic England's guidance on planning and archaeology, and the National Planning Policy Framework, are both clear that planning decisions on heritage assets must be based on sufficient information about significance, and that intrusive field evaluation may be necessary precisely because desk-based assessment alone is often not enough. The Parish Meeting's view is that, where the trenching is itself capable of altering the heritage understanding of W1, the consultation was being conducted on a heritage baseline that was known to be incomplete.

PARISH MEETING'S VIEW

This concern is of particular importance to the Parish Meeting because the W1 area lies immediately to the west of the parish and the heritage assets referred to either lie within or are closely connected to the parish.

The Parish Meeting also notes that this concern reinforces the wider argument advanced separately by Save Our Greenbelt that W1, W2 and W3 should properly have been the subject of three separate Development Consent Order applications. If W1 had been treated as a separate application, the trial trenching could have been completed and a complete heritage baseline established before any W1 application was submitted and this concern would fall away.

E4. A targeted consultation cannot stand in for statutory reconsultation

- 33.** The Applicant has chosen to address the post-consultation changes through a targeted consultation rather than a further round of statutory consultation under sections 42, 47 and 48. The targeted consultation ran for 31 days, from 4 March to 3 April 2026. The Applicant's characterisation of the changes is that they are "minor proposed changes to the draft Order Limits".
- 34.** As noted in Section C, the courts treat the question of whether further consultation is needed as a question of substance, not of how the applicant has chosen to label the changes. The Parish Meeting's view is that, on the face of the Applicant's own targeted consultation materials, the "minor" characterisation is not sustainable. Four points are relevant.

(i) Scale and number of changes

- 35.** The Targeted Consultation Leaflet runs to 43 pages and identifies 31 separately numbered changes, many with lettered sub-changes producing over 40 discrete items - spanning every area of the project from Micklebring in the north to High Moor in the south. The removal of entire solar field areas alters landscape, visual, heritage, glint-and-glare and ecological impacts. The removal of a substation alters cumulative effects, visual assessment, construction and operational effects. A 37% reduction in developable area is not, on any reasonable view, a minor refinement.

(ii) The dual-substation contingency arrangement

- 36.** Change 9 introduces new contingency Brinsworth substation infrastructure, with flood risk, heritage and coal mining implications acknowledged in the Applicant's own description. New substation infrastructure with those acknowledged implications cannot fairly be described as a minor change. The contingency arrangement also preserves multiple potential operational scenarios within the Order Limits - raising further questions about the precision of the environmental assessment and whether consultees ever understood the actual infrastructure proposal.

(iii) Multiple unresolved cable route alternatives

- 37.** The Targeted Consultation Leaflet shows that multiple cable route options remain open within the targeted consultation itself. Change 1 proposes an alternative to Cable Route B pending the outcome of environmental and engineering surveys. Change 10 proposes an alternative cable route south of the M1 subject to engineering assessments. Changes 13a and 19a propose further alternatives. The Newsletter's claim that a preferred cable route has been selected is materially qualified by the Applicant's own targeted consultation materials.

(iv) Discouragement of resubmission

- 38.** The Targeted Consultation Leaflet states that the Applicant has already considered the responses received during the statutory consultation and that consultees should not resubmit feedback already provided. That instruction narrows the scope of permissible response during the targeted consultation in a way that is difficult to reconcile with the duty to consult fairly, particularly where the evidence base has changed materially in the intervening months.
- 39.** Taking those four points together, the Applicant's own targeted consultation materials make the "minor" characterisation untenable. The targeted consultation is not, on this evidence, a substitute for the fresh statutory consultation that the scale of the changes properly required.

PARISH MEETING'S VIEW

The Parish Meeting respectfully asks the Council to read the Targeted Consultation Leaflet for itself. The Parish Meeting's view is that, once the Leaflet is read in full, the "minor" characterisation cannot be sustained.

If the Applicant later concedes that the changes were in fact material, the adequacy of the targeted consultation as a substitute for statutory reconsultation is directly in question. If the Applicant maintains that the changes are minor, that position is open to challenge by reference to the Applicant's own materials. Either way, the Council's AoCR is well-founded in raising this concern.

E5. Cumulative concerns about the consultation process

- 40.** The matters at E1 to E4 above go to what the community was consulted on and what information was available during consultation. The Parish Meeting also draws the Council's attention to a series of further concerns going to how the consultation was operated. These concerns are advanced on a more limited basis. The Parish Meeting does not contend that any of the matters in E5 would, taken in isolation, be likely to result in a finding of inadequacy. The submission is the narrower one: these matters are cumulatively material and, considered alongside the primary concerns, strengthen the case that consultees were not afforded a fair, stable and intelligible opportunity to engage with the scheme that is actually being submitted.

(i) Freepost address inconsistency and the integrity of the response record

- 41.** During the statutory consultation, the Applicant used two inconsistent Freepost address formats across its published materials. The discrepancy was identified at the time by Harthill with Woodall Parish Council. Royal Mail's published guidance is clear that Standard Freepost addresses must be reproduced exactly as registered, and that variations may result in mail being returned to sender or not delivered at all. The Applicant has not, to the Parish Meeting's knowledge, confirmed which of the two formats was the correctly registered address, or that all responses sent to the alternative address have been received and recorded.
- 42.** Consultation cannot meaningfully be said to have been conscientiously taken into account if responses were not reliably received in the first place. The Parish Meeting recognises that the practical force of this point depends on the available evidence of actual prejudice, and the strength of the argument is correspondingly limited as a freestanding ground. The Parish Meeting nevertheless asks the Council to request confirmation from the Applicant on these points in its AoCR. Cumulatively, when read alongside the primary concerns, the integrity of the response record remains a material issue.

(ii) Accessibility and reach of the consultation

- 43.** Three accessibility concerns arise. First, the cost of obtaining hard copy consultation documents - up to £750 for a complete set - was a structural barrier to participation for individual residents and small parish-level bodies. Second, the Applicant's consultation strategy was heavily weighted toward online engagement, which disadvantaged older residents and those in areas of limited or no broadband coverage. Third, the public events programme - seven events across a project corridor of around 12 kilometres affecting at least 14 parish-level bodies - did not include any event within or convenient to the parish of Hooton Roberts and Firsby, notwithstanding that the parish lies immediately adjacent to W1. Consultation must be practically accessible to the affected communities; none of these accessibility points is, taken alone, decisive, but cumulatively they reinforce the wider procedural fairness concern.

(iii) Treatment of consultation responses

- 44.** The Applicant states that 10,409 responses were received during the statutory consultation period. Its subsequent treatment of those responses, in the Community Update Newsletter and the Targeted Consultation Leaflet, has been to characterise them as confirmation that the design changes already incorporated into the revised masterplan are responsive to the community's concerns. That is not a proper response to a consultation. A consultation requires substantive engagement with the points raised by consultees, not a procedural framing of consultation responses as endorsement of changes the Applicant had in any event decided to make.

PARISH MEETING'S VIEW

The Parish Meeting acknowledges that these process matters are unlikely, taken individually, to support a finding of inadequacy. Absent specific evidence of actual prejudice, the Freepost issue may be characterised as a clerical irregularity and the accessibility points as administrative imperfections.

The Parish Meeting's submission is the more limited one: these matters are most usefully advanced cumulatively. Read alongside the primary concerns, they materially strengthen the broader picture that the consultation did not give the community a fair, stable and intelligible opportunity to participate in the scheme that is actually being submitted.

F. The Hooton Roberts and Firsby Parish perspective

- 45.** The Parish Meeting draws the Council's attention to four matters bearing on the adequacy question specifically from the Parish Meeting's perspective.

Direct impact from W1

- 46.** The parish lies immediately to the east of the W1 solar generation area, with the W1 boundary close to the parish boundary and cable corridor infrastructure proposed to pass within or adjacent to the parish. The parish will experience the direct landscape, traffic, heritage and amenity effects of W1, and the operational and decommissioning effects across a period extending at least sixty years. The Concerns at E1, E2 and E3 are of particular significance to the parish because of the proximity of W1, its heritage sensitivity, and the W1 trial trenching programme.

Statutory consultee status under section 42

- 47.** As noted in Section A, the Parish Meeting is a statutory consultee under section 42 of the Planning Act 2008. It was entitled to be consulted in its own right as the civil parish authority for an area directly affected by the proposed development. The Parish Meeting asks the Council, in preparing its AoCR, to satisfy itself that the Applicant's consultation report records the consultation of the Parish Meeting in that capacity, and to record any deficiency in the Council's Representation.

Geographic isolation of the parish

- 48.** Firsby lies administratively within Rotherham. The hamlet has no parish council, no parish offices, no resident-facing parish facility other than the parish meeting structure itself, and no public transport service that would permit residents to attend the public events held during the consultation. These features make the hamlet particularly dependent on direct engagement by the Applicant. The accessibility concerns at E5 are particularly pertinent to the parish for that reason.

A 60-year footprint in a long-occupied landscape

- 49.** The Applicant's programme is for a development with an operational life of at least 40 years, with construction and decommissioning periods either side, giving an effective duration of around 60 years. The community of Hooton Roberts and Firsby has occupied this landscape continuously across recorded history, with archaeological evidence of habitation extending back to the Roman period. The proportionality of the consultation duty in respect of a development of that scale and permanence, in a landscape of this depth of occupation, must be calibrated accordingly.

G. Conclusion and requests to Rotherham MBC

- 50.** In summary: the community has not had a fair opportunity to comment on the scheme that the Applicant intends to submit; the environmental evidence available during the consultation was incomplete in material respects; the heritage baseline at W1 was unresolved at the close of the consultation; the targeted consultation does not, in substance, substitute for the statutory reconsultation that the scale of the changes required; and the cumulative process concerns at E5 reinforce the picture.
- 51.** The Parish Meeting respectfully invites the Council to take the following steps in the preparation of its Adequacy of Consultation Representation:
- (a)** to consider this Report in full when forming the Council's view, and to draw upon the analysis at Sections D, E and F in the body of the Council's Representation to the extent the Council considers it well-founded;
 - (b)** to append this Report in full to the Council's Representation, so that the Parish Meeting's evidence is placed formally before the Planning Inspectorate;
 - (c)** to frame the Council's Representation around the practical evidence of what changed, when, and what consultees did and did not have available to them — a chronology-based, evidence-led submission rather than a broad-brush assertion of unfairness;
 - (d)** to ask the Applicant to: (i) confirm whether all responses sent to the alternative Freepost address have been received and recorded; (ii) make available the trial trenching results for W1 and confirm the timing of any consequential design changes; and (iii) make available the Coal Mining Risk Assessment, the complete Agricultural Land Classification survey, the outline Construction Traffic Management Plan and the Flood Risk Sequential Test for the application area within the Council's administrative boundary;
 - (e)** to record in the Council's Representation the Parish Meeting's status as a section 42 statutory consultee and the Parish Meeting's position that the specific absence of any public event held within or convenient to the parish is a substantive consultation failing in respect of a community directly affected by W1 and the cable corridor; and
 - (f)** if PINS accepts the application notwithstanding the Council's Representation, to preserve the consultation adequacy concerns as live matters for examination by recording them in the Council's Local Impact Report and Relevant Representations.

- 52.** The Parish Meeting is grateful for the Council's consideration of this Report and remains available to provide any further information or clarification the Council may need. The Parish Meeting will make its own representation to the Planning Inspectorate at the appropriate stage, but considers it important, given the weight given to local authority AoCRs, to assist the Council in the preparation of the Council's own Representation in the manner set out above.

Submitted on behalf of Hooton Roberts and Firsby Parish Meeting



Chair, Hooton Roberts and Firsby Parish Meeting

19 May 2026

H. Schedule of supporting documents

- 53.** The following documents support the matters set out in this Report and are available from the Parish Meeting on request. Documents within the public PINS case record for EN0110020 are not duplicated here.

No.	Document	Date	Author / Source
1	Whitestone Solar Farm — Programme Document	March 2026	Whitestone Net Zero Ltd
2	Whitestone Solar Farm — Community Update Newsletter (revised W1, W2, W3 masterplans)	March 2026	Whitestone Net Zero Ltd
3	Whitestone Solar Farm — Targeted Consultation Leaflet (43 pp, 31 numbered changes)	March 2026	Whitestone Net Zero Ltd
4	Whitestone Solar Farm — Statement of Community Consultation	2025	Whitestone Net Zero Ltd
5	Planning Act 2008 — Pre-application stage guidance (section 50)	2024	DLUHC / DESNZ
6	National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3)	2023 (updated)	DESNZ
7	Scheduled Monument designation — Conisbrough Parks Romano-British Villa (SM1491751)	July 2025	Secretary of State
8	Historic Environment Advice Note 17: Planning and Archaeology	2022	Historic England
9	National Planning Policy Framework, para 207	December 2024	DLUHC
10	Correspondence on Freepost address inconsistency	Sept–Oct 2025	Harthill with Woodall PC



Laughton-en-le-Morthen Parish Council

Incorporating Brookhouse, Carr, Slade Hooton and Newhall Hamlet

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S25 1YD**

Telephone – 01709 528823

Email: clerk@laughtonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Date: 20th May 2026

Ms Lisa Brooks

Development Manager – Strategic Applications
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Riverside House
Main Street
Rotherham
S60 1AE

Dear Ms Brooks,

Whitestone Solar Farm – Adequacy of Consultation

Laughton-en-le-Morthen Parish Council asks that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council take the following comments into account when considering the adequacy of consultation undertaken in relation to the Whitestone Solar Farm proposal.

The Parish Council understands that the proposed development is not located within the parish boundary of Laughton-en-le-Morthen. However, Council is concerned that Whitestone's consultation approach appears to have been based on defined zones, with the level of consultation received depending on a community's proximity to specific parts of the proposed infrastructure. While the Council understands that this was the approach adopted by Whitestone, it does not consider that this zoning strategy properly reflected the wider area likely to be affected by the proposal, particularly in terms of construction disruption, traffic movements, recreational use of the countryside, and visual amenity.

Many residents across the wider Rotherham area regularly travel through, walk in, visit, or commute across areas affected by the proposal. For those residents, the potential impacts are not remote. They may include disruption during the construction phase, changes to familiar walking routes and recreational areas, increased journey times, highway diversions, and changes to the visual amenity of landscapes which form part of their daily lives.

This concern has become particularly evident to the Parish Council through the comparatively smaller Common Farm Solar Farm development. Although that development is not within our parish, its construction phase has already had noticeable effects on local commuters, including disruption, diversions and increased travel times. In the Council's view, this demonstrates how solar developments can have a practical impact well beyond the immediate application site or host parish.

Council is therefore concerned that Whitestone has not taken sufficient steps to ensure that residents outside its selected consultation zones properly understand the scale of the proposal, the likely construction impacts, or how the application may affect their day-to-day lives. Council considers that many residents across the wider Rotherham area have had little or no meaningful information about the scheme, despite being likely to experience some of its impacts.

Council considers that the issue is not simply whether consultation has taken place in a procedural sense, but whether the communities likely to be affected have been given a fair and reasonable opportunity to understand the proposal and its likely day-to-day impacts.

For these reasons, Council considers that the consultation approach has been too narrowly focused and has not adequately reflected the wider communities likely to be affected by the proposed development.

The Parish Council would be grateful if these concerns could be noted by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council when considering the adequacy of consultation and the wider local impact of the proposal.

Yours sincerely,



Clerk to Laughton-en-le-Morthen Parish Council

Ravenfield Parish Council

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19 May 2026

Ms Lisa Brooks
Development Manager – Strategic Applications
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Riverside House
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S60 1AE

Dear Ms Brooks,

Whitestone Solar Farm – Adequacy of Consultation

Ravenfield Parish Council wishes to formally raise serious concerns regarding the adequacy of consultation undertaken by Whitestone Solar Farm during both the informal and statutory consultation stages of this proposed development.

At the outset of the consultation process, Ravenfield Parish Council was not included within consultation arrangements, as the parish was not initially identified by Whitestone as a “host parish”. It was only after concerns were raised locally, and the Parish Council actively requested involvement, that Whitestone acknowledged that the proposal would impact Ravenfield Parish and subsequently involved the Council within consultation discussions.

As a result, Ravenfield Parish Council was excluded from the early stages of engagement and missed the first stage of consultation entirely. The Council considers this to be a significant failing given the scale and potential impact of the proposed development upon the surrounding rural landscape and neighbouring communities.

The consultation events held by Whitestone were considered by many residents and members of the Parish Council to be inadequate and poorly organised. Only one local drop-in session was held within Ravenfield Parish at Ravenfield Parish Hall. The event concluded by 7pm, included no formal presentation and offered limited opportunity for meaningful engagement. Residents raised concerns that the timing and format of the event made attendance difficult, particularly for those working during the day, and that accessibility arrangements were poor.

The consultation material itself was also problematic. Maps and plans displayed at events were often unclear, incomplete and difficult to decipher, lacking sufficient detail for residents to properly understand the proposals. Parish Council representatives and members of the public found it difficult to identify the extent of the development, associated infrastructure and likely impacts upon Ravenfield Parish.

The Parish Council also wishes to raise concerns regarding the volume and complexity of the technical documentation provided throughout the consultation process. Many of the documents released by Whitestone were extremely lengthy, highly technical in nature and difficult for members of the public to meaningfully understand without specialist knowledge.

Residents repeatedly expressed concerns that important information was buried within extensive technical reports, making it unreasonable for ordinary members of the community to properly review and assess the likely impacts of the development. The scale and complexity of the documentation, combined with limited consultation periods, created significant barriers to effective public participation.

The Parish Council considers that consultees could not reasonably be expected to provide informed responses where information was overly technical, inaccessible and difficult to interpret.

Initially, there was no meaningful information provided regarding proposed cable corridors, despite the potentially significant impacts associated with underground cabling, construction works and land access arrangements. Even after more than two years of consultation and scheme development, many residents remain unclear regarding the true scale of the proposed solar farm, the extent of associated infrastructure, the likely disruption during construction and the long-term impact upon the landscape and character of the area.

The Parish Council also remains concerned that many residents are still unaware of the proposal altogether. In many cases, awareness within the local community has only been achieved through the efforts of the Parish Council in publicising the development and sharing information with residents.

Residents and Parish Council representatives also found that many questions raised during consultation events could not be adequately answered by Whitestone representatives. It was apparent that representatives had limited knowledge of the local area and were unable to provide clear responses regarding local concerns.

In particular, Whitestone representatives were unable to provide satisfactory information relating to flooding and drainage impacts, construction traffic routes, biodiversity impacts, impacts upon bridleways and public rights of way, land access arrangements and the cumulative impacts arising from other nearby developments and infrastructure proposals.

The Parish Council considers that the lack of available information significantly restricted the ability of residents and consultees to provide informed responses during consultation. Residents and consultees could not properly assess the likely impacts of the scheme because sufficient and meaningful information was unavailable throughout much of the consultation process.

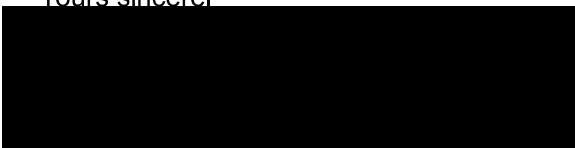
Ravenfield Parish Council also shares the concern that the developer's chosen approach to engagement has not captured all individuals and communities that will ultimately be affected by the proposal.

The Council considers that the consultation process has too often appeared focused upon satisfying minimum statutory requirements, rather than ensuring genuine and meaningful engagement with affected communities.

Ravenfield Parish Council respectfully requests that Rotherham MBC gives full consideration to the concerns outlined above when preparing its submission regarding the adequacy of consultation.

We would appreciate confirmation of receipt and would welcome being kept informed of any further developments relating to this matter.

Yours sincerely



Clerk to Ravenfield Parish Council

Please note: This correspondence has been sent by email only to the address of: lisa.brooks@rotherham.gov.uk No hard copy will follow.

Proposed changes to the boundary of Whitestone Solar Farm, known as the 'draft order limits'.

Below are the Responses from Treeton Parish Council in Respect of Changes Numbers 8 to 13

Number 8

Description of Change: Additional land is proposed along Long Lane southwest of Whiston to allow the proposed access to Cable Route E, to comply with highway safety standards for visibility and temporary speed reductions if required.

Impact of Change: This change may lead to the loss of hedgerow and roadside vegetation. This impact is already being considered within the EIA being undertaken to support the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development will include commitments to planting new hedgerows and creation of additional areas of habitat including safeguarding of any species as needed. With suitable mitigation, this change is unlikely to lead to significant adverse effects

Response - This will involve taking land from each side of Long Lane at both ends of the proposed Substation and will contribute further to the overall loss of habitat and change visible appearance.

Number 9

Description of Change: While the grid connection is to the Long Lane 400kV Substation, the Applicant notes that this substation is still in planning and has not yet been constructed. Therefore, additional land is being proposed to connect into the existing Brinsworth substation if for any reason the new Long Lane 400kV Substation is not constructed. Works would include underground cabling to the substation.

Impact of Change: As the change consists of running an underground cable, the potential effects could be flood risk, cultural heritage and land and soils due to a high risk from coal mining. These constraints would need to be fully assessed and construction work would be managed to limit and mitigate potential impacts.

*Response -Treeton Parish Council's view is that there **is insufficient information provided by the developer for it to give any informed feedback**. This is however a significant tranche of land which would appear to run between the existing Brinsworth and the proposed substations. This boundary change will significantly increase the size of the development around Treeton where there has been no mitigation following either the informal or statutory consultation phases. We will write to you separately about this matter. The PC has always maintained that this development is too big and will have a damaging effect on the unique character of the village*

Not only will this boundary change significantly extend the size of the development, it relates to land which is known to routinely flood but you have failed to date to undertake any impact assessments where significant risks have already been identified relating to flooding, cultural heritage and previous coal mining activity

It is of concern that these impact assessments have not been undertaken given their potential to significantly affect residents, the environment and grid connectivity.

The establishment of this link will involve much earth work and will add significantly to the disruption during construction.

Number 10

Description of Change: Additional land is proposed south of the M1 between Treeton and Pleasley Road (A618) to provide for an alternative cable route option south of the M1. This is an alternative cable route option to Cable Route D-1, which is north of the M1, and could provide an alternative route to the grid connection location at Long Lane 400kV Substation, subject to engineering assessments.

Impact of Change: This change is not anticipated to result in any impacts that are not already being considered within the EIA being undertaken to support the Proposed Development. Any noise generated during construction of the cable corridor is already being assessed in the EIA and industry best practice mitigation will minimise any short-term disturbance on nearby receptors. Construction work will be managed in a way to minimise any disturbance on receptors through an Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan. This change is unlikely to lead to significant adverse effects.

Response - This change will result in the loss of a significant amount of prime agricultural land and will again add to the size of the development around Treeton.

This work will also significantly increase disruption during construction.

Number 11

Description of Change: Additional land is proposed along Long Lane northeast of Treeton to allow the proposed access to solar area to comply with highway safety standards for visibility and temporary speed limits if required. The works could include trimming hedges or roadside vegetation for safe visibility, temporary road signage for managing safe access and temporary speed limits during construction if required.

Impact of Change: This change may lead to the loss of hedgerow and roadside vegetation if other mitigations such as temporary speed limits are not feasible. This impact is already being considered within the EIA being undertaken to support the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development will include commitments to planting new hedgerows and creation of additional areas of habitat including safeguarding of any species as needed. With suitable mitigation, this change is unlikely to lead to significant adverse effects

Response - This will involve taking land from each side of Long Lane, below the sewer treatment plant to the bend before the motorway underpass, and will contribute further to the overall loss of habitat and change visible appearance.

Number 12

Description of Change: Additional land is proposed along Pleasley Road (A618) to allow the proposed access to Cable Route F, to comply with highway safety standards for visibility and temporary speed limits if required. The works could include trimming hedges or roadside vegetation for safe visibility, temporary road signage for managing safe access and temporary speed limits during construction if required.

Impact of Change: This change may lead to the loss of hedgerow and roadside vegetation if other mitigations such as temporary speed limits are not feasible. This impact is already being considered with the EIA being undertaken to support the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development will include commitments to planting new hedgerows and creation of

additional areas of habitat including safeguarding of any species as needed. With suitable mitigation, this change is unlikely to lead to significant adverse effects

Response - This will involve taking additional land from each side of Pleasley Road and will contribute further to the overall loss of habitat and change visible appearance.

Pleasley Road is a fast, busy and dangerous road which has seen a high incidence of traffic accidents and fatalities over the years. Heavy construction work on this road will increase the risk to road safety. It carries a high traffic load and should this work proceed it will significantly impact traffic flow.

Number 13a

Description of Change: Additional land is proposed west of Burnt Wood and east of Treeton to provide for an alternative cable route option to Cable Route G-1. This alternative cable route is likely to be a better engineering route to connect the solar areas north of Treeton due to the topography of the land.

Impact of Change: This change is not anticipated to result in any impacts that are not already being considered within the EIA being undertaken to support the Proposed Development. Construction work will be managed in a way to minimise any disturbance on receptors through an Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan. This change is unlikely to lead to significant adverse effects

Response - This represents a further and significant loss of agricultural land and will affect local habitat and visible appearance.

Number 13b

Description of Change: Additional land is proposed along Treeton Lane to provide an additional access point to and from the solar area. This change has been proposed in response to consultation feedback about the potential traffic impacts of the proposed access point on Long Lane. This access point is being proposed in addition to the access point on Long Lane to either reduce traffic impacts on Long Lane, or remove that access point altogether. The proposed access includes additional land to access solar area, to comply with highway safety standards for visibility and temporary speed limits if required. The works could include trimming hedges or roadside vegetation for safe visibility, temporary road signage for managing safe access and temporary speed limits during construction.

Impact of Change: This change may lead to the loss of hedgerow and roadside vegetation. This impact is already being considered within the EIA being undertaken to support the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development will include significant commitments to planting new hedgerows and creation of additional areas of habitat including safeguarding of any species as needed. With suitable mitigation, this change is unlikely to lead to significant adverse effects.

Response - The Parish Council considers this a major change to the development and like many of the changes proposed during this 'targeted consultation' will result in the loss of more of the green belt around Treeton. Treeton has three access and egress routes of which Treeton Lane is one. There are major concerns relating to road safety, the road has a high incidence of accidents, many of which go unreported. The stone wall, opposite the proposed entrance, and extending hundreds of meters was rebuilt several years ago but has been mostly destroyed as a result of vehicle accidents which serves to demonstrate the real safety issues associated with this road

During the proposed construction timetable, Treeton Lane will become the main access route in and out of Treeton due to bridge replacement work at Catcliffe which will take in excess of three years, the contract has yet to be awarded, and massive construction works on Long Lane which, in addition to Whitestone, may include a large housing development and the likely construction of the proposed substation.

Treeton Lane has a junction with Pleasley Road at Aughton where long queues are routinely experienced. Early mornings and evenings frequently have tail backs stretching up to half a mile with very long delays.

Should Treeton Lane become the major access route to the solar farm, particularly during construction, residents of Treeton face a likely scenario of being unable to access and egress the village for what will run into years and this is totally unacceptable.

Number 13c

Description of Change: Additional land along Pleasley Road (A618) is being proposed for landscaping to minimise potential glint and glare impacts on the adjacent road. Works could include the planting of trees, hedges or other landscaping and visual barriers as needed.

Impact of Change: The impact is dependent on type of visual screening. There is a preference for planting of hedgerows and trees which would have beneficial impacts on habitat creation and connectivity. It may be necessary to install temporary fencing whilst vegetation establishes, however it is expected that any adverse impact would be not significant as receptors would be driving and views impacted would be fleeting

Response -The Parish Council cannot overstate the perilousness of Pleasley Road and its accident history, particularly where this boundary change is proposed. There is concern that the proposed measures to address glint and glare must be properly risk assessed given the road safety issues . Immature trees will take time to establish and will need to provide year round cover.

In your assessment you are dismissive of the adverse impact of your proposal stating that 'receptors would be driving and views impacted would be fleeting'. This area, where your panels will be sited, is one of extensive local beauty; it is entirely inappropriate and profoundly insensitive to describe the impact as 'fleeting'. For people who are local to this area the impact will be overwhelming.



Clerk to the Council – [REDACTED]

The Reading Room, 25 Front Street, Treeton, S60 5QP
Telephone 07868 813547 Email: treetonpc@aol.com
Website: www.treetonparishcouncil.gov.uk

16 February 2026

Ms Lisa Brooks
Development Manager Strategic Applications
Rotherham MBC
Riverside House
Main Street
Rotherham
S60 1AE

Dear Ms Brooks

Whitestone Solar Farm – Inadequacy of the Consultation Process

Treeton Parish Council is deeply dissatisfied with the consultation process undertaken by Whitestone at both the informal and statutory consultation stages of this proposed development. At no point has the process been transparent, meaningful or fit for purpose.

Written communication with residents throughout has relied heavily on flyer distribution, which by many was reportedly mistaken for junk mail and discarded as it resembled commercial advertising for domestic solar panels.

Informal Consultation

At the informal stage of consultation 8 public events were held across the entire development which was inadequate in number with no event held in Treeton resulting in residents having to travel to other venues. The events were poorly advertised resulting in lacklustre attendance. Moreover, the information presented at these events largely comprised large maps displayed on tables which residents found extremely difficult to read. The maps and associated literature did not clearly show the locations of the proposed development. In the case of Treeton, the print was so small it was impossible to identify as a location. At these meetings it was clear that Whitestone representatives had a poor knowledge of the area and were unable to provide adequate responses to local concerns.

At the end of this initial process local communities remained largely ignorant of the proposed development.

Statutory Consultation

Despite being more than two years into planning, Whitestone, at the end of the statutory consultation stage, has failed to provide clear information on the siting of many critical infrastructure components including: -

- Cable corridors
- Battery storage areas
- Primary and secondary substations
- Associated infrastructure.

As a result, the proposals presented during the statutory consultation were unclear, incomplete and left residents insufficiently informed about the true scale and impact of the development. This important stage of consultation was premature and residents remain ignorant as to where critical infrastructure will be sited and its impact on the landscape and local communities.

Statement of Community Engagement

Whitestone's *Statement of Community Engagement* (September 2025), produced to meet the statutory consultation requirements of the Planning Act 2008, divided residents into Inner Zone and Outer Zone categories, based on perceived levels of impact determined by proximity to the proposed development. This approach has resulted in serious omissions and failures in engagement.

(i) Inner Zone Residents

Whitestone's consultation document in relation to the statutory consultation states that public events would be held ***"at a variety of times, including evenings and weekends to enable participation by people with different time commitments."*** In reality:

- Only seven public drop-in events were arranged across the entire development area
- These covered a distance of over 25 miles, from Conisbrough in the north to Harthill and Woodall in the south
- The events spanned 22 host parishes
- There were no formal presentations
- Only one Saturday morning event was held
- No events finished after 7pm

All of the above severely restricted access to the events for working residents and fell well short of the stated commitment to accessibility.

The statutory consultation period itself was limited to just six weeks, close to the legal minimum. Given the scale, complexity and impact of what is proposed, this timeframe was wholly inadequate.

There has been little meaningful engagement with Treeton Parish Council or its residents. Whitestone repeated its failure to offer Treeton a consultation meeting despite the village's requests and close proximity to a significant part of the development.

It was only after persistent intervention by our Member of Parliament, Sarah Champion, that a meeting was eventually arranged. This meeting was held at very short notice, limiting attendance. When it did take place, Whitestone's representatives demonstrated a dismissive attitude and an unwillingness to address legitimate concerns. They were unable to provide satisfactory responses to questions relating to flooding, construction traffic access, biodiversity impacts and community benefit among others.

The list of unresolved issues is extensive and the engagement was wholly inadequate.

(ii) Outer Zone Residents

Whitestone has failed seriously to consult with residents in neighbouring villages bordering the proposed development area. In the case of Treeton, as a 'Host Parish Council', no material consultation has taken place with the neighbouring parishes of Catcliffe, Waverley or Orgreave.

As a result, the majority of residents in these communities have little knowledge of the proposed development, nor any meaningful understanding of how it will affect them and the surrounding landscape.

This is a major omission. Due to the sheer scale and prominence of the proposed solar farm, its impacts will extend well beyond the immediate host parishes, affecting residents across Rotherham and much of South Yorkshire impacting the landscape for generations. Consultation should have been far more extensive.

Instead, engagement with Outer Zone residents has been limited to:

“Publicising the consultation via the project website, email updates to a ‘keep informed’ list, social media advertising, statutory notices, and press releases to local media.”

This approach has resulted in a woeful and disturbing lack of public awareness among large sections of the local community.

Conclusion

Whitestone’s *Statement of Community Consultation* appears to be designed solely to satisfy the statutory requirement to consult, rather than to genuinely engage with affected communities.

At both stages of consultation, Whitestone has ignored the concerns raised by Treeton Parish Council and its residents, set aside no land to mitigate local impacts and failed to account for the cumulative effects including the proposed National Grid Substation, itself a major infrastructure project, and a 170 home development to be sited adjacent to the substation.

It is entirely unacceptable that a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) of this magnitude consuming approximately 3,400 acres of Green Belt land should proceed on the basis of such superficial and inadequate engagement.

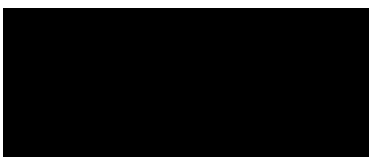
The consultation process is unfit for purpose and Treeton Parish Council firmly belief that the Secretary of State should declare the entire consultation process invalid.

Treeton Parish Council asks that Rotherham MBC Planning Department acknowledge receipt of this letter and confirm how these serious concerns regarding the adequacy of the consultation process will be addressed?

In particular, we would welcome clarification as to whether Rotherham MBC intends to make formal representations to the Secretary of State regarding the deficiencies outlined above.

We would also appreciate being kept informed of any updates or decisions relating to this matter and are willing to meet to discuss our concerns in more detail should that be helpful.

Yours sincerely



Parish Clerk
Treeton Parish Council

(This letter was sent electronically to the address of: lisa.brooks@rotherham.gov.uk)



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Website: treetonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Consultation Team
Whitestone Solar Farm
Freepost
SEC Newgate UK Local

21st October 2025

Dear Sir/ Madam

Re: Formal Objection to the Proposed Whitestone Solar Farm

Treeton Parish Council formally objects to the proposed Whitestone Solar Farm Development. Having engaged extensively with residents, attended consultation events and reviewed the materials made available, the Parish Council can confirm that the **overwhelming majority** of Treeton residents strongly oppose this development.

Treeton is a historic village of just over 3,000 residents, recorded in the Domesday Book and with a church dating back to the 11th century. The surrounding landscape, once scarred by deep and open-cast mining, has undergone several decades of natural regeneration to become a rich and thriving ecosystem. The proposed Whitestone project would reverse that recovery, destroying habitats and erasing our village's rural character.

This proposal is disproportionate in scale, inadequate in consultation, and profoundly damaging to the environment and the identity of our landscape.

Our objection is based on the following:

1. Inadequate and Misleading Consultation

Treeton Parish Council is deeply dissatisfied with the consultation process, which has been neither transparent nor meaningful. Despite being two years into planning, Whitestone has yet to determine the siting of many infrastructure components including cable corridors, battery storage areas, primary and secondary power stations and other infrastructure. The plans for this development are not sufficiently clear and this formal phase of the consultation is premature.

Written communication with the public has been via flyers which many residents did not read mistaking them for junk mail advertising solar panels!

Only seven public drop-in sessions were arranged across the entire development which will range from Conisborough in the north to Harthill and Woodall in the south, covering a distance of over 25 miles and affecting 22 parishes where solar panels will be physically sited. The drop-in sessions did not include formal presentations with most taking place during working hours effectively excluding many residents. The statutory consultation period has been limited to almost the bare minimum of six weeks.

There has been little, and no meaningful engagement with Treeton Parish Council or its residents. Whitestone failed to offer Treeton a consultation meeting in the first round of informal consultation despite the village's close proximity to a large part of the development. In this second round of statutory consultation, it repeated the mistake and it was only after persistent pressure from our MP, Sarah Champion, was one arranged at very short notice limiting the number who could attend. When it finally took

place, Whitestone's representatives demonstrated a dismissive attitude and an unwillingness to address legitimate concerns. They were unable to answer adequately questions on issues such as flooding, access during construction, biodiversity and community benefit. The list is not exhaustive.

Whitestone has largely failed to consult with inhabitants of the local area where solar panels or infrastructure are not planned to be physically sited. This is a major omission as all of the residents of Rotherham and well beyond will be affected by this development because of its scale and prominence across South Yorkshire. Consultation should have been more extensive and this failing has led to a woeful and disturbing lack of public awareness amongst sections of the community. The impact of this development on the wider population and on human health will be enormous.

Whitestone's 'Statement of Community Consultation' seems to be aimed at merely satisfying its statutory requirement to consult. At both stages of consultation Whitestone has chosen to ignore completely the concerns put forward by the Parish Council and its residents, has set aside no land to mitigate impact and has failed to take account of the proposed National Grid Sub Station next to Treeton which in itself is a major infrastructure project.

It is simply unacceptable that a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) of this magnitude covering 3400 acres of green belt land should proceed under such superficial engagement. The consultation process is unfit for purpose and unsafe and as such we believe that the relevant Secretary of State should declare the whole consultation process null and void.

2. Flooding Risk

Flooding is a major and immediate concern. Treeton has a well-documented history of flood events, most recently in 2023, when the village was cut off for two days due to all three access routes being submerged.

The proposed site in Treeton lies within an area known for surface water accumulation and runoff. The large-scale installation of solar panels and associated infrastructure will increase impermeable surfaces, increase soil compaction and worsen downstream flood risk.

There have been no topographical/relief maps provided by Whitestone, these would show the contours and the steep relief of the proposed development in the Parish of Treeton.

The natural drainage for this site follows the lie of the land into a valley, where the natural base flow enters the Ulley Brook, from there into the River Rother catchment basin. This basin is particularly flashy with the flood frequency increasing significantly in recent years, mainly due to urbanisation in the surrounding catchment, river management schemes which control flooding in surrounding urbanised town centres and the uncertainty of 'normal' /expected climatic expectations.

An increase in industrialised impermeable surfaces such as solar panels will compromise this catchment further and the implications on Treeton and Catcliffe residents will be considerably more dangerous.

Impermeable surfaces will increase the intensity of flow directly onto what will be compacted surfaces after the works are completed on the erection of the panels. Such an increase in flow will therefore cause further overland flow and shorten the lag time of the water entering the river basin. This will in turn increase the flashy nature of the River Rother potentially increasing the frequency and magnitude of flood events in this area.

Currently, these fields are arable and this benefits infiltration rates into the ground which causes the rainwater to become ground water rather than overland flow. This slows the passage of water into the base flow river and allows the water to pass through the basin in a more controlled manner. You have stated to us that the ground under and between the panels will be grass and that infiltration rates will not be impacted. We reject this hypothesis. With such a huge area now covered with impermeable surfaces there is a significantly increased flood risk.

Whitestone's documentation provides no convincing hydrological modelling or mitigation strategy. The responses to our queries were evasive and inadequate. This omission is unacceptable and poses a real danger to residents and property.

3. Long Lane and Construction Traffic

The proposed use of Long Lane for construction traffic is entirely inappropriate. The road is narrow, dangerous albeit a main access route for residents. Whitestone's own figures project over 630 construction vehicles per day, including more than 200 HGVs, operating for extended hours.

This traffic volume, coupled with the nearby proposal to build the proposed National Grid Sub Station (itself consuming 18 acres of green belt), will cause serious congestion, safety hazards, and prolonged disruption for residents. Two of the three access routes to the village are inadequate for such heavy use, risking bottlenecks and delays for emergency vehicles and essential services.

The lack of a coordinated traffic management plan, especially in light of concurrent infrastructure projects, is indefensible. It was staggering to learn that Whitestone had not even considered traffic management issues at this stage of the project including the impact on residents who use this as a main entry/exit point to Treeton. As we stated at the consultation meeting access to Long Lane from Treeton and Whiston, the only two access points, are clearly signed as unsuitable for heavy vehicles.

4. Biodiversity and Habitat Loss

Since the end of mining, Treeton's landscape has experienced a remarkable ecological recovery. Wetlands, woodlands, and grasslands now provide habitat for a wide range of species.

The areas proposed for the siting of solar panels around Treeton support a large population of birds through the winter including Tree Sparrows, Chaffinches, Linnets, Goldfinches, Reed Buntings and Yellowhammers and records of these species do exist. Access to some of the areas has made recording a challenge, but records of these species have been submitted to the Rotherham Biological Records Centre by our Parish Councillor, Robert Croxton who has advised that surveys through the breeding season will not highlight this habitat. It is of note that these areas also have a high population of Brown Hares.

Whitestone's ecological assessment is wholly inadequate. Local experts, including those identified by the Parish Council, have been ignored, and the applicant's 'consultants' simply have no knowledge of our local habitat. RMBC does not currently employ an ecologist and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust does not have anyone with specific knowledge of Treeton's habitat or wildlife. Without this local knowledge a proper environmental assessment cannot be made – it seems Whitestone has employed experts/consultants for the sole purpose of ticking the appropriate 'environmental boxes'.

This development will destroy vital green corridors, reduce biodiversity, and undermine years of regeneration. Serious mitigation by removing solar panels is requested to offset this loss.

5. Cumulative Development and Environmental Impact

Whitestone has failed to sufficiently consider other significant solar and housing developments which impact our environment. **In Whitestone 2 (W2) alone** RMMC is in the process of considering or have already approved numerous planning applications.

These include:

- Path Energy – Common Farm Solar Park, Dinnington (290 acres) already approved and under construction
- Abei Energy – Piper Lane Solar Farm, North of Anston (100+ acres, 72,000 panels)
- Exagen Development Ltd, near Wickersley (254 acres)
- Downing Renewables, Aughton – 3,000 panels, already approved.

- Newton Energy, Thurcroft, BESS
- Harmony Energy, Thurcroft, BESS
- Two large scale housing developments at Hellaby (260 homes) and at Shrogswood Road in Whiston (217 homes) both taking up a further 18 acres of land

The above excludes all of the nearby developments outside the catchment area of W2. For example, Root Power is to planning to build a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) in neighbouring Brinsworth.

Neither Whitestone nor RMBC's Environmental Impact Assessments acknowledge this cumulative burden. The absence of a coordinated regional assessment is unacceptable and misleading to the public.

South Yorkshire has seen and continues to see a massive increase in the building of huge industrial units, car parks, large petrol stations etc which can, but rarely do, host solar panels. This is allowed whilst our green belt is consumed by the panels.

6. Loss of Agricultural Land and Food Security

Almost 3400 acres agricultural land would be lost under Whitestone's proposal alone. This at a time when the population is increasing and food security is a national priority. The payments offered to landowners are so lucrative that many feel compelled to lease their land for 60 years. It has also been alleged that if landowners refuse to surrender land, it could be acquired compulsorily at less favourable rates.

Once converted to solar use, this land will not return to viable agricultural production. This approach undermines the UK's food independence and contradicts national sustainability goals. The displacement of food production in favour of industrial energy generation is a short-sighted and a regressive policy choice.

7. Ethical and Environmental Concerns Over Panel Sourcing

There are widespread concerns that Whitestone's panels will be sourced from Chinese manufacturers, whose supply chains have been linked to forced labour and high-carbon production methods.

To brand this project as "green" or "sustainable" is deeply misleading if the technology used carries such ethical and environmental liabilities. The Parish Council urges RMBC and national authorities to require full supply chain transparency and independent verification before any such development is approved including the assessment of threats to national security, including potential cyber-attacks, associated with the use of Chinese produced panels and components.

8. Impact on Treeton's Identity and Rural Character

Treeton's historical and cultural heritage is central to its community identity. The village's origins date back to at least the 11th century, and its rural surroundings have always been integral to its sense of place.

The Whitestone development threatens to overwhelm the village on an industrial-scale. The result of the solar arrays would be a permanent erosion of landscape character, a loss of accessible green space and a reduction in residents' quality of life.

Over the last 20 to 30 years Treeton has been forced to accommodate several large scale housing developments, more than doubling the size of the village, causing major disruptions and eroding our green belt. Also, the Waverley housing development of over 4,000 new properties is taking place on our doorstep to the immediate west of Treeton. The cumulative impact is an enormous threat to our village identity.

9. Disproportionate Scale, Duration of Impact and Decommissioning

At 750MW, Whitestone would be the largest solar farm in Europe, far exceeding comparable schemes elsewhere in the UK. It is disproportionate in scale and deeply damaging to Treeton and its surrounding.

The construction period of two years will cause massive disruption, affect the condition of our roads, air quality and once built it will dominate the landscape. Its operational lifespan of 60 years will affect current residents and their children for generations.

Should the proposal be approved, it is essential that firm and legally enforceable commitments are secured to ensure the land is returned to agricultural use and reinstated as part of the Green Belt once the operational period of the solar installation has ended. A comprehensive decommissioning and restoration plan should be required by condition and supported through a legal agreement to guarantee the complete removal of all infrastructure, cabling, and hardstanding, together with the restoration of soil quality to a level suitable for productive agricultural use. The agreement should also secure the necessary investment in supporting infrastructure, such as access improvements, drainage, and landscaping, to protect the integrity of the site during its operation and to facilitate its successful reinstatement upon decommissioning.

10. Community Benefit

A community benefit fund of £300,000 has been proposed but this would be of little financial benefit to our small parish irrespective of how the fund was administered. It is the local communities who will have endure the effects of this major industrialisation of our green space but it will be the investors and developers who take the profits. £300,000 shared between 22 shared is no benefit for the widespread destruction of a large part of South Yorkshire. When you were asked 'What are the actual benefits to Treeton of this project?' there was a deafening silence.

Rather there should be clear and enforceable measures to ensure that the communities most directly affected by the development receive appropriate and lasting benefits. The level of financial contribution to local parish councils reflecting the scale and duration of the impact on the local area. Consideration should also be given to a local energy discount scheme offering reduced energy costs for households situated within a defined proximity to the site. These measures would ensure that the community shares in the benefits of the scheme in a meaningful way and that the obligations associated with its delivery are transparent, equitable, and fully secured through binding planning mechanisms.

11. Green Nation and Energy Security

Green Nation (GN) currently manages 75 solar farms and more than 700 solar rooftop installations with a portfolio total of 200 MW. Only 5 of the 75 solar farms were developed by GN, this is insignificant in relation to the size of the proposed development.

The development is intended to produce 750 MW and is of NSIP status. It is deeply troubling that Whitestone has remained silent throughout the consultation concerning its experience, competence and financial ability to deliver a project of such magnitude and complexity,

It is clear that Green Nation does not have the funding to support this project and you advised that you would be looking to the financial markets to secure the required capital should the development be approved. We would expect that due diligence is exercised when sourcing future capital to ensure our future energy supply is secure should funding come from a hostile state, organisation or individuals.

12. Mitigation

Following initial consultation, you did not remove any of the land from your initial proposal concerning Treeton in order to mitigate the impact of the development except for a tiny strip of land which was taken out at the landowner's request.

Given the increased threat of flooding to Treeton and Catcliffe which this development presents, the congestion associated with the construction of Brinsworth B on Long Lane, unmanageable traffic during construction due to access restriction and the significant loss of wildlife we want to see the land around **Treeton removed from Whitestone 2 in its entirety**. Should this be refused there needs to be a sufficient portion of land removed to mitigate all of the identified risks.

Conclusion

Treeton Parish Council recognises the need for renewable energy and responsible climate action. However, this project is neither responsible nor sustainable. It represents environmental harm, procedural failure and the marginalisation of local voices. For the reasons outlined above including inadequate consultation, flood risk, unmanageable traffic, biodiversity loss, cumulative solar and other development sprawl, loss of farmland, ethical concerns, disproportionate impact and major concerns about the deliverability of the project. **Treeton Parish Council formally and strongly objects** to the Whitestone Solar Farm proposal.

Should this proposal progress, we will do everything we can to urge the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero to reject this application and to initiate a transparent review of how large-scale renewable energy projects are being sited, assessed and imposed on rural communities.

Yours faithfully,



Chairperson

Treeton Parish Council

On behalf of the residents of Treeton



[REDACTED]
Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Ulley Parish Council
C/o Ulley Village Hall
Main Street
Ulley
S26 3YD

20 May 2026

Dear Lisa Brooks

Re: Whitestone Solar Development (Consultation Period 16 September to 28 October)

Ulley Parish Council confirms that the attached submission represents our final position on the adequacy of consultation for the proposed Whitestone Solar Farm development. We consider that the consultation undertaken by the developer was inadequate, with incomplete and inaccurate documentation, missing records, insufficient time for meaningful engagement, and an inability to provide clear answers to questions raised by parishioners in both written and verbal communications. The developer also declined our request for a short extension to the consultation period. We request that this submission be appended in full to RMBC's formal response to the Planning Inspectorate.

Ulley Parish Council – Submission on the Adequacy of Consultation

This response draws on issues identified during the statutory consultation period (16 September to 28 October) and subsequent public engagement events.

1. Scale of Development and Adequacy of Submitted Evidence

The Parish Council considers the scale of the proposed development to be excessive and inappropriate for its rural setting. There is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the cumulative and site-specific impacts of the proposal have been fully assessed, particularly in relation to landscape character, residential amenity, highways, ecology, and public rights of way.

The Environmental Impact Statement and supporting documentation are overly complex, not readily accessible, and were incomplete and inaccurate at the time of consultation. Errors were identified and acknowledged, yet no revised or complete information was provided within a timeframe that allowed for meaningful scrutiny. The Parish Council considers this to represent a material procedural weakness in the consultation process.

2. Consultation Process and Availability of Information

A public consultation event was held in Ulley on 14 October, leaving only a limited period before the consultation deadline of 28 October. This restricted the ability of the community and statutory consultees to review information, seek clarification, and submit informed responses. The Parish Council considers that the consultation did not provide a reasonable opportunity for informed engagement and that this should be afforded significant weight in the planning assessment.



3. Unassessed Impacts and Absence of Mitigation

Evidence was submitted by residents demonstrating potential shadowing and reflective impacts arising from the interaction between existing wind turbines and the proposed solar panels. At the public consultation event, the developer confirmed that no assessment of this issue had been undertaken and that no established methodology was available to do so. Later responses to questions raised have been and continue to be inadequate with a failure to directly address the questions asked, failure to provide relevant data and monitoring information, or to address possible mitigation.

In the absence of assessment, evidence, or mitigation, the Parish Council considers that land parcels affected by this issue should be removed from the proposal entirely, as this represents the only effective means of avoiding harm.

4. Highways, Traffic, and Construction Impacts

The Parish Council remains concerned that the proposal lacks sufficient detail regarding construction access, internal access routes, traffic volumes, and mitigation measures, particularly in relation to Whitestone 2.

Ulley is served by narrow rural roads that are unsuitable for prolonged construction traffic and have a history of serious road traffic incidents. Some routes are subject to heavy goods vehicle restrictions. There is no site-specific evidence assessing the impacts of increased heavy vehicle movements on road safety, residential amenity, noise, vibration, or the structural integrity of nearby properties.

The Parish Council considers these omissions to be significant and contrary to the requirements for robust highway and amenity assessment.

5. Landscape and Visual Impact

The proposed siting of solar panels on elevated land surrounding the village and adjacent to rural roads would result in substantial and unavoidable visual harm. Development on hillsides fundamentally alters landscape character and cannot be effectively mitigated through screening or planting.

The Parish Council considers the impact along Penny Hill Lane to be particularly harmful and advises that any solar development should be set back significantly further from this route to preserve the rural approach to the village.

6. Ecology, Wildlife, and Public Rights of Way

The Parish Council notes that the area supports a wide range of wildlife, including birds of prey, owls, deer, hares, and diverse flora and fauna. The submitted ecological assessments do not adequately address hunting territories, habitat connectivity, or the functional land needed to sustain these species.

The surrounding network of public footpaths and bridleways is of high recreational and well-being value. The Parish Council considers that the proposal fails to demonstrate how the openness,



views, and rural experience of these routes will be preserved. A substantially greater setback from public rights of way is required.

7. Battery Storage, Substations, and Associated Infrastructure

There is insufficient certainty regarding the siting of battery storage facilities, substations, and cable corridors. Indicative plans showing battery storage on elevated land near Upper Whiston raise serious concerns regarding visual prominence, noise impact, and proximity to residential properties.

The Parish Council considers the lack of defined locations and impact assessments for this infrastructure to be unacceptable at this stage of the planning process.

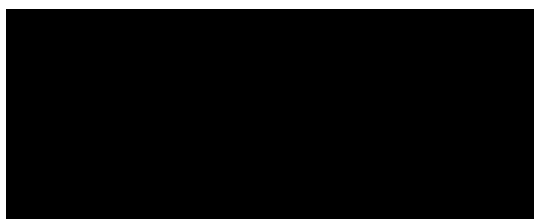
8. Community Impact and Weight of Harm

The Parish Council notes that the proposed community benefits package does not address the direct impacts on those most affected, including loss of amenity, disruption, and potential impact on property values. While community benefits are not a material planning consideration, the absence of adequate mitigation or compensation reinforces the imbalance between public benefit and local harm.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, the Parish Council considers that the proposed development is unsupported by sufficient evidence, fails to demonstrate acceptability in planning terms, and would result in significant and avoidable harm. The Parish Council therefore requests assurance that the Local Planning Authority is actively seeking the necessary information and clarification from the developer and relevant RMBC officers, and that, where this cannot be provided, these deficiencies are clearly reflected in the Authority's formal response and report to the Secretary of State. The Parish Council also asks that a copy of this response be made available once it is completed.

Yours sincerely,



Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Ulley Parish Council

clerk@ulley-pc.gov.uk

From: Clerk <clerk@walesparishcouncil.gov.uk>

Sent: 14 May 2026 12:31

To: lisa.brookes@rotherham.gov.uk
[REDACTED]

Subject: Whitestones- adequacy of consultation statement by Wales Parish Council

Dear Lisa

Wales Parish Council would like its adequacy consultation statement to be appended to RMBC's submission as per the email circulated to Parish Clerks.

Given our council calendar does not align with the window given to make the Parish's submission, the response relies on comments previously submitted in a letter to the Consultation Team for the proposed Whitestone Solar Farm in October 2025.

The Parish's comments are as follows:

"The consultation period has not been meaningful; your representatives do not listen to local opinions. The number of drop-in sessions have been inadequate and to add insult to injury there was no consultation in Kiveton for the October sessions. Kiveton has the largest village hall and a large car park available for use. However, your company chose small village halls with no or very little car parking available. This in itself indicates the lack of care your company has for the local community. Your consultations appear to be a tick box exercise only.
"There has been little communication with Wales Parish Council."

I confirm that:

- it represents Wales Parish Council's final position; and
- The Parish agree for it to be appended to RMBC's submission.

This action was taken in consultation with the Chair of the Council, Cllr Shaw.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

Clerk to Wales Parish Council

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Normal working days: Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday

WHISTON PARISH COUNCIL

*The Parish Hall
Well Lane
Whiston
S60 4HZ*

Telephone: 07712 305729

Email clerk@whistonparishcouncil.gov.uk

25th March 2026

RMBC
Regeneration & Environment
Riverside House
Main Street
Rotherham
S60 1AE
E-mail: Lisa.Brooks@rotherham.gov.uk

Dear Lisa,

We write to record our Parish council's support of your letter 'Whitestone Solar farm – Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM) to dwd-ltd, published at the RMBC website [Whitestone Solar Farm and nationally significant infrastructure projects – Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council](#)

Within the Whiston Parish boundary the proposed works comprise areas of solar panels, a significant area of cable installation with their associated construction impacts as well as permanent substations and BESS (Battery Energy Storage System) - all in combination with the new connecting 'Brinsworth' sub-station. We find ourselves in a position of not fully understanding the likely impacts of both the construction operations and permanent features in terms of nuisance (noise, dust, traffic, flooding etc), medium term impacts of reinstatement of farmland and hedgerows and longer term visual impacts and noise implications.

The green space around Whiston is limited, bisected by M1, and under increasing pressure from a significant number of developments. Circular walks, cycling and equestrian routes from Whiston Parish also run through neighbouring parishes. It is extremely important to us that the value of PROW and the visual impact and change of character that the panels will impose must not be under-estimated and our green space must be protected. Not all residents have capability to travel to alternative locations and filling in our local greenspace will have long term impact on both the current and future generations health and wellbeing.

The consultation process to date has not been focussed sufficiently on local issues, in particular we are deeply concerned that the impact of the works within our parish are only just starting to emerge and that the vast majority of our parishioners are unaware of the extent and scope of the works.

Our concerns are broadly addressed by the bullet points within your letter, however we feel it is appropriate to expand as follows. For ease of reference our concerns regarding lack of consultation are detailed below under the relevant headings from your letter.

a. Consultation process lacked transparency, clarity, and genuine community engagement

- As detailed further below the number and timing of events was inadequate
- The initial documentation lacked detail of cable routes, hence unlikely to attract the full attention of residents of Whiston who may consider the works to be located in other parishes
- The red line boundary drawings issued with the March 26 targetted consultation is the first time a scale has been put to the width of cable works
- Limits on height and scale of buildings, panels and ancillary equipment remains unclear
- The new 'Brinsworth' substation planning development is on our doorstep. It is claimed the two development applications are not connected but surely a key driver of that scheme is to facilitate the connection point for the solar farm? Why is the sub-station considered separately, or the impacts of the solar farm considered in isolation?

b. Not all directly affected residents received communication about consultation events.

The definition of 'directly affected' is unclear – for example there is a potential for noise nuisance in the long term, perhaps from cooling fans within battery energy storage systems and sub-stations. This could affect residents in Whiston and Upper Whiston in particular. We have no information on this issue.

c. Only a small number of drop-in sessions were held across a very large geographical area, many during working hours, with no formal presentations.

- To date there has been only one public engagement event within the Whiston Parish, this was held 12pm to 4pm at Whiston Parish Hall, on Wednesday 15th October. Only 1 event was held at weekend (in Conisborough, 8 miles away). This contradicts the SOCC statement that events organised at a range of times to ensure people with different schedules are able to attend. It is, for example, unlikely that anyone taking a bus to work would contemplate travelling to an event outside the parish

d. Consultation events were poorly advertised and offered limited opportunity for meaningful participation.

- Apparently an introductory newsletter was sent to 30,755 addresses in Autumn 2024, yet in the SoCC 45000 addresses have been identified in the inner zone. How has the consultation been notified to the 15,000 households not included originally. Note we don't recall receiving such a letter to our home addresses in Whiston.
- The proposals at the Autumn 2024 consultation were limited to an outline plan which did not show the proposed cable routes, the scheme has developed

significantly since and unless individuals have maintained an interest through seeking information on-line they will not be aware of the emerging detail.

- It appears that invitations to the statutory consultation in Autumn 2025 were not published by post

e. Whitestone representatives showed poor local knowledge, dismissive attitudes, and were unable to answer key questions regarding flooding, traffic, biodiversity, and community benefits.

- One example where local issues have not been understood is flood risk within Whiston. The environmental statement, chapter 10 Water Resources and Flood Risk has no mention of Whiston Brook. This is the primary watercourse through Whiston, classed as a main river to permit YW discharges, and extremely sensitive to flash flooding. The risk of run off during the construction period causing pollution and silting is significant
- The consultation session in Whiston was attended by Parish councillors, in combination with other discussions, at no stage have the local impacts of cable routes been explained. To quote 'we are more concerned about what they haven't told us than what they have'.

f. After two years of planning, key infrastructure locations (cable corridors, battery storage, substations) remain undetermined and were not clearly presented.

- The scale, and in particular the width of the corridors for cable installation have only become clear in the most recent publication of documents. We are still reliant on scaling the drawings as dimensions have not been provided, but a boundary up to 200m wide within which the developer can do as they please is not acceptable. What is the actual working width? what gaps will be cut through hedgerows? what are the effects on land drainage? Are trees protected/avoided? how will road crossings be undertaken? - how and when will all this be reinstated?
- There is no visualisation of what BESS and substations at the proposed locations will look like – only typical examples with no dimensions. What heights are proposed, will visual screening be provided?

g. Technical documentation was extensive, but the consultation period was too short for residents and organisations to review and understand its implications.

- A very short (6 week) consultation period does not allow sufficient time for a volunteer group of non-expert parish councillors to understand and review the details within the many pages of the environmental statement. The documentation has been prepared by a team of full time specialist consultants employed by the applicant to support the case for the works over a period in excess of 12 months. There is no opportunity to employ the same level of expertise to challenge and support the concerns of residents affected.

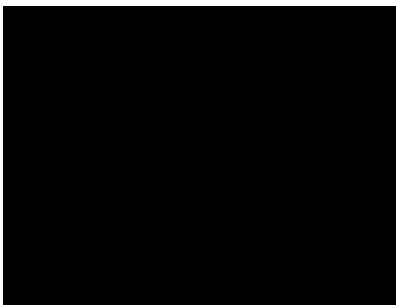
In addition we consider that the documentation upon which the consultation is based is incomplete and in some areas misleading.

1. The draft ES consistently refers to a construction period of 2 years being worst case, yet also suggests 3 years is more likely. What is the construction period and over what period will our villages be subjected to noise, dust, siltation, traffic disruption and so on?
2. What are the proposals for reinstatement of hedgerows, it could be 15 to 20 years for full recovery.
3. What is the proposed cross section of the cable routes? – the indicative sections within the consultation documents show 2 trenches, access road, working area and 2 strips for stockpiling arisings. This indicative drawing infers a width of circa 50m, not the 200m shown on the very latest drawings which define order limits.

We have not yet formally objected to the scheme as the details and implications are only becoming clearer as more detailed information is issued, and as we have taken time to study what has been published. Given that the statutory consultation period is over we anticipate there will be an opportunity to raise and discuss these issues once the full DCO submission is available. We do expect to undertake a review of the proposals and raise our concerns in full when the DCO application is submitted.

Meanwhile we would appreciate if the detailed concerns listed above would be considered during the RMBC development of the Local impact Report.

Yours Sincerely



Clerk to Whiston Parish Council

[REDACTED]
Sent: 24 March 2026 14:24

To: Lisa Brooks <Lisa.Brooks@rotherham.gov.uk>

Cc: Andrew Bramidge <Andrew.Bramidge@rotherham.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Subject: Subject: STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL: Evidence of Intentional Concealment and Section 47 Breach – Whitestone Solar Farm (EN0110020)

Subject: URGENT: Evidence of Intentional Concealment and Section 47 Breach – Whitestone Solar Farm (EN0110020)

To: Lisa Brooks (RMBC)

From: Sharon and Christopher Leahy (Springvale Farm / Yew Cottage)

Dear Lisa Brooks,

We are submitting the attached **Heads of Terms (issued 6 March 2026)** and **Map Box 5a** in strict confidence. This evidence proves that the Applicant has intentionally masked the industrial scale of **Cable Route C (Corridor CR 2a)** throughout the statutory consultation process.

While the Applicant has used "survey access" via the residential driveway, these documents prove their long-term intent was always a major East-to-West Industrial Haul Road. This explains the **300m corridor width** previously queried by PINS; it was never for "routing flexibility," but to provide a footprint for an unconsulted industrial staging area and HGV thoroughfare.

1. The Deception: "Cable Route" vs. "Industrial Thoroughfare"

Throughout the public consultation, CR 2a was presented as a "Cable Route."

However, **Section 13c-d and Map Box 5a** prove the true requirement:

- **The Intent:** A "Temporary Hard Core Access Track" for heavy plant and HGVs and a "Temporary Compound" featuring security fencing, floodlighting, and 24/7 generators.
- **The Omission:** By omitting the "Haul Road" and "Compound" designations from public maps, the Applicant avoided mandatory Noise, Vibration, and Dust Assessments for an industrial site situated only **30m from our residence**.

- **The Impact:** This is a blueprint for the total industrialization of our home. If granted, the operational impact on **Springvale Farm** would be catastrophic—a *de facto* closure order for our smallholding and tourism business.
- **2. Economic Sterilisation & 10-Year Blight**

Section C (Items 4-7) seeks to "freeze" our livelihood until **2036**. The Applicant is attempting to strip the commercial value of our land while offering a predatory "agricultural" rent of just £0.15 per square metre. For a company burning millions in cash, this is an attempt to use our home as a cheap industrial staging post at the expense of our future.

3. "Change 5a" as a Forced Admission

The recent "Change 5a: Road Safety" notice is a late-stage attempt to retro-fix a failure to consult. By admitting a need for "visibility standards" and "speed limits" now, the Applicant confirms the site was **never suitable** for the heavy HGV use they privately intended. This admission coincides with suspected surveyors being present on Morthen Road on 13 March, as noted in recent correspondence from our neighbor at New Sycamore Farm.

4. The "Gagging Clause" (Section 21 a-e)

This "voluntary" offer is contingent on us **withdrawing all existing representations to PINS** and waiving our right to object. This is a predatory attempt to "cleanse" the public record of the documented **20 February Trespass** and other misconduct before the May DCO submission reaches the examination stage.

5. Financial Inadequacy & Insolvency Risk

The offer is based on a generic agricultural valuation (£12k/acre). The offer ignores the **£6M+ asset value** of the Morthen Lane Cluster. Given the Applicant's negative net worth and high cash burn, the **Funding Statement** for the May submission will be factually inadequate to cover the statutory compensation (Injurious Affection) required. Furthermore, **Section 6** reveals a risk of "permanent abandonment," leaving us with a ruined field and no remediation funds if the developer fails.

6. The "31 July" Procedural Sham

Issuing a voluntary deadline of **31 July** while rushing a DCO submission in **May** confirms the Applicant is bypassing the "Last Resort" requirement for Compulsory Acquisition, in direct breach of **DCLG Guidance**.

Conclusion

The Applicant has used the "Cable Corridor" label to bypass the scrutiny that a Major Haul Road would naturally trigger. We request that this evidence informs the **Section 55 Acceptance Test** and the **Adequacy of Consultation Report**. The prior consultation is legally flawed.

Kind regards



STATEMENT OF FACT: Dean Baker (Morthen House)

Subject: Technical Mapping Failure and Unauthorized Survey Attempt (EN0110020)

1. Land Interest & Residential Status:

I, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. My property is situated within the proposed **Order Limits** for the Whitestone Solar Farm (**CR2a Cable Corridor**).

2. Procedural Irregularity of Section 172 Notice:

While I have received Section 42 consultation documents, I have **not** signed for or formally accepted any statutory notice of entry. Despite this, the Applicant (Whitestone Net Zero Ltd) issued a **Section 172 Notice** dated 30 January 2026.

- **The Mapping Fiction:** The map provided with this notice identifies a "**Red Line**" **access route** originating from Morthen Lane and crossing a **private concrete bridge** directly into my residential garden.
- **Structural Risk:** This bridge is a private residential feature, not designed for industrial survey vehicles or heavy plant machinery. The Applicant has conducted no structural assessment or safety briefing regarding this crossing.

3. Attempted Entry & Abandonment (19 February 2026):

On 19 February 2026, agents of the Applicant attempted to access my property.

- **Contractor Admission:** On 20 February, the Applicant's surveyor, [REDACTED], explicitly admitted to my neighbor, [REDACTED], that he had **abandoned the survey at Morthen House** the previous day.
- **Procedural Failure:** This abandonment proves that the Applicant's "desktop-mapped" access strategy is technically unworkable. They are attempting to force entry via private gardens because they have failed to secure viable agricultural access.

4. Material Breach of Privacy (Article 8):

The Applicant's insistence on mapping a private garden and a residential bridge as an industrial corridor—without a validly served notice or structural survey—represents a disproportionate interference with my **Right to Respect for Private Life and the Home**.

Conclusion:

The "Morthen House Failure" on 19 February demonstrates that the Applicant's survey plan is a fiction. I request that **RMBC** marks this consultation as **INADEQUATE** due to these systemic mapping and safety failures.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

STATEMENT OF FACT:

Martin Pashley

(New Sycamore Farm)

Subject: Failure of Statutory Consultation and Diligent Inquiry (EN0110020)

1. Land Interest & Residential Status:

I,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

, Morthen Road. I am a second-generation agricultural tenant on the surrounding fields. Over a decade ago, I purchased 2.5 acres of land from the landowner, **Warde-Aldam**, and was successfully granted planning permission by **Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC)** to construct a permanent agricultural dwelling within the Green Belt. This house is my primary residence.

2. Business Operations:

I have operated a livery stable and agricultural business on this site for several decades. The remainder of the paddocks associated with my business are leased from Wardolden, with **Savills** acting as the managing agents. My livery business involves the care of livestock and the daily presence of sub-tenants (stable renters) and members of the public.

3. Total Failure of Consultation:

Despite the proposed **CR2a Cable Corridor** potentially bisecting my active paddocks with a 300-metre wide construction zone, I have received **zero correspondence** from the Applicant (Whitestone Net Zero Ltd) or their agents (Ardent).

1. I have not been served a **Section 42 Statutory Consultation** notice.
2. I have not been served a **Section 172 Notice of Entry**.
3. My business and residential dwelling appear to have been entirely omitted from the Applicant's **Book of Reference**.

4. Incident of Unauthorised Scouting:

On [Insert Date], suspected agents of the Applicant entered my private yard without notice. Bypassing my residence (located 20m from the yard), they approached my sub-tenants and requested they 'bring in the horses' to facilitate a survey. This unauthorised interference with livestock, conducted without a safety briefing or statutory notice, represents a **grave risk to animal welfare** and a material breach of professional conduct.

Conclusion:

The Applicant has failed the legal test of '**diligent inquiry**' by ignoring a highly visible, long-standing residential and commercial interest. I request that RMBC marks this consultation as **INADEQUATE**.

Signed: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **Date:** 08/03/2026_____

Sent from my iPhone

Dear Lisa Brooks, please see the following in regards to adequacy of consultation. Sorry I sent this to the wrong address previously.

STATEMENT OF FACT: Susan Patching (Springvale House)

Subject: Inconsistency of Statutory Process and Failed Consultation (EN0110020)

1. Land Interest & Residential Status:

[REDACTED]

Morthen Lane, for several decades. My property includes two agricultural fields situated within the proposed **Order Limits** for the Whitestone Solar Farm (specifically the **CR2a Cable Corridor**). These fields are identical in nature and location to those owned by my neighbour, Sharon Leahy.

2. Record of Correspondence:

Until recently, I received identical correspondence from the Applicant (Whitestone Net Zero Ltd) and their agents (Ardent) as my neighbours at Springvale Farm. This included the **Section 42 Statutory Consultation** documents and a final request in January 2026 to sign a **Voluntary Licence Agreement**. I have not signed this agreement, nor have I engaged in any voluntary discussions with the Applicant to date.

3. Omission of Section 172 Notice:

Despite my land being identical to the neighbouring parcel [REDACTED], which was served a formal **Section 172 Notice of Entry** on 30 January 2026, I have **not** been served with any such notice.

- The Applicant appears to be exercising statutory powers **selectively**.
- Because my fields do not have direct driveway access and rely on an informal gate to the neighbouring Parkes' land, it appears the Applicant has bypassed my legal interest in favour of "easier" residential targets.

4. Procedural Failure & Mapping Inconsistency:

The failure to serve a Section 172 notice on my land while targeting the identical adjacent plot proves that the Applicant's survey strategy is fragmented and technically unsound. If the Applicant intends to "punch through" this corridor, they have a **statutory duty** to consult and notice all affected owners equally.

Conclusion:

The Applicant's "pick-and-choose" approach to statutory notices is a misuse of the DCO process. I support my neighbours' request that **RMBC** marks this consultation as **INADEQUATE** due to the inconsistent and unprofessional handling of residential land interests.

Signed: _____

_____ Date: _08/03/2026_____

Sent from my iPhone



Planning Inspectorate

Planning Inspectorate
c/o QUADIENT
69 Buckingham Avenue
Slough
SL1 4PN

Customer
Services:
e-mail:

0303 444 5000
Whitestonesolarfarm
@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Ms L Freeman
Whitestone Net Zero Ltd

Project Ref: EN0110020
Date: 3 July 2026

By email only

Dear Lucy

Planning Act 2008 – section 55

Application by Whitestone Net Zero Ltd for an order granting development consent for the Whitestone Solar Farm (EN0110020)

Notification of decision to accept an application for examination for an order granting development consent

I refer to the above application for an order granting development consent made under section 37(2) of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) and received by the Planning Inspectorate on 10 June 2026.

The Planning Inspectorate has decided to accept this application for examination. In reaching this decision, the Planning Inspectorate has:

- in respect of section 55(3)(e) had regard to the matters set out in section 55(4), and concluded that the applicant has complied with Chapter 2 of Part 5 of PA2008
- in respect of section 55(3)(f), had regard to the extent to which those matters set out in section 55(5A) have either been complied with or followed, and concluded that the application (including accompaniments) is of a satisfactory standard

Please be aware of your duties under:

- Sections 56, 58 and 59 of PA2008
- Regulations 8, 9 and 10 of the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009
- Regulation 13 of The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 or, for projects scoped after 16 May 2017, the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

Yours sincerely

<https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>



Chris White

Chris White
Operations Lead – National Infrastructure

This decision was made by officials on behalf of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government under delegated powers

This communication does not constitute legal advice.
Please view our [Privacy Notice](#) before sending information to the Planning Inspectorate.