

Reference number: 15/503884/FULL

I have been copied-in to letters to Members from Helen Grant MP and a local resident 'on behalf of residents opposed to Pullen Farm Solar Installation'.

Helen Grant underlines her objection to solar farms on farmland and the cumulative impact of such development in this area. Local residents are opposed to these developments. There is nothing to stop further applications after the temporary consent has elapsed and the site would effectively become 'brown-field'. Buildings should be used rather than agricultural land.

The local resident had objected previously and writes to underline objections expressed in the report, emphasising the view that the development is contrary to policy and government guidance; would be unlikely to be successfully used for sheep grazing; would have an adverse impact on the River Beult as an SSSI; would be harmful to the setting of heritage assets; would be harmful to the countryside; provides inadequate provision for decommissioning; and would lead to crime.

Following legal advice, I wish to amend my recommended condition 7: this is because the site of the construction compound and haul road are in Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's administrative area and the requirements of that condition should only relate to land within the control of this Council. Informal advice from TWBC officers indicates that they would recommend the imposition of a similarly worded condition on the parallel application (15/505149/FULL) that they are currently considering.

RECOMMENDATION: amend condition 7 to read:

'Only with regard to land within the Maidstone Borough Council administrative area: unless the Local Planning Authority gives its consent in writing to any variation, the development shall be constructed in accordance with the submitted 'Construction Traffic Management Plan: Revision D' (March 2015). Prior to the commencement of the development a Construction Method Statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. That Plan shall include timetabling for the removal of the compound and haul road and the restoration of the land to agricultural land. The development shall be constructed in accordance with the submitted Plan unless the Local Planning Authority gives its consent in writing to any variation;

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, residential amenity and visual amenity. These details are required prior to commencement because they are fundamental to the acceptability of the proposal overall.'