



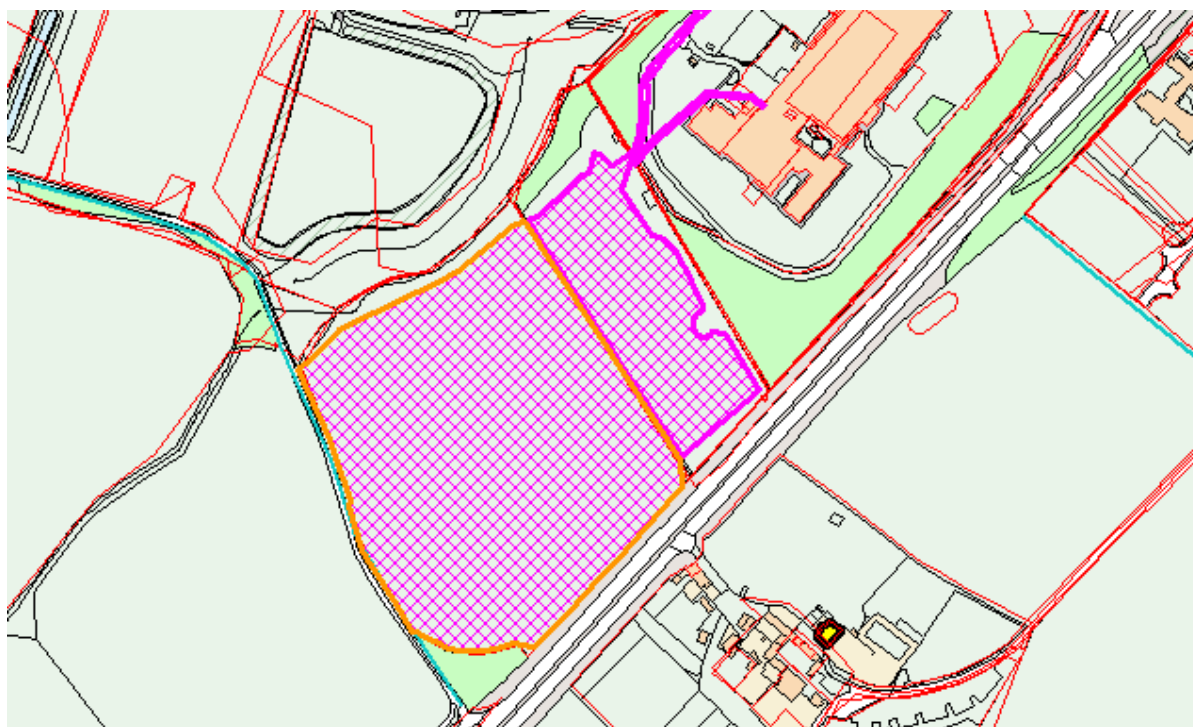
Northumberland

County Council

Strategic Planning Committee, 5th November 2023

Application No:	22/03576/RENE		
Proposal:	Change of use of agricultural land and construction of solar PV panels, associated electrical infrastructure, small operational and battery energy storage buildings, security fencing, CCTV, access tracks, landscaping, and other ancillary works.		
Site Address	Land Southwest of Quotient Sciences, South of Taylor Drive, Alnwick, Northumberland NE66 2DH		
Applicant:	Mr. Barry Spall Northumberland Estates, Estates Office, Alnwick Castle, Alnwick NE66 1NQ	Agent:	Mr. Barry Spall Northumberland Estates, Estates Office, Alnwick Castle, Alnwick NE66 1NQ
Ward	Alnwick	Parish	Alnwick
Valid Date:	19 October 2022	Expiry Date:	10 November 2023
Case Officer Details:	Name: Mr. David Love Job Title: Specialist Senior Officer Email: David.love@northumberland.gov.uk		

Recommendation: That this application be GRANTED permission subject to conditions.



1. Introduction

1.1 This application is currently recommended for approval subject to the agreement of conditions with National Highways. An official response from National Highways has confirmed that, given the changes to the proposals, they have no objection subject to conditions. These changes are reflected in the compliance with plans and details in condition two.

1.2 In addition to the NH response we also have a reply from the County Archaeologist. This confirms a position of no objection subject to condition six being amended to include archaeology considerations.

2. Planning Policy

6.1 Development Plan Policy

STP 1 - Spatial strategy (Strategic Policy)
STP 2 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development (Strategic Policy)
STP 3 - Principles of sustainable development (Strategic Policy)
STP 4 - Climate change mitigation and adaptation (Strategic Policy)
STP 5 - Health and wellbeing (Strategic Policy)
STP 6 - Green infrastructure (Strategic Policy)
ECN 1 - Planning strategy for the economy (Strategic Policy)
QOP 1 - Design principles (Strategic Policy)
QOP 4 - Landscaping and trees
TRA 1 - Promoting sustainable connections (Strategic Policy)
TRA 2 - The effects of development on the transport network
ENV 2 - Biodiversity and geodiversity
ENV 3 - Landscape
ENV 7 - Historic environment and heritage assets
WAT 3 - Flooding
POL 2 - Pollution and air, soil, and water quality
REN 1 - Renewable and low carbon energy and associated energy storage

6.2 National Planning Policy

NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework (2023)
NPPG - National Planning Practice Guidance (2021, as updated)

6.3 Neighbourhood Planning Policy

Alnwick & Denwick NP Policy ENV 10: Small scale renewable energy
Alnwick & Denwick NP Policy HD 1: Protecting landscape setting

6.4 Other Documents/Strategies

British Energy Security Strategy, 2023
UK Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order (2019)
Energy White Paper: Powering our net zero future (December 2020)
NCC's Climate Change Action Plan 2021-23
National Fire Chiefs Council letter: BESS, 22nd August 2023

3. Conclusion

3.1 Since the production of the original officer report confirmation has been received from National Highways confirming they offer no objection subject to conditions. The changes to address NH concerns can be summarised as a bunded along the boundary with the A1, an amended phasing plan that ensures the bund is in place prior to any works in the south west field and the agreement of maintenance conditions. It should be noted the applicant has agreed to these conditions.

3.2 For ease of reference this has resulted in condition seven being replaced and additional conditions 18 – 21. It should also be noted that condition six has been edited to include commentary on archaeology as per the County Archaeologist comment.

3.2 It is therefore considered that the proposal remains in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and policies of the Northumberland Local Plan

4. Recommendation

That this application be GRANTED permission subject to conditions.

Conditions.

01. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

Approved Plans and Details

02. The development to which this permission relates shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents referenced.

Approved Plans

Site Security, 1364-114 Rev E

PV Array (Option B: With BESS) 1364-113 Rev F

Proposed Planting Plan NT15295-016 Rev D

Sections 1364-131 Rev D

Elevations CCTV 1364-129 Rev C

Elevations Security Fencing 1364-128 Rev C

Existing Site Plan NT15292-015

Site Location – Aerial Imagery NT15292/002

Site Location – Ordnance Survey Background NT15292/001

Elevations Central Inverter 1364-122 Rev E

Elevations Private Substation 1364-124 Rev C

Elevations Aux Service Building 1364-125 Rev C

Elevations DNO Substation 1364-126 Rev C

Elevations Spares Store 1364-127 Rev D

Elevations Battery Container 1364-134 Rev B

Arboricultural Assessment

Arboricultural Method Statement for Trees on Land South of Arcinova Factory, Alnwick
Revision A, All About Trees, January 2023

Arboricultural Method Statement – Tree Protection Plan (AMS TPP Rev A)

Surface Water Management

Drawing Number NT15295-018 indicative surface water management plan Rev A dated 24/08/2023 produced by Wardell Armstrong

Document number 0002 Rev 3 Proposed Solar Farm at Land South of Arcinova, Alnwick Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy September 2023 by Wardell Armstrong

Landscape Mitigation

Northumberland Estates, Proposed Solar Farm at Land South of Alnwick, Landscape and Visual Appraisal, September 2023 – Wardell Armstrong

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning, and to achieve a satisfactory form of development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan.

03. Ecology

The development will be carried out in full accordance with the details of the reports and plans:

Tree Protection Plan (All About Trees, 15.09.2022)

Proposed solar PV photovoltaic (PV) development on land south of Arcinova, Alnwick Biodiversity Gain Assessment Report (BSG Ecology, February 2023)

Proposed solar PV photovoltaic (PV) development on land south of Arcinova, Alnwick Ecology Report (BSG Ecology, September 2022)

Proposed Planting Plan (Wardell Armstrong, September 2022)

Reason: to maintain and enhance the biodiversity value of the site in accordance with Policy ENV2 of the Northumberland Local Plan

04. Vegetation Erosion

Vegetation cover under the solar panels shall be present and maintained throughout the lifetime of development. Any erosion shall be rectified and made right.

Reason: To minimise the risk of soil erosion and reduce runoff rates.

05. SuDS Maintenance

Maintenance of grass filter strips and interception swales shall be undertaken throughout the lifetime of development.

Reason: To ensure that the scheme to dispose of surface water operates at its full potential throughout the development's lifetime.

06. Construction Method Statement (including Plan) (Amended)

Development shall not commence until a Construction Method Statement, together with supporting plans have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Construction Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Construction Method Statement and plan shall, where applicable, include details of but not exclusive to:

- i. site contact details - name, telephone number etc;
- li. details of temporary traffic management measures, temporary access, routes, and vehicles;
- lii. vehicle timings, types, and vehicle cleaning facilities;
- lv. the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
- v. the loading and unloading of plant and materials;

- vi. storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development.
- vii. Details on how the development intends to protect potential archaeological remains.

Reason: To prevent nuisance in the interests of residential amenity and highway safety, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy TRA2 of the Northumberland Local Plan.

07. Boundary treatment (Amended)

No panels shall be installed until a detailed boundary planting landscaping plan has been submitted for written prior approval of the planning authority in consultation with National Highways and Ecology. The detailed boundary planting plan shall identify species types, density of planting, confirmation of retention of all existing planting and ongoing maintenance for the lifetime of the solar panels. Once approved the boundary treatments shall be completed following the first available planting season following approval and maintained in perpetuity.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and highway safety, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy TRA1 of the Northumberland Local Plan.

08. Car Parking

The development shall not be brought into use until details of the car parking area have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and implemented in accordance with the approved details. Thereafter, the car parking area shall be retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy TRA4 of the Northumberland Local Plan.

09. Means of vehicular access from specified road

Means of vehicular access to the permitted development 'Change of use of agricultural land and construction of solar PV panels, associated electrical infrastructure, small operational and battery energy storage buildings, security fencing, CCTV, access tracks, landscaping and other ancillary works' shall be from the U3155 only.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy TRA2 of the Northumberland Local Plan.

10. Bespoke Deliveries and Servicing Management Strategy

The development shall not be brought into first use until a Deliveries and Servicing Management Strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Deliveries and Servicing Management Strategy shall be adhered to in perpetuity. This Deliveries and Servicing Management Strategy must include:

- i. details of the access, routes and vehicles associated with the site;
- li. details of the timings for deliveries and servicing of the site;
- lii. details of the annual numbers of HGV's associated with the deliveries/servicing of the site;
- lv. a plan for monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the Deliveries and Servicing Management Strategy, including details of management of decommissioning; and
- v. a scheme providing for a biennial monitoring report to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy TRA1 of the Northumberland Local Plan.

11. Lifespan

The development hereby permitted shall be for a temporary period only to expire 40 years and 6 months after the first export date of the development. Written confirmation of the first export date shall be provided to the local planning authority within one month after the event.

Reason: The development is not considered suitable for permanent retention and to enable the impacts to be assessed as to the impacts on the landscape character and visual amenity in accordance with Policy ENV 3 and Policy REN 1 of the Northumberland Local Plan

12. Operating Period

If the solar farm hereby permitted ceases to operate for a continuous period of 12 months, then a scheme for the decommissioning and removal of the solar farm and ancillary equipment together with the restoration of the site shall be submitted within 6 months of the end of the cessation period to the Local Planning Authority for written approval. The scheme shall make provision for:

- a. the removal of the solar panels and associated above ground works approved under this permission;
- b. the management and timing of any works;
- c. a traffic management plan to address traffic impact issues during the decommissioning period;
- d. an environmental management plan to include details of measures to be taken during the decommissioning period to protect wildlife and habitats;
- e. details of site restoration; and
- f. an implementation timetable.

The decommissioning of the site shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To ensure that the decommissioning and restoration of the site is carried out in a managed approach that minimises the impacts on the natural, built, and historic environment and upon highway safety in accordance with Policies REN 1, TRA 2 and ENV 1, ENV 2, ENV 3, ENV 4 and ENV 7 of the Northumberland Local Plan.

13. Decommissioning

Within a period of 39 years and 6 months following the first export date, a scheme for the decommissioning of the solar farm and its ancillary equipment and restoration of the site, shall be submitted to written approval by the Local Planning Authority (except in the event that Condition 4 has been triggered and decommissioning has been completed). The scheme shall incorporate the criteria set out within Condition 4 as a minimum. The decommissioning of the site shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To ensure that the decommissioning and restoration of the site is carried out in a managed approach that minimises the impacts on the natural, built, and historic environment and upon highway safety in accordance with Policies REN 1, TRA 2 and ENV 1, ENV 2, ENV 3, ENV 4 and ENV 7 of the Northumberland Local Plan.

14. Restoration

The solar farm and its ancillary equipment shall be dismantled and removed from the site and the land restored in accordance with the approved decommissioning and restoration scheme within a period of 40 years and 6 months following the first export date.

Reason: In the interests of natural, built, and historic environment in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy REN 1 of the Northumberland Local Plan.

15. Artificial Lighting

No external lighting (other than low level lighting required on ancillary buildings during occasional maintenance and inspection visits), or Floodlighting is permitted to be installed, used, or modified as part of the hereby approved development without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority. To apply for consent the operator must provide a detailed report of the proposed lighting which details:

- a. The specific location of all external lighting units;
- b. Design of all lighting units;
- c. Details of beam orientation and lux levels; and

Any proposed measures such as motion sensors and timers that will be used on lighting units

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against artificial light, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy POL 2 and Policy REN 1 of the Northumberland Local Plan.

16. Construction Hours

During the construction period, there should be no noisy activity, i.e., audible at the site boundary, on Sundays or Bank Holidays or outside the hours: Monday to Friday 0800 to 1800, and Saturday 0800 to 1300.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy POL 2 and Policy REN 1 of the Northumberland Local Plan.

17. Fire Safety and Pollution Prevention Plan

Prior to the installation of the lithium-ion battery storage facility the applicant shall submit a fire safety and pollution prevention plan with a strategy in place in the event that the lithium-ion batteries catch fire. This plan should demonstrate consistency with the National Fire Chiefs Council's guidance titled Planning Policy Guidance: Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), 22nd August 2023. Once approved the development shall be managed as per the details of this document.

Reason: In the interests of safety, pollution prevent and ensure consistency with PPG and policy ENV 2 of the Local Plan.

18. Construction and Maintenance Method Statement

Prior to the commencement of any works on-site a detailed construction and maintenance method statement shall be submitted for the prior written approval of the planning authority in consultation with National Highways and Highways Development Management. As a minimum this document shall include the following information and be supported by a detailed site plan showing routes, parking and loading / unloading

locations: i. vehicle cleaning facilities; ii. the on-site parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors; iii. the loading and unloading of plant and materials; iv. storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development; v. details of routes and traffic management requirements; vi. storage of materials and plant to be used throughout the construction period. Once approved the construction method statement shall be adhered to at all times through construction and maintenance operations.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy TRA2 of the Northumberland Local Plan.

Bunding Construction

19. Prior to the commencement of any works on site construction details of the bunding shown in the Wardell Armstrong - Proposed Planting Plan drawing, reference NT15295-016, revision D, dated 20/10/23, shall be submitted for the written prior approval of the planning authority in consultation with National Highways and Highways Development Management.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy TRA2 of the Northumberland Local Plan.

Timing of Phasing

20. No solar panels shall be installed in Phase 1B or Phase 2 of the application site's southwest field, as shown in the Cooper Energy Engineering – Site Plan – General Arrangement – PV Array (Option B: With BESS) drawing, reference 1364-113, revision F, dated 19/10/23, until such time as the bunding shown in the Wardell Armstrong - Proposed Planting Plan drawing, reference NT15295-016, revision D, dated 20/10/23, has been installed in its entirety and in accordance with the approved details. This bund shall be maintained in perpetuity. National Highways Planning Response (NHPR 22-12) December 2022

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy TRA2 of the Northumberland Local Plan.

Vehicular Access A1

21. No vehicular or other access is permitted between the development site and the adjacent southwest field. The development shall make no use of the adjacent field's farm track accessed from the layby on the A1 or make use of the layby on the A1 itself for the purpose of accessing the site.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy TRA2 of the Northumberland Local Plan.

Informative

Highway condition survey

You should note that a highway condition survey should be carried out before the commencement of demolition and construction vehicle movements from this site.

To arrange a survey, contact Highway Development Management at highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk

Reminder to not store building material or equipment on the highway

Building materials or equipment shall not be stored on the highway unless otherwise agreed. You are advised to contact the StreetWorks team on 0345 600 6400 for Skips and Containers licences.

Reminder to not deposit mud/ debris/rubbish on the highway

In accordance with the Highways Act 1980 mud, debris or rubbish shall not be deposited on the highway.

Section 59 Agreement - Extraordinary Expenses

You are advised to contact the Council's Highway Development Management team at highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk concerning the Section 59 Agreement of the Highway Act 1980 relating to extraordinary expenses

Date of Report: 2nd November 2023

Background Papers: Planning application file(s) 22/03576/RENE