

FAO: Fred Brown
31 Dewar Place Lane
Edinburgh
EH3 8EF

Our Ref: 20/503677/ENVSCR
Date: 3rd September 2020
Contact: Ms C Griffiths

Dear Mr Brown,

The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (SI 2017/571)

Location: New Rides Farm, 820 Leysdown Road, Eastchurch, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 4DD

Proposal: EIA Screening Opinion – Installation and 35 year operation of a solar farm with capacity of up to 10MW

I note the contents of your letter, and the plan identifying the land which is subject of the EIA screening opinion request. The request relates to a proposed installation and 35year operation of a solar farm development with capacity of up to 10MW. The installation would involve erection of solar panels on approximately 23ha (58 acres) of agricultural land. Access to the site would be via the existing access for New Rides Farm and New Rides Wind Farm off the B2231. The site measures approximately 64ha, and consists of agricultural land situated within and adjacent to the operational New Rides Wind Farm development located to the south of the village of Eastchurch.

The site is situated outside of the nearest settlement boundary of Eastchurch and therefore is situated in the open countryside. Whilst being in the open countryside there is existing built form to the west of the site comprising the Sheppey Prison Cluster, and residential dwellings on Orchard Way, Range Road, Kent View Drive, Brabazon Road and surrounding roads. There is a PROW footpath (ZS46) which runs north-south through the site.

The site accommodates no landscape designations or ecological constraints on the site itself. It is noted that the site adjoins the Area of High Landscape Value (Kent Level), and the Swale Special Protection Area (SPA) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are situated 0.75km to the south-east of the site. The northern half of the site is located in Flood Zone 1, and the southern part of the site is located in Flood Zones 2 and 3. The site is not located within a Conservation Area and contains no Listed Buildings.

The development is of a type referred to in Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations under 3(a) Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water (unless included in Schedule 1); as the area of development exceeds 0.5ha.

Having taken into account the information in your request letter and the criteria in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations, due to its size, location, nature and limited pollution outputs, it is the Council's opinion that the development is not likely to result in significant environmental

effects over and above existing local conditions. Overall, I do not consider that development on its own or cumulatively would have significant effects upon the environment to warrant an EIA. I consider the development would not be of more than local importance and does not involve unusually complex and potentially hazardous environmental effects.

Accordingly, the Council's screening opinion is that the proposal is not EIA development and an Environmental Statement (ES) will not be required. The impacts of the proposal can be satisfactorily assessed through the planning process. Given this determination, there is obviously no need to give consideration to the scope of the ES.

The above response does not address the planning merits of the proposed development, and it is recommended that pre-application advice should be sought. Any future planning application will need to address, among other things, potential biodiversity and landscape issues as a result of the proposed development, supported by comprehensive reports. Furthermore it is advised that advice is sought from Natural England, KCC Ecology and the RSPB at pre-application stage and it is noted that Natural England and KCC Ecology provide their own pre-application services.

Any future planning applications should be supported by the following reports/information;

- Design and Access Statement
- Planning Statement, including an assessment regarding agricultural land quality
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Landscaping and Visual Impact Assessment, and detailed landscape scheme
- Ecological Surveys
- Surface Water Drainage Strategy
- Sustainable Construction Information, and Energy Statement including BREEAM

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Griffiths', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Corinna Griffiths
Senior Planner