

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOWLANDS AREA PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

Date: 27th May 2025

Report of Additional Representations



**WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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24/01565/FUL	University Farm Witney Road Hailey
25/00244/FUL	Rainbow Farm Buckland Road Bampton

Report of Additional Representations

Application Number	24/01565/FUL
Site Address	University Farm Witney Road Hailey Witney Oxfordshire OX29 9UH
Date	23 rd May 2025
Officer	James Nelson
Officer Recommendations	Provisional Approval
Parish	Hailey Parish Council
Grid Reference	435497 E 211865 N
Committee Date	27th May 2025

Application Details:

Installation and operation of a renewable energy generating station comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays and battery-based electricity storage containers together with a switchgear container, inverter/transformer units, site access, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure and landscaping and biodiversity enhancements.

Applicant Details:

Bente Klein
Windmill Hill Business Park
Whitehill Way
Swindon
Wiltshire
SN5 6PB

Additional Representations

- I. Additional comments on the Transport Technical Note received by the LPA on 15.05 have been received from Oliver Eden (Transport Development Lead (West)) on behalf of OCC Transport which state:

“Further to the deferral from the previous committee meeting to allow further consideration of construction access routes I have reviewed the proposals again along with the additional information provided by the applicant.

As a general principle is preferable where possible to use the shortest route between the site and the principal road network as that allows for any mitigation/management measures to be concentrated where they are most effective. However, each site is individual and has specific circumstances and so alternatives should be considered.

The applicant has provided a note which has considered alternative routes via the B4022, both to the north via Charlbury and south through Witney.

Route 2 (B4022 North)

The B4022 and B4437 are generally suitable for local HGV traffic however due to the historic nature of the roads there are areas where HGVs are likely to conflict with other traffic. There is a greater distance between the B4022 and the site access where HGVs would need to use minor roads.

One option is via Ramsden - the junction with the B4022 is very tight for HGVs to use and the road narrows away from the junction to less than 5.5m which will be difficult for large vehicles to pass each

other. Within the village the lack of footways and sporadic on street parking create risks to other road users that would be difficult to manage.

The alternative route via Poffley End bypasses Ramsden however the majority of the route between the B4022 and site is too narrow for two large vehicles to pass without mounting the verge/kerb.

This route will also be hard to enforce. Third party contractors that have a departure/destination from the West, South and East (ie all main route other than A44 north) will be tempted to travel through Witney (see route 3) rather than undertake a significantly longer route.

Route 3 (B4022 south)

In addition to the constraints and Poffley End this route takes HGVs through Witney via West End and the Staple Hall mini roundabouts. HGVs cannot undertake a number of turning movements at the mini roundabouts due to the narrow width and other vehicles waiting at the give way lines. The applicant's note identifies that this could be made possible with mitigation measures such as temporary lights. I anticipate however that traffic capacity would be significantly reduced and would likely lead to very significant delays on all routes approaching the junction and likely elsewhere in the town as traffic re-routes. Most major bus routes serving Witney and the surrounding areas pass through this junction and would be significantly impacted, particularly the key A40 corridor services.

In summary whilst recognising that there will inevitably be some level of disruption experienced during construction the original option 1 route via North Leigh is the preferred option from those available. It has the advantage of being the shortest route to the major road network and so most likely to be observed and whilst there are sections that require additional measures to ensure safe operation, these are defined single width sections and over a relatively short distance rather than longer distances of narrow carriageway where it is harder to control interactions between HGV vehicles delivering to/from site and other traffic. I recommend that a CTMP condition is applied that will need to be discharged prior to commencement. I would expect that a specialist logistics company will be appointed to assist with construction who will be able to advise the applicant on specific details to discharge the condition and will likely have experience of similar locations. I am satisfied that with suitable traffic management such as warning signage, temporary lights and potentially escort vehicles the construction traffic can be suitably managed for the duration of the build."

2. One additional third party representation has been received in objection to the scheme from Mr. Neil Roberts of Wychwood Barn, New Yatt Road Witney which states:

"In response to the recent additional information provided, I have further objections to the proposals (please see my earlier comments also).

Firstly, I am concerned that the proposed solar panels are going to be far more visible than is suggested by the documentation and that they will have a significant visual impact - both on homes close to the site, as well as long distance views in the wider landscape.

An important point to note is that the site is not flat but slopes up to the north making portions of it much more prominent.

The supplied ZTV "Zone of Theoretical Visibility" diagram identifies an assumed building height of 3m - the panels shown on plan are 6m deep - these would be as large as typical house roofs and, based on measurement of the supplied plan, cover an area of approximately 24.5 hectares (approx. a quarter of a million square meters).

I assume that the ZTV analysis uses a 3D surface terrain model for reference - surface features such as vegetation are treated as opaque solids which obscure the line of sight - as such, it may be inaccurate. In reality, any screening of solar panels by foreground vegetation may only be partial - reflected sunlight from the panels is bound to be visible though gaps in leaves and branches.

It is of note that the some of the colours on this diagram are very feint and thus diminish the apparent extent of the wider area visibility.

The photographic viewpoints supplied are selective and do not address all of the potential significant viewpoints. For example, the long range view to the site from Burford Road is not covered. I suspect the site will be ever present in the wider landscape as it catches the sun at various times of day.

Secondly, in terms of construction access, the proposed route through North Leigh and New Yatt looks to be completely unsuitable.

The New Yatt Road is a narrow country lane used by recreational users as well as regular ordinary traffic.

The 18 wheel articulated lorries indicated will have to negotiate through the pinch points in North Leigh and several tight bends along the New Yatt Road.

Although trucks may fit down the road in theory, they will have to share it with other existing road users.

Not all of the bends on the route are shown in the diagrams - there are four further bends through New Yatt that are not shown - plus a further blind bend on a steep slope along the New Yatt Road at the southern end of the route.

It is apparent that lorries will have to regularly cross the centre line of the road to navigate the route - this is not safe.

In summary, I would like to reiterate that I think this scheme will have a significant detrimental affect on the character and quality of the landscape setting with a resulting negative impact upon the adjacent settlements - I note that the previous iteration of this application was refused on similar grounds.

There are far better places to locate solar panels that would be far more suitable - roofs of industrial buildings, shade structures over car parks and old airfields, to name but a few."

Application Number	25/00244/FUL
Site Address	Rainbow Farm Buckland Road Bampton Oxfordshire OX18 2AA
Date	23 rd May 2025
Officer	Clare Anscombe
Officer Recommendations	Refuse
Parish	Bampton Parish Council
Grid Reference	432650 E 202161N
Committee Date	27th May 2025

Application Details:

Construction of a detached building for use as a fitness suite and wellness hub, along with associated car parking facilities and formation of a new access onto the highway

Applicant Details:

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Dodd Fit
Rainbow Farm
Buckland Road
Bampton
Oxfordshire
OX18 2AA

Additional Representations

- I. Following correspondence from the applicant's agent requesting that the application be withdrawn, the application is withdrawn from the committee schedule.