red kite

Landscape Architecture
Ecology | Greenspace

12th November 2021

LANDSCAPE COMMENTS

Reference: **20/01182/FUL**

Status: **FULL PLANNING APPLICATION**

Proposal: Installation of a solar farm comprising ground mounted solar PV panels with a net installed generating capacity (AC) of up to 49.9MW, including mounting system, battery storage units, inverters, underground cabling, stock proof fence, CCTV, internal tracks and associated infrastructure, landscaping and environmental enhancements for a temporary period of 40 years and a permanent grid connection hub.

Site address: **Land East Of Jericho Covert, Jericho Lane, Barkestone Le Vale**

Grid Reference: **SK775361 E:477518 N:336187**

Applicant: **Green Farm Solar Ltd**

**1. Executive Summary**

1.1. During my review of all updated and revised available material relating to landscape and visual matters, I am pleased to note that in most cases the Applicant has sought to provide additional evidence, clarify and justify queries in the previous Comments issued on 1st October 2021 with some small omissions which have been commented on within the following sections of these Comments.

1.2. The updated and revised Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment by Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects is in line with *'The Landscape Institute's Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition'*. It is acknowledged that '*The Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 1/20 `Reviewing Landscape Impact Assessments (LVIAs) and Landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVAs)'* has been used as reference. As has '*The Landscape Institute published a consultation draft in February 2021: Technical Guidance Note, Consultation Draft 02/21 "Landscape Value and Valued Landscapes"'* and that this new consultation report has informed the assessment of landscape value, an area of the previous LVIA I considered to be lacking.

1.3. The updated and revised LVIA information concludes that the Site has Moderate sensitivity to a solar farm development. That it is located on low-lying flat land which at a national and regional scale is favoured for solar energy production as the effects upon landscape character and visual receptors are greatly reduced.

1.4. The Site benefits from existing hedged field boundaries which will assist in the screening and filtering of views to the solar arrays and that no hedgerows are to be removed to allow this Development Proposal to take place. As such the pattern of the Site landscape remains as the baseline conditions. Principally the Development Proposal will result in a visual change from one material, agricultural crops, to solar arrays with a potential change to perceptions of the landscape view based upon an individual's response to this landscape change. As such the significance of the effects upon landscape character is assessed as slight.

1.5. The Site lies on low lying land in a comparatively wide-open landscape, with views towards the Site hard to find from most directions. The exception are views from the immediate south and south-west where the Site is visible from a public footpath which runs across the southern boundary of the site. The magnitude of effect from these viewpoints is assessed as large and adverse and experienced by high sensitivity visual receptors due to their presence on Public Rights of Way and experienced by footpath users.

1.6. Consideration has been given to Belvoir Castle and its setting through the inclusion of 4 viewpoints and it was found that the significance for residual effects were slight in all cases and that the significance is triggered by the high sensitivity of the receptor rather than magnitude of change to the view.

1.7. The effects upon visual receptors is assessed in the range of large, through moderate to negligible. The small number of receptors experiencing views gives rise to an overall assessment of moderate to slight and triggers a recommendation of some mitigation measures to reduce adverse effects.

1.8. It is acknowledged that the proposed mitigation measures will not fully screen the proposal and the residual effect, following the construction phase, will remain as moderate to slight and slightly adverse from these viewpoints. These effects are upon the land cover within the field enclosures themselves, rather than any changes to landscape pattern or wider views which will remain unchanged. From all other assessed viewpoints the effect will be slight to negligible or visual receptors will experience no change to the view.

1.9. It is concluded that views can be mitigated but not screened completely by the mitigation proposals and that once mitigation planting has established, within 5 years the residual effect is likely to be moderate and slightly adverse. Beyond 10 years, the effect will become slight and not adverse.

1.10. Cumulative effects of a solar farm Development Proposal at Jericho Covert on both the visual and landscape character have been considered in the LVIA information with two operational solar farms found within the 5Km study area. A further solar farm is located 5.8Km to the west. It is concluded that "*that people's perception of the landscape, when moving through it, will not be adversely affected by the proposed development in combination with other solar farms in the area*".

1.11. The mitigation proposals in summary are;

1.11.1. to reduce the cutting regime of the hedged boundary to allow them to grow to a minimum of 3m in height,

1.11.2. enhance hedgerows through infill planting where gaps are present,

1.11.3. provide additional tree planting within the existing and proposed hedged boundaries in particular in the proximity to CCTV poles to assist in the screening of their presence,

1.11.4. provide native woodland planting along north-western boundary,

1.11.5. provide a 5m margin of wildflower grassland around each field margin,

1.11.6. provide a large area of wildflower meadow in the south-west corner of the site,

1.11.7. grow short mown grass managed by grazing or strimming rather than used for agricultural crop

1.12. It is considered that the proposed mitigation will be an enhancement from intense agricultural practice to a less-intense, nature-led, approach to landscape management.

1.13. I agree with all the conclusions drawn by Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects outlined above found within section *10 'Conclusions'* of the updated and revised LVIA and deem the mitigation as outlined in the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan to be acceptable.

1.14. It can be concluded that the solar farm Development Proposals for Jericho Lane are now broadly in line with 'Planning guidance for the development of large-scale ground mounted solar PV systems – BRE and Cornwall Council' following the receipt of the additional requested information.

1.15. I believe the additional information provided by the Applicant provides sufficient evidence to conclude that the 'wider' landscape is robust enough to absorb this proposal and the cumulative effects have been considered with other proposals of this type within this landscape. Therefore, I can conclude that this Development Proposal will result in slight / negligible visual harm and I see no reason to OBJECT to the Solar farm Development Proposal at Jericho Covert.

## 2. Introduction

2.1. These comments are an addendum to the previous comments made on 1st October 2021 for which Red Kite Network Limited (RKN) was instructed on behalf of Melton Borough Council (MBC) to comment on landscape and visual matters of the above Planning application. These Comments are to be read in conjunction with Comments previously issued to the Applicant on 1st October 2021. Red Kite Network Limited are Landscape Architecture, Green Space and Ecology Consultants of Coalport, Shropshire.

2.2. The Application proposal – "*The planning application proposes the installation of a solar farm comprising ground mounted solar PV panels with a generating capacity of up to 49.9MW, including mounting system, battery storage units, inverters, underground cabling, stock proof fence, CCTV, internal tracks and associated infrastructure, landscaping and environmental enhancements for a temporary period of 40 years and a permanent grid connection hub*." (Planning, Design and Access Statement (PDAS) 1.1.3).

2.3. The Site – "*The Site extends to circa 183.5 acres (74 ha) of agricultural land to the north of the Grantham Canal (disused) and a former railways track (dismantled*)" (PDAS 1.1.2).

2.4. These comments are in addition to those previously made, assess whether the information outstanding to determine the Application (section 13 of previous Comments) as noted has been provided and with sufficient detail in order to recommend a decision of this Application with regards to landscape and visual matters.

2.5. My assessment is subjective based on my own professional judgement. The additional landscape related documents reviewed are as follows:

2.5.1. *'Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment'* (LVIA) (Revised and updated October 2021) – Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects

2.5.2. *'Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Plans and Representative Views'* (Revised and Updated October 2021) – Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects

2.5.3. *'SITE BLOCK PLAN – PROPOSED Rev B'* - Savills ref: 20.11.301 at 1:2500@A1

2.5.4. *'Landscape and Ecological Management Plan* (LEMP)' (Revised and Updated October 2021) – Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects

2.5.5. *'Heritage and Archaeological Assessment* (HAA)' (March 2021) – HCUK Group

2.6. My comments are based on the review of Landscape and Visual material and the other supporting documents for the application as listed above, prepared to date.

**3. Revised and Updated 'SITE BLOCK PLAN – PROPOSED'**

3.1. The Applicant has provided a revised and updated '*SITE BLOCK PLAN – PROPOSED'* which is now revision B of this drawing. Within the previous Comments issued on 1st October 2021 a number of corrections to errors and / or clarifications were requested. This included;

3.1.1. clarification of the allocated width for the buffer strip between the existing hedges and solar panels (para 13.2)
3.1.2. inclusion of new standard trees in relation to CCTV poles and provide additional screening and filtering of views (para 13.3)
3.1.3. clarification to the section illustrating the 'Buffer zone to edge of panel arrays – typical detail' to ensure width between the proposed perimeter fencing and existing hedges is between 4-5m (para 13.4)
3.1.4. the LEMP states that a 2m margin for wildflower to the boundaries will be provided (page 5). However, it was not clearly identified on drawing '*SITE BLOCK PLAN – PROPOSED'* if the position of the stock fencing will allow this (para 8.5)
3.1.5. provide additional notes / labelling of native woodland planting and ponds for GCNs as identified within the LEMP (para 13.5)

3.2. These have all been addressed within revision B of the drawing with the exception of 3.1.2 which is detailed within the updated and revised LEMP rather than illustrated on the drawing, refer to section 4 within these Comments for further details.

**4. Revised and Updated Landscape and Ecological Management Plan**

4.1. The Applicant has provided a revised and updated LEMP by Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects, dated 21st October 2021.

4.2. It is noted that *'SITE BLOCK PLAN – PROPOSED'* referenced within this report is the current revision, revision B of this drawing.

4.3. Proposed native woodland planting along north-western boundary will be planted (page 6), and a suggested 'New woodland species' list is provided on page 30 of the LEMP this was previously highlighted as missing in the previous Comments issued to the Applicant on 1st October 2021 (para 8.4).

4.4. The previous revision of the LEMP stated that *'Management of woodland areas will be carried out through coppicing and thinning.'* However, details of this could not be found but it is noted that this has been included in the updated and revised LEMP and can be found in section *7.2 'Operation 1: New Woodland'* and Item 10.0 of '*MANAGEMENT SCHEDULE: ROUTINE AND ANNUAL MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT'.*

4.5. The previous revision of the LEMP did not provide details of the maintenance of the existing and mature hedgerows defining the individual field and overall Site boundaries. However, the updated and revised LEMP includes a new section; *6.4 'Boundary management'* which fills the gap of the previous report and a minimum maintenance height of 3m is noted in item 9.0 of '*MANAGEMENT SCHEDULE: ROUTINE AND ANNUAL MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT*'. This reflects the mitigation measures found in the LVIA, refer to para 5.20 of these Comments for further details.

4.6. There remains a confused narrative within section *7.5 'Operation 4: Areas of longer grass/open herb layer'* (formally section 6.4 within the previous revision of the LEMP) as per the previous Comments on this Application (para 8.11).

4.7. I note that the 'Recommendations for additional Mitigation Measures' made in the previous Comments issued to the Applicant on 1st October 2021, found in section 9, regarding tree planting within the field hedges has been incorporated within the Development Proposals. This is a welcomed addition to the Development Proposals.

4.8. There remains some outstanding comments and clarification requests from the previous Comments issued to the Applicant on 1st October 2021 but it is my opinion that these can be included within the Time Determined Conditions, refer to section 9 Recommendations within these Comments.

**5. Revised and Updated Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**

5.1. The Applicant has provided a revised and updated LVIA by Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects which has been reviewed against the list of information outstanding to determine the application previously provided to the Applicant in Comments issued on 1st October 2021. Below summarises the findings of this exercise, para references in brackets cross-reference to the para number for Recommendations and information outstanding to determine the application listed in the Comments.

5.2. Firstly, it is noted that the Site boundary assessed within the revised and updated report does reflect that shown on revised drawing '*SITE BLOCK PLAN – PROPOSED Rev B'* - Savills ref: 20.11.301, where the previous reports did not (para 13.12).

5.3. A review of and analysis has been completed for Policy EN10 (Energy Generation from Renewable and Low Carbon Sources) of the Local Plan within section *5.3 'Local Planning Policy'* (para 13.6). However, it is noted that other Local Plan Policies such as Policy EN1 (Landscape) and EN2 (Biodiversity & Geodiversity) have not been reviewed or analysed which would add value to the LVIA report.

5.4. A review and analysis of *'NCA Profile 48'* and *'Leicestershire County Council Landscape Character Type'* has been provided within section *8.4 'Response to Described Landscape Characteristics'* (para 13.7) of the updated and revised LVIA by Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects. However, it is noted that the requested review and analysis of '*NCA Profile 74'* has not been provided. As noted in the previous comments there has been no acknowledgement that the Site is close to the boundary with '*NCA Profile 74'* and that some of the key characteristics in this NCA may exert influence on the Site or that the Site and its surroundings may display some key characteristics.

5.5. Within the revised and updated LVIA information by Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects, a defined study area appropriate to the proposed development and landscape has been provided in sections *7.2 'Landscape Designations'* and *8.2 'Assessment of Effects of the Proposal Upon Landscape Value and Character: Wider Context'*. A review and analysis have been completed as requested. It is noted that Grantham Canal SSSI is not identified within section *7.2 'Landscape Designations'*, which is surprising as this designation is in such close proximity to the Site boundary (para 13.8). However, the designation is referred to and considered throughout the report.

5.6. A thorough consideration has been given for landscape value of the Site in its existing form to establish the baseline of the Site in section *8.2 'Assessment of Effects of the Proposal Upon Landscape Value and Character: Wider Context'*. Sections *8.8 'Summary: Capacity for the Landscape to Accommodate a Solar Farm'* and section *8.14 'Summary of Residual Visual Effects'*, discuss the effects of change a solar farm Development Proposal would bring to the Site, its landscape character and visual appearances (para 13.9). I agree with the conclusions of these sections within the LVIA noted in paras 8.8.8 and 8.14.3.

5.7. As requested, a narrative and justification for the decision to change the landscape sensitivity from *moderate-high* to *moderate* has been given in the revised and updated LVIA information within section *8.2 'Assessment of Effects of the Proposal Upon Landscape Value and Character: Wider Context'* (para 13.10). I agree with the justification given for this decision.

5.8. Within the previous revision of the LVIA by Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects the key characteristic described in '*Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study for Leicester and Leicestershire' 'Ensure that development does not detract from the setting of historic buildings and settlements.'* was not addressed (para 13.11). However, this has been done in great detail in section *8.13 'Visual Effects Upon Heritage Assets'*, with which I agree with the conclusions given. The key characteristic '*Retain the valued rural character of the vale and avoid urbanising influences'* (para 13.11) is discussed on page 38 of the updated and revised LVIA and states that, '*This could increase the perception of human influence on the landscape. This is localised and hidden from most viewpoints.*' Which I believe addresses this key characteristic and I agree with conclusion reached.

5.9. A fundamental reason for my deferring a recommendation decision in the last set of Comments was the inconsistencies of the viewpoint assessments due to the differing Site boundary as outlined in para 5.1 of these Comments (para 13.12) and an inconsistency of the receptor sensitivities given against the LVIA methodology (para 13.15). In addition, it was requested that the additional viewpoints found in *'Additional viewpoints, supporting information'* by Tetra Tech include a judgement on the sensitivity of the receptors, magnitude of change and significance of change as per GLVIA3 (para 13.22). In reviewing the updated and revised LVIA information provided by the Applicant, this has been addressed, they are consistent with the LVIA methodology given and I agree with the judgements described in pages 12 – 48 of '*Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Plans and Representative Views'*. The revised information provided within this updated LVIA by Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects demonstrates that significant views of the Development Proposals are found in very close proximity to the boundary or within the Site boundary, which is to be expected but not within the wider landscape.

5.10. Further to this, previously missing information for VP 14 has been provided within the revised information and is also consistent with the above comments (para 13.14).

5.11. Another gap within the previously submitted LVIA material was the omission and/or lack of justification for the omission of viewpoints within the Church of St Peter and St Paul and Redmile Conservation Area (para 13.23). The omission of the Church of St Peter and St Paul is clarified within the updated and revised LVIA by Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects within paras 8.13.2 – 6 satisfactorily. A separate covering email from the Applicant received on 21st October 2021 provides justification for the omission of a viewpoint within Redmile Conservation Area satisfactorily, however, this justification cannot be found in the updated and revised LVIA by Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects.

5.12. In previous Comments, it was requested that LVIA information and consideration is given to CCTV poles within the Development Proposals (para 13.16), this can be found and is

discussed in para 8.16.5. In a covering email from the Applicant received on 21st October 2021, they have outlined that the CCTV poles have reduced in height to 3m, which is a welcomed change and as such I agree with the judgements made in para 8.16.5 that they will be screened, within 5 years, through the addition of tree planting in their vicinity.

5.13. It was also requested that the new access tracks and upgrade of the existing access track is discussed within revised LVIA information (para 13.16). Para 8.16.2 states that details of this information that can be found in the '*Revised Transport Statement*' by Hydrock and that '*Upon completion of the construction phase, the land will be returned to its original condition*.' Para 8.16.3 states that upgrades to the access track are now no longer within the Development Proposals and this has been discounted from the LVIA for this reason.

5.14. In previous Comments, it was requested that the updated and revised LVIA information give further consideration to the Grid Yard which provides a permeant grid connection hub (para 13.16). Although section *8.15 'Visual Effects of the Grid Yard'* remains broadly the same in this updated LVIA report, and viewpoints are not illustrated on the plan for this element of the Development Proposal, consideration is given to the overall effects within section *8.14 'Summary of Residual Visual Effects'*, para 8.14.1. I broadly agree with the judgment and conclusion reached.

5.15. Finally, it was requested that consideration was given to the construction compound of the solar farm Development Proposals within the revised and updated LVIA information (para 13.16). This is discussed in section *8.16 'Visual Effects of the Development Proposal Upon Visual Receptors During the Construction Phase and Residual Effects of the CCTV Columns'*, and para 8.16.1 states that *'moderately adverse effect during the construction phase'* will be experienced. I agree with this judgement, however it would have been valuable to have a narrative to how this judgment was reached, a visual or description of the construction compound within the LVIA report and consideration of the construction phase for each viewpoint within pages 35 – 48 of *'Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Plans and Representative Views'*.

5.16. The updated and revised LVIA considers the seasonal changes when predicting and describing visual changes that a solar farm Development Proposal may bring in AVR 1-03 (TT VP1), VP5 and when considering the visual effects of the CCTV poles (para 13.17). It would have been valuable to the assessment if all viewpoints that are expected to experience visual change from the solar farm Development Proposal considered seasonality, particularly VPs 5-13 as they are either within the Site boundary or in close proximity to it and screening is provided by existing or proposed native hedges.

5.17. An additional section, section *9.4 'Space for Wildlife: Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2026'* has been added to the updated and revised LVIA report. This addresses the comments previously made that the previous revision of the LVIA by Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects stated that the Development Proposal would contribute to wider landscape targets and LPA's Biodiversity Action Plans without evidence (para 13.18). This recent revision of the LVIA thoroughly discusses the considered contributions and justifies the mitigation proposals of the solar farm Development Proposals in terms of biodiversity and ecology.

5.18. Finally, it was requested in the previous comments that cumulative visual and landscape character impacts are considered for the solar farm Development Proposals at Jericho Covert (para 13.19). This has been included in the updated and revised LVIA report by Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects within section *9.6* 'Cumulative *Effects'*. I agree with the conclusions drawn within para 9.6.4, '*that people's perception of the landscape, when moving through it, will not be adversely affected by the proposed development in combination with other solar farms in the area'*.

5.19. The additional section *9.5 'Effects Following Decommissioning'* within the updated and revised LVIA report by Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects adds further valuable information to the assessment. It demonstrates that consideration has been given to the temporary nature of the solar panels and their associated infrastructure which are reversible and that *'landscape character and visual amenity receptors and their views will ensure that the overall residual effect will be, at worst, negligible adverse' (para 9.5.4)*. I agree with this conclusion.

5.20. Another welcome addition to the updated and revised LVIA report by Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects is the in-depth discussion and consideration for mitigation found in section *9 'Summary of Outcomes of the LVIA Informing Additional Mitigation, Compensation and Enhancement'*. I broadly agree with all the conclusions within this section and find the narrative informative to the Application as a whole for landscape and visual matters.

5.21. An update to the '*Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Plans and Representative Views'* provided by the Applicant clarifies and corrects errors found in this document within the previous Comments issued on 1st October 2021 (paras 13.20 and 13.21), although it is noted that errors to the inset plans have not been picked up.

5.22. The updated and revised LVIA by Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects concludes that;

5.22.1. Para 10.2.1. *'The site has a moderate sensitivity to solar farm development'*

5.22.2. Para 10.2.2. *'The site is located on low-lying flat land. At a national and regional scale, this type of site is favoured for solar energy production over undulating of higher ground as the effects upon landscape character and visual receptors are greatly reduced.'*

5.22.3. Para 10.2.3. *'The proposal is to install solar arrays within the existing hedged field boundaries. No hedgerows are to be removed such that the pattern of landscape remains as the baseline condition,..'*

5.22.4. Para 10.2.5 *'the significance of the effect upon landscape character is assessed as slight rather than neutral'*

5.22.5. Para 10.2.6. '*Described landscape characteristics, especially those listed in landscape management guidelines, will be enhanced by changing intense agricultural practice into a less-intense, nature-led, approach to landscape management. This will have benefits upon local biodiversity, as well as, reducing any residual visual effects.*'

5.22.6. Para 10.3.1. *'The effect upon visual receptors is assessed in the range large, through moderate to negligible. No assessments of very large effects were recorded.'*

5.22.7. Para 10.3.2. '*The site lies on low lying land in a comparatively wide-open landscape, with views towards the site hard to find from most directions.'*

5.22.8. Para 10.3.3. *'The exception are views from the immediate south and south-west where the site is visible from a public footpath which runs across the southern boundary of the site. The magnitude of effect from these viewpoints is assessed as large and adverse and experienced by high sensitivity visual receptors (footpath users). However, the small number of receptors gives rise to an overall assessment of moderate to slight and triggers a recommendation of some mitigation measures to reduce adverse effects. These views can be mitigated, but not screened completely. Once mitigation planting has established, within 5 years the residual effect is likely to be moderate and slightly adverse. Beyond 10 years, the effect will become slight and not adverse.'*

5.22.9. Para 10.3.4. *'These mitigation measures will not fully screen the proposal and the residual effect, following the construction phase, will remain as moderate to slight and*

*slightly adverse from these viewpoints. It is important to note that these effects are upon the land cover within the field enclosures themselves, rather than any changes to landscape pattern or wider views which will remain unchanged. It is principally a visual change from one material (agricultural crops) to another (solar arrays), but with a potential change to perceptions of the landscape view based upon an individual's response to this type of landscape change'*

5.22.10. Para 10.3.6. *'From all other assessed viewpoints the effect will be slight to negligible or visual receptors will experience no change to the view'*

5.23. I agree with all the conclusions drawn by Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects outlined above found within section *10 'Conclusions'* of the updated and revised LVIA.

5.24. To conclude, I have found that the updated and revised Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment by Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects is in line with '*The Landscape Institute's Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition'*. It is acknowledged that *'The Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 1/20 "Reviewing Landscape Impact Assessments (LVIAs) and Landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVAs)"'* has been used as reference. As has '*The Landscape Institute published a consultation draft in February 2021: Technical Guidance Note, Consultation Draft 02/21 "Landscape Value and Valued Landscapes"'* and that this new consultation report has informed the assessment of landscape value which is commended.

**6. Summary**

6.1. In summary the solar farm Development Proposals for Jericho Lane are now broadly in line with '*Planning guidance for the development of large-scale ground mounted solar PV systems – BRE and Cornwall Council'* following the receipt of the additional requested information.

6.2. The updated and revised Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment by Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects is in line with *'The Landscape Institute's Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition*'. It is acknowledged that '*The Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 1/20 "Reviewing Landscape Impact Assessments (LVIAs) and Landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVAs)"'* has been used as reference. As has '*The Landscape Institute published a consultation draft in February 2021: Technical Guidance Note, Consultation Draft 02/21 "Landscape Value and Valued Landscapes"'* and that this new consultation report has informed the assessment of landscape value, an area of the previous LVIA I considered to be lacking.

6.3. The revised information provided within the updated and revised LVIA by Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects demonstrates that significant views of the Development Proposals are found in very close proximity to the boundary or within the Site boundary, which is to be expected but not within the wider landscape.

6.4. In most cases the Applicant has sought to clarify and justify queries in the previous Comments issued on 1st October 2021 with some small omissions which have been commented on within the previous sections of these Comments.

**7. Conclusions**

7.1. I believe the additional information provided by the Applicant provides sufficient evidence to conclude that the 'wider' landscape is robust enough to absorb this proposal and the cumulative effects have been considered with other proposals of this type within this landscape. Therefore, I can conclude that this Development Proposal will result in slight / negligible visual harm and I see no reason to OBJECT to the Solar farm Development Proposal at Jericho Covert.

**8. Recommendations**

**Pre-Determined Conditions** (should the MBC approve the planning application)

8.1. Provide details of stripping, storage or replacement of topsoil in compliance with BS 3882. Provision of assurances and method statements of appropriate protection of any retained high-grade topsoil, to ensure this resource is not compacted or tracked through construction and operational phases of development.

8.2. Provide details of how the existing hedges and trees will be protected on site during construction and associated Tree Survey / hedge assessment compliant with BS 5837.

8.3. Provide a provision that cable moling beneath individual tree RPAs is avoided.

**Time Determined Conditions** (should the MBC approve the planning application)

8.4. Provide a detailed Landscape Management Plan and Maintenance Schedule which is specified to the detail and appropriate duration (minimum 5years) to enable the Slight/Negligible ratings assessed in the LVIA within the wider landscape due to mitigation to be achieved. Ensure that the Landscape Management Plan and Maintenance Schedule does not enhance significance through poor aftercare of the mitigation proposed. Include for the removal and replacement of failed trees/hedgerow planting. Include clarification of amount of strimming required of short grass if grazing does not occur.

8.5. Provide planting plans including schedules of species, stock sizes and densities for all planting within the landscape proposals. Provide information of mulch type and locations, the provisions for spiral guards or other protection for the establishment of plants and staking proposals.

8.6. Provide seeding plans of wildflower seeding areas, seed mixes and appropriate cutting regime. Refer to para 4.6 of these comments for further details. Provide a cross section illustrating the positions of stock fencing to provide the 2m margin for wildflower to the boundaries as stated in the LEMP.

8.7. Provide details for the bat, bird and log pile locations and numbers.

8.8. Provide details of pond enhancement to increase the carrying capacity and suitability for Great Crested Newts (GCN).

**Katie Lewis CMLI**

**Landscape Architect**

**For and on Behalf of Red Kite Network Limited**

Footnotes

The following acronyms have been used:

1. LVIA - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
2. MBC – Melton Borough Council
3. LVIA – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
4. VP – Viewpoint
5. LI – The Landscape Institute
6. GLVIA3 - The Landscape Institute's Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition
7. LEMP – Landscape and Ecological Management Plan
8. GCN – Great Crested Newts