

Nythe Road Solar Farm, Ashcott, Somerset TA7 9BG

Landscape Objection Statement

on behalf of Save Our Somerset Levels and CPRE Somerset

2023/1892/FUL– Planning application for ‘Proposed ground mounted solar photovoltaic park, underground cable route and ancillary development. | Land At 342774 135299 Nythe Road, Walton, Street, Somerset’

The Landscape Practice (TLP) has prepared the following on behalf of Save Our Somerset Levels and CPRE Somerset in objection to the above planning application. In relation to the above planning submission, this is a review of local landscape context, quality and value, and the potential landscape and visual impact and effects the proposed development would have on this. A field visit was made to assess the local area and photographs were taken on 2 April 2024 and in accordance with Landscape Institute guidelines. The weather and visibility were variable over the day visit.

Landscape Context

The Site lies across two identified National Character Areas (NCAs). Relevant key characteristic extracts are described as follows from published documents. Our emphasis has been added to highlight specific points relative to the context:

NCA 143: Mid Somerset Hills

- ‘...a series of low hills, islands and ridges dividing the Somerset Moors and Levels.
- The hills, such as the Poldens, are prominent and dramatic, rising above the surrounding landscape, forming a visual backdrop to the Somerset Levels and Moors and giving panoramic views across the lower lands surrounding them.’
- At the wetland edge there is much flood plain grazing marsh, a nationally rare habitat.
- The historic landscape illustrates continuous human occupation since prehistory closely linked to the farming and occupation of the Somerset Levels and Moors, with droves and farming systems reflecting this long association.’

NCA 142: Somerset Levels and Moors

- ‘This is a flat, open landscape of wet pasture, arable and wetland divided by ditches and rhynes, often forming a chequer-board pattern, that clearly illustrate the reclaimed, planned nature of the landscape.
- The area includes the largest lowland grazing marsh system in Britain.
- The landscape is surrounded, divided and punctuated by a diverse geology of hills, ridges and islands such as the...Polden Hills...which form distinctive skylines.
- Semi-natural unimproved grasslands, wet meadows, fen, mire and reedbeds underline the area’s wetland character, which is internationally important for assemblages of wetland and wading birds, invertebrates, amphibians, wetland mammals and the aquatic vegetation of the rhynes and ditches.
- The historical landscape illustrates continuous human occupation since prehistory with a vast array of features, including some of the oldest archaeological remains, of international and national importance, contained within peat deposits and other waterlogged soils across the area.’

More locally, the local area staddles three identified landscape character areas over former districts of Mendip and Sedgemoor. Relevant key characteristic extracts are described as follows from published documents. Our emphasis has been added to highlight specific points relative to the context:

Mendip District - LCA F4: Butleigh Moor

- *'The area lies at around 5 m AOD and is dominated by the backdrop of the Walton Hill ridge.*
- *On the low lying area, the landscape is comprised of flat grazing/hay meadows defined by drainage ditches rather than any hedges.*
- *With the ridge blocking views and noise to the north and the expanse of unoccupied landscape to the south this area offers a good degree of tranquillity.*
- *The unusual and semi natural character of the watery landscape also feels unspoilt and remote.*
- *Area feels very remote and tranquil.*

Sedgemoor District - LCA Levels and Moors - Peat Moors

- *The Moors comprise the very low-lying areas....*
- *Views are mostly wide and panoramic. It is a particularly distinctive and atmospheric landscape, with a very remote feeling strengthened by its lack of buildings and settlement. Hedgerows or woodland can be a localised obstruction to long views.*
- *Landscape may be very open with few trees.'*

A further section on 'Sensitivity to Visual Impact and Capacity for New Development' states:

'Very little development is expected in the Moors, with the possible exception of agricultural buildings, extension of existing property and bird hides or other visitor-related facilities. Such proposals should be encouraged to maintain traditional patterns of settlement and building form or, in the case of visitor facilities, use natural materials such as timber and thatch in ways which draw inspiration from the area's more ancient history.'

Sedgemoor District - LCA Lowland Hills - Polden Hills

- *'The Polden Hills form a long low ridge which cuts across the Somerset Levels and Moors.*
- *The topography is variable, with steeper slopes and hillocks on the southern side of the ridge, and shallower gradients on the northern side.*
- *The area is a rich tapestry of landscape, with frequent long views over the Levels and Moors and to the other hill areas, creating a very high-quality landscape character.*

A further section on 'Sensitivity to Visual Impact and Capacity for New Development' states:

'The visual prominence of the Polden Hills and the variety and richness of its landscape promotes it as a high priority area for conservation. In particular, the western end of the hills and the southern hillocks have a high value in terms of views from lowland areas.

The large area of the flat, low-lying Kings Sedge Moor has a unique, semi-natural, expansive, and open character with a strong, characteristically ordered, and easily recognisable field pattern. This is controlled by the man-made drainage system of rhyes and ditches which form field boundaries predominantly in place of hedgerows thus maintaining the open character. Settlement is very sparse and there are just two isolated roads crossing the expanse of moor.

The hills surround the moors area and create a distinctive and dramatic skyline backdrop at High Ham to the south and the Polden Hills to the north and east. The latter is punctuated by Dundon Hill and Dundon Beacon. In contrast to the moor, the surrounding hills have medium sized irregular fields with consistent hedgerows and trees and a network of roads and lanes connecting settlements. There are extensive views of the whole from both the hills and the moor and of each from one to the other.

Since prehistoric times there has been a long-standing, cultural and functional relationship of farming communities living on higher ground and utilising the naturally fertile moors only during the drier summer months. The very name of Somerset is derived from this relationship between hill and moor. The Saxon title, Sumersaeta means 'summer man's land'.

By function, dramatic topography, and a noticeable contrast in character, the hills and moors are inextricably linked. The local area is a high quality, overtly rural landscape with restricted human access on the moor, and consequently has a high degree of tranquillity.

Landscape Value, Susceptibility and Sensitivity

The submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) underestimates the value of the baseline landscape. Whilst most of the baseline assessment refers mainly to the study area, the assessment of landscape value oddly refers, in a rather mechanical approach, only to the Site area which is entirely unrepresentative. The submitted LVIA also doesn't take account of susceptibility of the landscape to accept this type and scale of development, so sensitivity is not properly assessed, and landscape impacts and effects are consequently grossly underestimated. Landscape sensitivity to the proposed development seems to be measured only by physical change and does not consider perceptual changes that the development would affect.

Published landscape character assessments clearly outline the local area as a landscape of value. Using the Table 1 of The Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 02/21 – '*Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations*', as the submitted LVIA does, but to evaluate the representative value of the local landscape (not just the Site area) reflecting the conclusions of the published landscape character assessments:

Natural Heritage

Internationally important wildlife and habitats (NCA 142).

RAMSAR and SSSI within 1.75kms of the Site.

Nationally rare habitat at wetland edge (NCA 143).

Autumn starling murmurations.

Home to the Large Blue, one of Britain's rarest butterflies.

Cultural Heritage

Inhabited continuously since prehistory over 6,000 years and by the Romans.

Historically exploited for salt and peat extraction.

Shapwick Hoard – the largest and some of the rarest collection of Roman coins in the country.

Extensive 18th century Dutch engineers' land drainage system.

Unique living/working environments between hills and moor – a distinctive bond between man and land.

Walton Windmill on Walton Hill is a Grade 2 listed local highpoint landmark.

Stembridge Tower Mill on High Ham, Grade 2* listed local landmark, the last surviving stone thatched windmill in the country.

Landscape Condition

Both the RSPB and Somerset Wildlife Trust have a high presence in the local area and in an intricate, managed landscape where once exploited land *'has since been transformed into a vibrant mosaic of land for agriculture and internationally renowned wetland nature reserves'* which are heavily supported by the surrounding areas.

The condition outside protected land is considered to be declining, but seasonal use and intensive care required to maintain reclaimed ground form an instinctive connection between man and the land.

The landscape is extremely vulnerable to climate change and water management, and any changes to that are critical.

Associations

The famous escape of King Alfred from the Vikings before the moors were drained.

The influence of the Monks of Glastonbury and the rise of Christianity in this country.

Poets such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Tennyson, and T. S. Eliot have been associated with the area.

The monument to Admiral Samuel Hood on Windmill Hill is visible from the local hills and moor.

Distinctiveness

Unique and characteristic contrasts between hills and moor.

Instantly recognisable and distinctive landscape patterns.

Very limited human presence and activity.

Summarised beautifully by Steve Mewes, Somerset Wildlife Trust, Policy and Campaigns Manager: *'The magical mix of the area's history, heritage, culture, people and wildlife results in an almost visceral connection to the land as soon as you step onto the Levels. There's nowhere else quite like it. Those that live and work here go about their daily lives totally in tune with the natural rhythms of this unique and special place.'*

The area is known and acknowledged especially for its distinctive excellence.

Recreation

Footpaths are infrequent on the moor, but with unique remote and wild experiential qualities.

Samaritan's Way Long Distance Path and Polden Way local footpath.

Very well-known, easily accessible viewpoint and open access at Walton Hill.

The Polden Hills is often overlooked but known as a hidden gem and tranquil part of Somerset.

Perceptual (Scenic)

Panoramic and expansive views from Walton Hill over a patchwork of continually changing colour - perhaps one of the most iconic and well-known views in Somerset.

Unique, expansive views but with a backdrop the hills (Polden Hills, Dundon Hill and Beacon, and High Ham) from the low-lying moors.

Striking contrast of topographic landform and vegetation landcover between hills and moor.

Prominent presence of distinctive and stark moors field patterns created by rhynes and ditches contrasting with well-furnished, irregular field pattern on the hills.

Contrast of views from the hills to the moor and vice versa.

Few detractors. Ironically, high level powerlines over the Site and an adjacent, existing solar site are primarily the only visual detractors in the local area.

Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity)

Lack of built form and restricted human activity on the moors – extensive areas without human development.

Moors highlighted as ‘unusual, semi-natural habitat’ - Mendip District - LCA F4: Butleigh Moor.

Predominantly rural, and less well-known and less visited, sometimes referred as the ‘hidden’ Polden Hills.

The area has a ‘*good degree of tranquillity*’ (Mendip District - LCA F4: Butleigh Moor), it is peaceful with dark skies, intrinsic remoteness, seclusion, and openness.

Functional

The 18th Century Dutch engineers’ land drainage system which has a strong functional link with the nearby RAMSAR and SSSI designations.

A special organisation, the Inland Drainage Board (IDB) whose authority to secure clean drainage water, water levels, and management of the rhynes and ditches is determined by the water catchment area of the levels and moors. One of only six such areas of IDB authority in the country.

The Levels remains the only area in the UK growing basket willow commercially and growing teasel to produce combs for the traditional textile market.

Peat bog is a significant carbon sink.

From an independent land classification report prepared for Save Our Somerset Levels the land covering the Site and the surrounding area is a mixture, but it is mainly Grade 2 – ‘*very good quality*’ agricultural land, and 3a – ‘*good quality*’ agricultural land, the ‘*best and most versatile*’. In this respect, the land over the Site is deemed the most flexible, productive, and efficient in response to inputs, and is recognised as the best to deliver future crops for food.

All of the above undoubtedly confirms, this is a special landscape of high value and quality, and it is a valued landscape which should be considered in relation to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Paragraphs 180a and 180b.

The susceptibility of the existing landscape to accept this type and scale of development does not seem to have been considered in the submitted LVIA, although it is part of the stated methodology. Due to the expansive and open nature of the local area, the Site is easily perceivable with the surrounding landscape both from elevated and low-lying, level ground. As such, the character is particularly fragile and is therefore easily vulnerable to change and harm. In particular, this industrial type and scale of development which would form a substantial change which would be entirely discordant causing considerable harm. The local area therefore has high susceptibility to this proposed change. High landscape value and high susceptibility suggest a landscape of high sensitivity.

Development Proposals

The submitted drawings and the proposals are difficult to read having numerous errors and omissions. There are instances of cut and paste text from other projects unrelated to this Site. However, this should not be a diversion from the principal issue that this proposal is unsuitable for this location.

The proposed development Site including solar panels, ancillary buildings, numerous structures, and access tracks is stated as 59.11Ha. To put into perspective, the size of the development proposals is equivalent to the area of approximately 83no. Premiership sized football pitches. The majority of the Site is on flat ground, highly visible from elevated ground. However, an area in the north east corner oddly includes an area of solar panels on steep ground and consequently has some added exposure from certain viewpoints on lower ground which is not identified in the LVIA. This is not a serious part of the proposal, and its potential expendability should not divert from the overall principal issue of the unsuitability of the whole Site for the proposed development in this location.

Measured from the submitted drawings, there are 8.40kms of proposed fencing, 1.30kms of proposed new track and 2.50kms of existing track. It is unclear if the latter is to be resurfaced as much of this currently appears to be mud tracks with practical summer only use. The LVIA is unclear and states only that: *'Some other ancillary development may be required, including in the form of tracks formed by depositing crushed stone, where required'*. It is difficult to determine from the submitted layout drawing, but it appears there are 12no. inverter sub-station modules. There are 39no. x 3.0m high CCTV cameras spaced around the perimeters, but these are not mentioned in the LVIA.

An exceptionally large and incongruous proposed *'Control Room'* building (22.85m x 7.0m x 5.0m) high of dubious quality and alien design is located immediately adjacent to public footpath BW1/25, The Samaritan's Way long distance path. However, the size and shape shown on the RPS drawing 002 doesn't match the layout plans and appears to be labelled for another site, and on the Elgin drawings it is labelled as *'Applicant's Substation Location'* and *'DNO Substation Location'*. Hedge screening of this has been suggested by the local authority. Whilst this would take some time to achieve, it would also be out of character and would block currently open views from the Samaritan's Way over the moors and towards High Ham. Views would be affected for almost one kilometre of this footpath either side of Redlands Farm.

Landscape and Visual Impact

This is a significantly large development creating a collection of built form the nature and scale of which is plainly industrial in character. Panels will form a large and continuous block of monotone colour which would be highly discordant with the patchwork character and varying colours and textures of existing landscape patterns and the high quality, rural setting. This would create substantial harm to the unique character of the local landscape.

Physical damage and degradation of land and soils is likely to occur through erosion and compaction. Refer to *'The Impact of Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Sites on Agricultural Soils and Land Quality'* (2023) ADAS for the Welsh Government. The configuration of solar panels will concentrate run off and alter drainage patterns. Regular maintenance access required to solar panels with concentrated tracking will cause compaction. This is particularly pertinent to this Site where land is waterlogged for long periods, drainage of reclaimed land is critical, and the land is traditionally summer use only. This has the potential to degrade the soils and affect the carbon sink capabilities of the peat making the

development proposal counterproductive. The submitted Design and Access Statement states that *'most of the soil will not be physically impacted by the Proposed Development'*, however, maintenance would be carried out between each of the rows of solar panels which would include most of the Site area.

The development proposals would be highly visible over a large area in public views from both elevated ground within panoramic views and at close proximity from lower ground. This would interrupt and obstruct both open views over the moors and distinctive back drop views of the surrounding hills, particularly those of the Polden Hills. Additional photographs in the Appendix illustrate those not fully represented within the submitted LVIA, in particular those from Nythe Road and The Polden Hills.

Although designed to absorb light energy, in the countryside the solar panels present an unusual, alien, glassy, grey–white mass, highly visible within surrounding landscape particularly in winter months.

Cumulative Impact

There is a cumulative effect which is not considered in the submitted LVIA. The proposed development would be visible (ironically) with the only two principal existing visual detractors in the local area. It would be visible with high level overhead powerlines and with the adjacent solar development on Butleigh Drove (approximately 17.2Ha) in both wider, elevated, and lower-level and close proximity views. The proposed development and the existing solar development would create a total combined area of 76.31Ha which is equivalent to approximately 106no. Premiership sized football pitches.

From higher ground on the Polden Hills, (public footpath a large proportion of the development proposals would be visible together with the Redlands Farm buildings, the existing solar park on Butleigh Drove, and high level powerlines crossing the Site. Similarly, from lower ground on Nythe Road, the proposed development would be visible with the existing solar park, high level powerlines, and Redlands Farm buildings which includes existing solar panels on the building roofs.

Proposed Mitigation

The full extent of mitigation is difficult to determine on the small scale submitted Landscape Strategy accompanying the submitted LVIA. The proposed hedgerows are wholly out of character with the open nature and character of the moors area. Incidentally, the proposed detail regarding species and wildflower mixes appears to be for drier agricultural land and does not reflect the existing wetland habitat.

However, the hedges' ability to screen views would be ineffective in wider elevated views. From lower level, they would obstruct currently open and important views over the moors from the public footpath BW1/25, The Samaritan's Way long distance footpath and views from Nythe Road towards the Polden Hills. The inclusion of hedges would in themselves cause harm to the local open character.

In addition, hedgerows would be impractical next to rhynes and ditches where traditionally critical maintenance access space is required on the landowner's side.

The very need to propose development screening hedges which are out of character with this part of the landscape, cause impact to visual amenity, and which would obstruct critical function of the landscape should be enough on its own to suggest that this is not an appropriate Site for this proposed development.

Planning Guidance

The following national and local planning guidance has been referenced here in relation to the proposed development and the local context in this statement:

NPPF Section 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Paragraph 180 states: *'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the local and natural environment by:*

- a) *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;'*

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Paragraph 007 Ref. ID 5-007-20140306 states:

- *'The need for renewable or low carbon energy does not automatically override environmental protections; cumulative impacts require particular attention, especially the increasing impact that large scale solar farms can have on landscape and local amenity as the number of solar arrays in an area increases;*
- *Local topography is an important factor in assessing whether wind turbines and large scale solar farms could have a damaging effect on landscape and recognise that the impact can be as great in predominately flat landscapes as in hilly or mountainous areas;*
- *Great care should be taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impact of proposals on views important to their setting;*
- *Proposals in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and in areas close to them where there could be an adverse impact on the protected area, will need careful consideration;*
- *Protecting local amenity is an important consideration which should be given proper weight in planning decisions.'*

Sedgemoor Local Plan - Policy D19 Landscape

'.....proposals should ensure that they enhance the landscape quality wherever possible or that there is no significant adverse impact on local landscape character, historic landscape, scenic quality and instinctive landscape features as identified in the Sedgemoor Landscape Assessment and Countryside Design Summary. In particular through:

- *Siting and landscaping that takes account of visibility from publicly accessible vantage points;*
- *The form, bulk and design of buildings having proper regard to their context in respect of both the immediate setting and the defining characteristics of the wider local area;*
- *Protecting and enhancing natural and historic features which contribute to the distinctive character of the district's landscape, such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows, soils, rivers/river corridors, ditches, open space, archaeological remains and rural buildings; and*
- *Taking account of the predicted long-term impacts of climate change on landscape.'*

Mendip District Local Plan - DP 1: Local Identity and Distinctiveness

Paragraph 6.11 states: *'In terms of backdrop, the landscapes of the Mendip Hills AONB, the Somerset Levels, and transitional areas around them provide a diverse and highly attractive rural setting which historically has influenced the dispersed settlement pattern of the area. This backdrop has also influenced the variety of habitats and wildlife present, as well as the nature of rural land use which in itself has shaped the character of the countryside for hundreds of years.'*

Mendip District Local Plan - DP 4: Mendip's Landscapes

Supports the Mendip Hills (AONB) National Landscape but also *'the transition from this upland area down to the equally distinctive Somerset Levels and Moors on the western side of the district creates a wealth of visually and culturally significant landforms'*. The policy states: *'Mendip district is defined by its landscapes. Proposals for development that would, individually or cumulatively, significantly degrade the quality of the local landscape will not be supported.'*

Conclusion

This planning application proposes a solar development of industrial nature and scale within an overtly rural local landscape of international importance and with perhaps some of the finest and most distinctive views in Somerset. This is a high-quality landscape of value with a high susceptibility to this type and scale of development and it therefore has a high sensitivity to change. Published landscape character assessments for the area confirm this.

The proposed development is discordant with this setting and its prominent location. The Site is overlooked both from surrounding elevated ground within panoramic views, and locally at close proximity where proposed development would spoil and obstruct important existing views. This proposed development would cause such substantial harm to landscape character and visual amenity to conclude that this type of development is, in principle, unsuitable for this location.

Proposed hedgerow mitigation planting on submitted information does not reflect local character and it would harm the open character of the moors. The very suggestion of the need for this mitigation in this location proves that this is not a suitable development for this location.

Promoting renewable energy sites without proper consideration of the quality of the baseline and development proposals which would cause harm to the landscape fail to address or follow important national and local planning policy. This is a valued landscape which would be substantially harmed by this development. Proposals which damage the very landscape and environment they purport to save are entirely conflicting and counterproductive. For these reasons, it is respectfully requested that this proposal should be refused.

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736 LS01 P3 – 11 April 2024

**Proposed Solar Farm
Nythe Road, Nythe, Somerset**

Appendix Photographs

736 LS01 P3



Viewpoint 1 - Nythe Road

Approximate Elevation: 6.0m AOD
 Coordinates: E342606 N135079
 Direction of View: North East
 Distance from Site: 135m

From Nythe Road approaching the Site, the proposed development would be visible in the middle ground in front of the view of the Polden Hills. The proposed development would also be visible with the existing solar park on Butleigh Drove and Redlands Farm. The proposed development would cover a substantial part of the middle ground in front of Pedwell Hill and the Polden Hills.

Two submitted LVIA Viewpoints have been located along Nythe Road north and south of the Site where existing vegetation has filtered views of the Site. This is not entirely representative of the experience of the Site along the road where there are more open views of the Site and across the moor and towards the Polden Hills. This is illustrated here under Viewpoints nos.1-4.

Photographs have been stitched together to give an impression of the overall view. The red outline is for identification of the visible proposed development Site area in the view.



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Viewpoint 2 - Nythe Road

Approximate Elevation: 6.0m AOD
 Coordinates: E342560 N135207
 Direction of View: North East
 Distance from Site: 3m

From Nythe Road adjacent to a proposed Site entrance there would be a wide, open view of the proposed development. Although intermittent, similar open views of the Site are available for nearly a kilometre of the road. Motorists would normally be of low sensitivity as their attention would be concentrated on driving. However, there would be passengers, and as this is the only road crossing this part of the moor and the proximity and scale of the proposed development would make this particularly noticeable. Due to the lack of footpaths across the moor, it is likely that pedestrians will also be using the road. The views towards Pedwell Hill and the Polden Hills would be substantially affected.

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Viewpoint 3 - Nythe Road

Approximate Elevation: 6.0m AOD
Coordinates: E342472 N135429
Direction of View: North East
Distance from Site: 5m

Similar to Viewpoint 2, from Nythe Road adjacent to a proposed Site entrance there would be a wide, open view of the proposed development. Although intermittent, similar open views of the Site are available for nearly a kilometre of the road. Motorists would normally be of low sensitivity as their attention would be concentrated on driving. However, there would be passengers, and as this is the only road crossing this part of the moor and the proximity and scale of the proposed development would make this particularly noticeable. Due to the lack of footpaths across the moor, it is likely that pedestrians will also be using the road. The views towards Pedwell Hill and the Polden Hills would be substantially affected.



Viewpoint 4 - Nythe Road

Approximate Elevation: 6.0m AOD
 Coordinates: E342344 N135720
 Direction of View: South East
 Distance from Site: 3m

Similar to Viewpoints 2 & 3, from Nythe Road adjacent to an existing gate at the north east corner of the Site there would be an open view of the proposed development. Although intermittent, similar open views of the Site are available for nearly a kilometre of the road. Motorists would normally be of low sensitivity as their attention would be concentrated on driving. However, there would be passengers, and as this is the only road crossing this part of the moor and the proximity and scale of the proposed development would make this particularly noticeable. Due to the lack of footpaths across the moor, it is likely that pedestrians will also be using the road.

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Viewpoint 5 - Pedwell Hill

Public Footpath BW1/27
 Approximate Elevation: 52m AOD
 Coordinates: E343195 N136133
 Direction of View: South West
 Distance from Site: 400m

The view from public footpath BW1/27 on Pedwell Hill on the Polden Hills, omitted from the submitted LVIA, shows a panoramic view over the Site from elevated ground covering an extensive area of the middle ground. Additional blocks of monotone solar panels would cause a cumulative effect dominating and substantially harming this view. This is not the best day for visibility but, apart from the visual distraction of the existing solar park and farm buildings, views across the moor towards High Ham are stunning. This view has been omitted from the submitted LVIA.



Photographs have been stitched together to give an impression of the overall view. The red outline is for identification of the visible proposed development Site area in the view.



Viewpoint 6 - Samaritans Way
Public Footpath BW1/25

Approximate Elevation: 9m AOD
Coordinates: E343377 N135674
Direction of View: West
Distance from Site: 0m

The rural view from The Samaritan's Way long distance public footpath BW1/25. This view is whilst travelling west on the footpath. The view in the submitted LVIA is unrepresentative of the full impact the development would have in this footpath. Solar panels and ancillary structures would be at close proximity to the path covering the foreground and would dominate and completely cover the view for a long section of the path (approx. 945m). Longer distance views over the moor towards Ham Hill would also be truncated. There are few footpaths associated with the lower ground across the moor the proposed development would cause substantial harm to the enjoyment of this footpath which makes this even more pertinent. The two submitted LVIA Viewpoints do not give the full impression of views that would be affected along the Samaritan's Way through the Site. Viewpoints 6-8 here provide representative views.



Photographs have been stitched together to give an impression of the overall view. The red outline is for identification of the visible proposed development Site area in the view.



Viewpoint 7 - Samaritans Way

Public Footpath BW1/25
 Approximate Elevation: 9m AOD
 Coordinates: E343539 N135608
 Direction of View: West
 Distance from Site: 0m

A similar rural view from The Samaritan's Way long distance public footpath BW1/25 as Viewpoint 6. This view is whilst travelling west on the footpath. The view in the submitted LVIA is unrepresentative of the full impact the development would have on this footpath. Solar panels and ancillary structures would be at close proximity to the path covering the foreground and would dominate and completely cover the view for a long section of the path. Longer distance views over the moor towards Ham Hill would also be truncated. There are few footpaths associated with the lower ground across the moor the proposed development would cause substantial harm to the enjoyment of this footpath which makes this even more pertinent.



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Viewpoint 8 - Samaritans Way Public Footpath BW1/25

Approximate Elevation: 9m AOD
Coordinates: E343697 N135544
Direction of View: West
Distance from Site: 0m

A similar rural view from The Samaritan's Way long distance public footpath BW1/25 as Viewpoints 6 & 7. This view is whilst travelling west on the footpath before it dog legs back to the boundary on the right of the photograph. This view would contain the large and incongruous 'Control Room' building which would be in close proximity to the path. Solar panels and ancillary structures would be at close proximity to the path covering the foreground not taken up with the building and would dominate the view blocking views of the moors and the distant Ham Hill. Mitigation hedgerow planting has been suggested in this location which in itself would be inappropriate and it would further screen currently open views.



Site extends beyond photograph edges

High Ham

Site Field

Site Field

Site Field



Photographs have been stitched together to give an impression of the overall view. The red outline is for identification of the visible proposed development Site area in the view.



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Viewpoint 9 - Pedwell Hill

Public Footpath BW1/45

Approximate Elevation: 30 m AOD

Coordinates: E343871 N135714

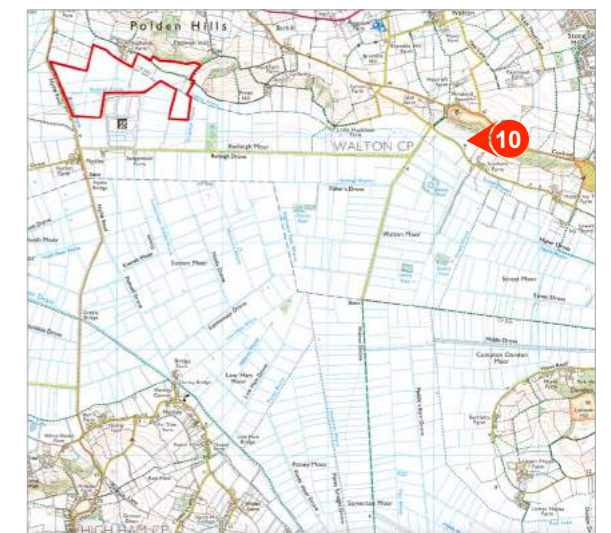
Direction of View: South West

Distance from Site: 100m

The rural view descending Pedwell Hill on public footpath BW1/45. A view omitted from the submitted LVIA. Proposed development of solar panels, ancillary equipment and the incongruous "Control Room" building (which would sit in the middle of this view) would dominate this rural view and distract from views of the moor and High Ham beyond. This view has been omitted from the submitted LVIA.



Photographs have been stitched together to give an impression of the overall view. The red outline is for identification of the visible proposed development Site area in the view.



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Viewpoint 10 - Walton Hill

Open Access Viewpoint

Approximate Elevation: 81m AOD

Coordinates: E346749 N134954

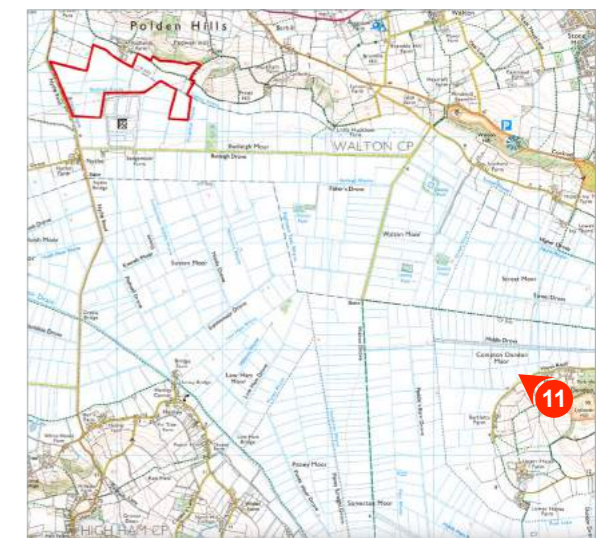
Direction of View: West

Distance from Site: 3.09kms

The overtly rural panoramic view from the popular viewpoint within the open access area at Walton Hill. The view over the moor with High Ham in the distance must be one of the best known and finest views in Somerset (even on a bad day). The existing adjacent solar park can be identified amongst vegetation. The proposed development Site would form a smaller part of the overall view but solar panels would be visible even at this distance of approximately 3kms as areas of glassy, grey-white mass similar to the existing solar park and in stark contrast to the surrounding pathwork of soft colours. This photograph identifies the extent of the proposed development Site within the view which is not indicated in the submitted LVIA.



Photographs have been stitched together to give an impression of the overall view. The red outline is for identification of the visible proposed development Site area in the view.



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Viewpoint 10 - Lollover Hill
Public Footpath

Approximate Elevation: 65m AOD
Coordinates: E347239 N132536
Direction of View: North West
Distance from Site: 4.40kms

The overtly rural panoramic view from the public footpath just below the Lollover Hill open access area. The popular hill affords stunning views over the moor and to the surrounding hills both north and south of the moor. The proposed development Site, whilst forming a smaller proportion of the view at this distance, would still be more prominent than the existing adjacent solar park site which can be identified in a stark, glassy, grey-white monotone colour contrasting with the natural and varied soft tones of the surrounding landscape. This view is not included within the submitted LVIA.

