

Councillor Chris Read – Leader of the Council

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20th November 2025

Cllr Greg Reynolds
Elected Member

Via email: gregory.reynolds@rotherham.gov.uk

Dear Cllr Reynolds

Council Meeting – Wednesday 5th November 2025

Thank you for your question regarding the rationale provided during the pre-application process for the Whitestone Solar Farm, specifically in relation to the discounting of brownfield land in favour of the current site layout.

I can confirm that the Council as Local Planning Authority (LPA) has only received the same level of information that is publicly available on the applicant's website. No additional or supplementary information has been submitted to the LPA on this matter.

Chapter 4 of the applicant's Environmental Statement (ES), titled "*Alternatives and Design Evolution*", addresses the consideration of alternative options. This chapter, which can be accessed here: [Template](#), outlines the applicant's justification for the development, referencing the National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3). It includes an assessment of alternative renewable technologies and site locations.

For developments of this scale, categorised as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), applicants are expected to have regard to EN-3, which forms the primary policy framework for decisions made by the Secretary of State. This document can be viewed here: [National Policy Statement for renewable energy infrastructure \(EN-3\)](#). Paragraph 2.10.18 (page 90) of EN-3 outlines key considerations for solar farm siting, including:

- Network connection
- Irradiance and site topography
- Proximity to dwellings
- Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) and land type
- Accessibility
- Public rights of way
- Security and lighting

In particular, Paragraph 2.10.29 (page 91) advises that while land type should not be the overriding factor in site selection, applicants should, where feasible, prioritise the use of previously developed (brownfield), contaminated, or industrial land. Where agricultural land is proposed, lower quality land should be preferred, avoiding “Best and Most Versatile” (BMV) land—defined as ALC grades 1, 2, and 3a—where possible. Paragraph 2.10.31 further states that applicants should justify their site selection, acknowledging the preference for brownfield, industrial, and lower-grade agricultural land.

At present, the draft ES does not appear to provide a robust justification for the exclusion of previously developed, brownfield, contaminated, or industrial land, as recommended by EN-3. The LPA will therefore raise this issue with the applicant and request that it is addressed in the formal submission to the Planning Inspectorate and Secretary of State.

Thank you again for highlighting this matter. As the proposal remains at the pre-application stage, I would also encourage you to contact the applicant directly at info@whitestonesolarfarm.co.uk to express your concerns regarding the current lack of consideration for alternative land types.

I hope that this information is useful.

Yours sincerely



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