



Supplement for

LOWLANDS AREA PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE - MONDAY, 7TH APRIL, 2025

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOWLANDS AREA PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

Date: 7th April 2025

Agenda Item 4.1 Addendum



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24/01565/FUL	University Farm, Witney Road, Hailey
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Officers insert the following addendum to the 'Other Matters' Section of the Committee Report (pg. 31):

With regard to the High Court judgment in R (Galloway) v Durham County Council [2024] EWHC 367, your officers note that the decision-maker must consider whether the footprint of the proposed solar panels is larger than required for a solar farm of that capacity ('overplanting'). Overplanting is a term used to describe the situation in which the maximum installed generating capacity of the solar generation facility is larger than facility's grid connection would allow. In this regard, your officers have reviewed Appendix 2 of the PDAS and consider that the degree of overplanting in this case has been clearly and reasonably justified, having regard to the constraints and context of the application site.

Quarry Solar Farm

RWE

April 2025

Dear Councillor,

On 7 April 2025, you will be asked to consider updated plans for Quarry Solar Farm, a solar farm with co-located energy storage to the north of Witney. This renewable energy project will help to unlock clean and renewable energy, delivering on West Oxfordshire District Council's net zero carbon emissions targets.

We are pleased to see that the planning application has an officer recommendation of provisional approval subject to the signing of a S.106 agreement.

In March 2023, JBM Solar was acquired by the RWE Group, the UK's leading power generator and a major player in the development, construction and operation of renewable energies and decarbonisation projects.

All feedback received from stakeholders, West Oxfordshire District Council and the community during the previous application's consultation and subsequent refusal last year has been considered with alterations made to address the relevant issues, following a further consultation in 2024 for the re-submission.



Quarry Solar Farm will deliver:



Enough solar energy to meet the annual needs of over 19,000 Oxfordshire homes.



The ability for over 95% of the site to be used for sheep grazing and remain in agricultural use.



New green infrastructure such as the enhancement of one existing public right of way access and two permissive paths, outdoor picnic areas, an outdoor classroom and an educational trail.



New wildflower meadows and grassland areas resulting in a biodiversity net gain of over 104%.



A community benefit fund of up to £462,000 to support sustainable initiatives locally.



Battery storage to help balance the grid network and store electricity at low-demand times so it can be used when demand is high and not enough solar is being generated.

How we have listened

We are committed to ensuring that these plans benefit the local community. As a result, we have held two rounds of public engagement, most recently in February 2024, following the refusal of the initial application in 2023. As a result of the feedback we received, both from the public and from the Council we made the following changes to the proposals:

- Increased setbacks from the Hailey Conservation Area and the listed building nearby.
- Reducing panelled areas to reduce visual impact along Downhill Lane, New Yatt Road and the public right of way to the north of the site.
- A new woodland belt along the proposed permissive path.
- Reinstatement of historic hedgerows, helping to create larger separation between footpath and panels.
- New native hedgerow to enhance screening along Downhill Lane.

FAQs

Is solar expensive?

Not at all. Solar provides the cheapest electricity in history, far cheaper than gas or nuclear. The energy price crisis has made the case for solar even stronger.

How much space will solar farms take up?

Very little. Even under the UK Government's target to become net zero by 2050, solar farms would occupy 0.5% of the UK's land. That covers less land than is currently used by golf courses.

Are solar farms good for farmers?

Solar farms provide valuable income for farmers. They ensure that farmers have financial security through difficult times and that long term food production can continue on farms which may not otherwise be able to operate.

Does land used for solar farms reduce food security?

No. The land can still be used for pastoral farming, such as sheep grazing, and can support farmers to continue food production on other parts of their land.

What consideration is given to the local landscape?

We work closely with communities to ensure that our solar farms blend in and restore traditional meadows and hedgerows. The maximum height of our panels are three metres - the equivalent of a well-maintained hedgerow.

Will the proposals have a noise impact when operational?

The only items which generate noise are the inverters and batteries, which are located in the centre of the site and away from houses. A full noise assessment has been included within our planning application.

Will there be much disturbance during construction?

We are confident that construction traffic can be managed effectively. The details of this will be set out and agreed in a construction traffic management plan prior to development.

Will there be fencing around the site?

Yes, we will install a deer fence around the site in order to keep it secure. The fencing will include gates that allow small animals to pass through.

Does manufacturing solar panels produce more carbon than they save in their lifetime?

No. Solar projects save vast amounts of carbon emissions over their lifetime. Research shows their carbon payback time is 1-4 years and that they generate a hundred times more energy than it takes to make them over a 40-year warranty period.

Are solar panels recyclable?

Certainly. Up to 99% of materials in a solar panel are recyclable. All of which can be extracted, separated, recycled or reused. Solar panels are built to last and can function for decades.

What the community said

As part of our engagement exercise in 2024, we asked people for their thoughts on a range of issues. This is what they said:

74%

said that they recognised the need for the UK to move away from fossil fuel usage.

77%

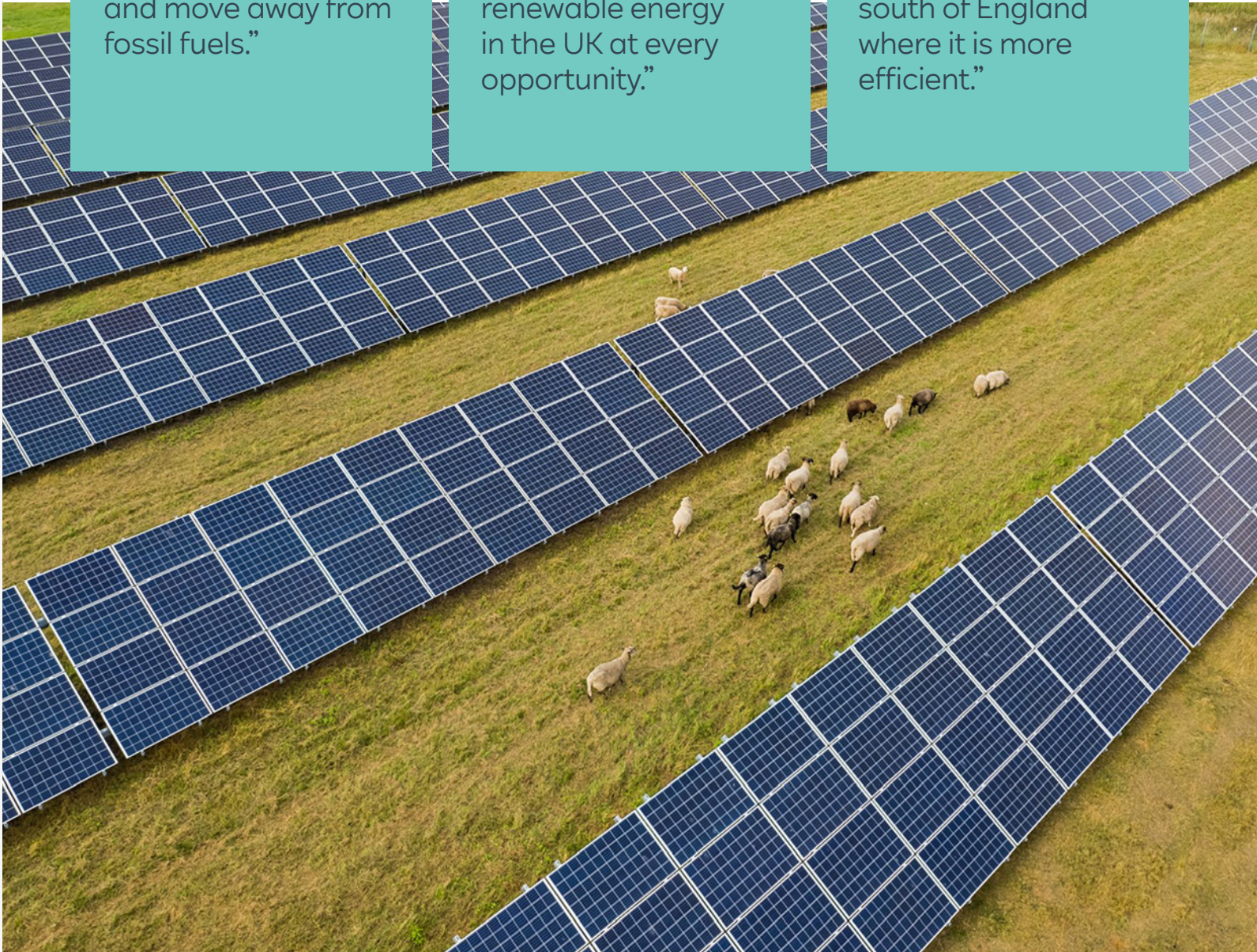
recognised the need for greater energy security in the UK.

Comments include:

"We need to generate clean energy rapidly and move away from fossil fuels."

"I am strongly in favour of adding renewable energy in the UK at every opportunity."

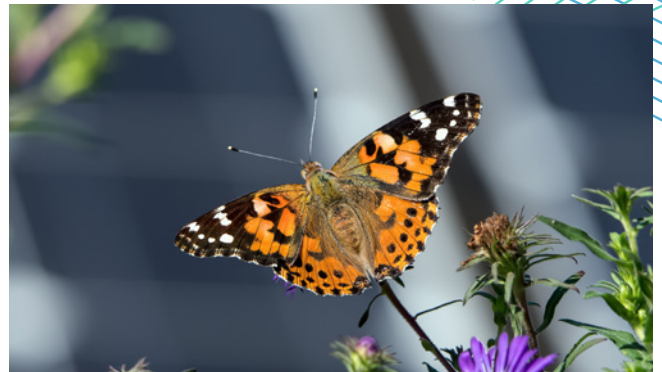
"We need more solar especially in the south of England where it is more efficient."



Who is RWE?

RWE is one of the UK's largest power providers, supplying around 15% of UK electricity. We are a key partner in the decarbonisation of the UK's power sector and the transition towards a secure, clean and affordable energy system. In the UK, RWE expects to invest up to £15 billion in new green technologies and infrastructure by 2030, directly employing around 2,600 people, plus many more indirectly. RWE's significant prowess in building and operating power generation projects provides enough electricity to power more than 14 million UK homes.

RWE



Contact us



If you have any questions or would like to speak to the project team, please do get in touch:

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