

Ms Jeni Jackson,  
Head of Planning & Infrastructure,  
Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council,  
Civic Offices,  
London Road,  
Basingstoke,  
Hampshire.  
RG21 4AH.

11<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

**Complaint: Re Planning Application Consultation for 23/03012/FUL at Land At Hook Lane Malshanger Hampshire**

Dear Ms Jackson,

I write further to the above planning application, on behalf of Hannington Parish Council.

While I note the above application falls outside of our Parish boundaries, the proposed site of the solar energy farm is to be located upon neighbouring, agricultural land which borders parish residents living in Ibworth and at the White Lane junction, adjacent the Malshanger estate. As such, the application has come to their and my notice.

Since publication of the planning notice, a number of our council members have been contacted by at least 12 parish residents, to express concern and objection – and additionally to complain at the lack of wider publicity regarding this proposed development.

I draw your attention to the attached document, in which I summarise the different categories of complaint and comment our members have so far, received.

To date, we have advised these residents to contact you directly with any questions, and to register the objections they have communicated, either by email or letter or to make use of the BDBC planning portal (when it works). However, I look forward to your considered response to each point raised in the attached, so that we may reply properly to the queries our members have received.

In addition to the above, I would separately like to register my concern over the way in which this planning application was communicated.

I am aware from residents in the neighbouring parish of Wootton St Lawrence and Ramsdell, they were sent letters just before Christmas which referenced a deadline for objections of, 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024; an extraordinarily short period of time in which to gauge public opinion on a proposal which you must've known would be controversial.

Having enquired; it would appear, no resident of our Parish was written to by the borough council regarding this planning application and we as a parish council were also not notified of it via the usual planning-update email, our clerk receives.

I understand this planning application impacts the neighbouring parish of Oakley the most, which is also home to our parish clerk. Over the Christmas period, I am aware she spoke with friends and family in the village, and they also had not received letters regarding the proposed application.

I appreciate the above is a matter for Oakley Parish Council to raise, (if they wish), but I am nevertheless curious to know how, exactly, the borough council determines which residential areas to notify and consult with and which it ignores, as the methodology being used is not immediately obvious.

Our parish clerk contacted your planning office on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December, to query both the process and the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January deadline and was advised, the 2<sup>nd</sup> January date was in fact, not correct and the expiry date was as published on the website, (at the time, this was showing as 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024).

I note that you have since extended this deadline to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024.

While I welcome the longer consultation period – I would like to register our disappointment that both the parish council and the residents of the parish of Hannington, Ibworth & North Oakley, were excluded from your original communications. The many and varied expiry dates for the consultation period have also led to uncertainty and confused a lot of people.

It is not acceptable that we only learned of the application's existence by accident and your target audience for the purposes of notifying such a planning application ought to have been much broader.

While I do not anticipate that everyone living in our parish will necessarily object to the proposal – it is important they be included. I would therefore be grateful if you would please confirm the following:

- you will circulate an updated version of the letter, (originally sent to the residents of Wootton St Lawrence and selected Oakley parish residents), to the residents of neighbouring parishes including ours and further;
- you will extend the deadline to enable our residents to participate in the consultation, should they wish to do so;
- In the event of similar applications in the future which either neighbour or border our parish; you undertake to include our residents in your communications and to separately notify us, as a parish council.

On behalf of the parish council, - largely because of the experience I have described above, I must unfortunately register this council's objection to the proposed application.

Should you wish to discuss the issues I have raised in this letter further; please contact me on 07712 835245. I look forward to hearing from you.

Your sincerely,



Cllr. Alex Lowrie.

**Chair, Hannington Parish Council**

Cc. Cllr. Andrew McCormick, Chair, Development Control Committee, BDBC

Cc. Cllr. Mike Bound, Tadley North, Kingsclere & Baughurst.

/Encs.

**Summary: Comments & Concerns Received from Residents in response to:  
Planning Application Consultation for 23/03012/FUL at Land At Hook Lane Malshanger Hampshire**

1. Timing was designed to coincide with a holiday period with little or no interaction available with 3<sup>rd</sup> parties presumably with the goal of avoiding the level of scrutiny such a project would normally receive. This has raised issues of trust in the local community about the 'fit' in the environment and the potential precedent it may set for future more expansive projects.
2. It was not well advertised or publicised – low profile and low visibility. The notice was bent/arched, attached to one gate which is set back from the road.
3. Sacrificing 30 hectares of productive grade 3 agricultural land at a time when self-sufficiency in food products for human and animal consumption is so important.
4. The location is unspoiled countryside and part of the well-renowned Wayfarers walk - popular with walkers and wildlife enthusiasts and on the boundary of an AONB – there are plenty of more appropriate sites for the placement of solar farms, on brownfield sites, on existing built infrastructure or parallel to major roads and railways.
5. The many miles of cabling, including along the ancient historically important byway between Basingstoke and Kingsclere will cause irreparable damage to wildlife and plants.
6. The proposal appears to conflict with a number of the articles of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan Policy.
7. The proposal appears to conflict with a number of areas of the North Wessex Downs position statement on Renewable Energy.
8. What happens to the materials at end of life? There is no stated decommissioning plan. This 'renewable energy investment' may be passed between owners/shareholders over its stated 40-year lifespan during which the cost of the physical structures will amortise to the point where it will not be commercially viable to dispose of them so they will be left in situ with little or no purpose or value. Please confirm that there is a decommissioning plan in place and if not: one is going to be requested.
9. Although these projects are billed as sustainable/green and serve a purpose in reducing carbon emissions and global warming, do the companies behind this project and the materials and methods they use to extract raw materials and manufacture the solar panels and related equipment, meet basic ESG requirements? What due diligence is being planned by BDBC to properly scrutinise the 'green', sustainable and regenerative claims, made in the documentation?
10. Solar power in this part of the world is inefficient, and lags behind other sources of energy in effectiveness – how can these installations with the inherent disruption to communities and damage to the countryside be justified?
11. The estimated movement of 2 to 3 HGVs per hour for 12 months construction period will cause excessive disruption, inconvenience, and damage to the local community roads; cyclists, walkers, horse riders and drivers on the narrow winding lanes, and exacerbated general traffic congestion on connected feeder roads – It would make much more sense to route the entire production through the main entrance to the Malshanger Estate, off of Malshanger Lane.

-Ends-