Advice from Climate Team to Planning

Reference: PL/2023/07269
Address: Land to the east and south of National Grid Minety substation, Minety, Malmesbury, Wiltshire SN16 9RP
Proposal: Installation of a grid connection cable route for an electrical connection between the approved Battery Storage Facility (Planning ref:20/07390/FUL) and National Grid Minety substation.

Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the relevant policies of the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (ref: Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). Section 19 of this Act places a legal duty on development plan documents, taken as a whole, to include policies designed to secure development that contributes to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.

Development Plan:

At paragraph 1.3 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) key principles that underpin the strategy to help build more resilient communities are identified including:

- *"Working towards lowering Wiltshire's carbon footprint through the appropriate location of development, and through renewable energy and sustainable construction."*

Paragraph 1.10 states: *"**The overarching priorities are to help build and protect resilient communities through….. tackling the causes and effects of climate change**"*

Paragraph 2.10 states: *"**Climate change is a central issue to be addressed by the WCS**….. The basis of this strategy is to achieve sustainable patterns of development in order to reduce carbon emissions."*

The WCS sets out that addressing climate change as a strategic objective stating at paragraph 3.5 that: ***"Climate change is possibly the greatest long-term challenge facing the world today."***

Core Policy 42 sets out that the principle of stand alone renewable energy projects is acceptable.

Other material considerations:

As set out above planning legislation establishes that **other material considerations** should be taken into account in the determination of planning applications. As such, these need to be kept in mind as developments are planned and formulated. Other material considerations may include other local planning policy and guidance, the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review, UK government legislation or Written Ministerial Statements and national planning policy and guidance such as the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Council is carrying out a **Local Plan Review**. A draft version has now been approved by cabinet and full council to proceed to the Regulation 19 stage of public consultation. This remains at a relatively early stage. A suite of ambitious new and replacement policies to further reduce Wiltshire's contribution to climate change and foster better community resilience to impacts from climate change are now emerging. The direction of travel is reflective of wider strategic policy already adopted by Wiltshire Council, such as the **Wiltshire Climate Strategy, adopted February 2022**. This builds on the Council's February

2019 resolution to acknowledge a **climate emergency and subsequent commitment to seek to make the county carbon neutral by 2030**.

To further underline this the **Climate change act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019** raised the **duty of the Secretary of State to ensure that the net UK carbon account for the year 2050 is at least 100% lower than the 1990 baseline** (previously 80%).

The **National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)** (NPPF) sets out the UK government's position on planning in England.

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states: *"The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development"* and paragraph 8 makes it clear that **mitigating and adapting to climate change is a core planning objective**.

Paragraph 152 states: *"The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate…. It should **help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions**, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure."*

In terms of the future national direction of travel the **10 Point Plan**, **Net Zero Strategy**, **Heat and Buildings Strategy** and the **Sixth Carbon Budget** are very clear. The intentions include:

- More renewable energy and storage technologies.

Comments on the proposal:

The climate team actively and strongly encourages developers of all scales to put the mitigation of and adaption to climate change as a golden theme to run through their development project. This will mean different things depending on the scale of the project, but to support the transition to a low carbon future, radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions over the existing status quo will be required.

This proposal in principle has addressing climate change at its heart. It is essential infrastructure associated with delivering a diversified energy supply and balancing the more intermitted renewable energy technologies to better match demand for energy. AS such, the proposal would accord with the principles of CP42, which support renewable energy and moreover would accord with the spatial object of the development plan to help address climate change.

The impacts on trees as part of this proposal are of course regrettable, partly because they are sequestrating carbon from the atmosphere. Any harmful impacts should be minimised. However, such impacts would be clearly outweighed by the benefit of the proposal, which is ultimately a part of the local puzzle for delivering more power through renewable energy sources via battery storage.

The co-benefits of this positive climate action include greater energy security. This also needs to be afforded positive weight in any planning balance.

Climate change is the central issue to be addressed by the development plan. The direction of travel since its adoption in 2015 is very clear with the Council's adopted Climate Strategy in 2022 setting a framework for reducing carbon emissions in Wiltshire and for making the county resilient to climate change. Furthermore, the NPPF states that planning needs to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

The climate team support this proposal.

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