



National Highways Planning Response (NHPR 22-12) Formal Recommendation to an Application for Planning Permission

From: Victoria Lazenby (Regional Director)
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Midlands Region
National Highways
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To: Newark & Sherwood District Council

CC: transportplanning@dft.gov.uk
spatialplanning@nationalhighways.co.uk

Council's Reference: 23/01837/FULM

Location: Land to the West of Main Street Kelham

Proposal: Proposed ground mounted photo voltaic solar farm and battery energy storage system with associated equipment, infrastructure, grid connection and ancillary work.

National Highways Ref:

Referring to the consultation on a planning application dated **1st November 2023** referenced above, in the vicinity of the **A46 and A1 trunk roads** that form part of the Strategic Road Network, notice is hereby given that National Highways' formal recommendation is that we:

- ~~a) offer no objection (see reasons at Annex A);~~
- ~~b) recommend that conditions should be attached to any planning permission that may be granted (see Annex A – National Highways recommended Planning Conditions & reasons);~~
- c) recommend that planning permission not be granted for a specified period (see reasons at Annex A);
- ~~d) recommend that the application be refused (see reasons at Annex A)~~

Highways Act 1980 Section 175B is not relevant to this application.¹

This represents National Highways' formal recommendation and is copied to the Department for Transport as per the terms of our Licence.

Should the Local Planning Authority not propose to determine the application in accordance with this recommendation they are required to consult the Secretary of State for Transport, as set out in the [Town and Country Planning \(Development Affecting Trunk Roads\) Direction 2018](#), via transportplanning@dft.gov.uk and may not determine the application until the consultation process is complete.

The Local Planning Authority must also copy any consultation under the 2018 Direction to PlanningM@nationalhighways.co.uk.

Signature:

Date: 20 May 2024



Name: Catherine Townend

Position: Spatial Planner

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¹ Where relevant, further information will be provided within Annex A.

Annex A National Highway's assessment of the proposed development

This response represents our formal recommendations and has been prepared by Catherine Townend, Spatial Planner for National Highways.

National Highways (formally Highways England) has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as a strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the Strategic Road Network (SRN). The SRN is a critical national asset and as such we work to ensure that it operates and is managed in the public interest, both in respect of current activities and needs as well as in providing effective stewardship of its long-term operation and integrity.

National Highways considers planning applications for new developments under the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and DfT Circular 01/2022: The Strategic Road Network and The Delivery of Sustainable Development ("the Circular"). The latter document sets out our policy on sustainable development and our approach to proposals which may have an impact on our network.

The SRN in the vicinity of the proposed development is the A46 and A1 trunk roads.

Development Proposal

The development proposal is for a solar farm and battery energy storage system with an export capacity of 49.9MW of electricity. The site measures approximately 65 ha and is located to the west of the village of Kelham, near Newark, Nottinghamshire.

The site is approximately 2.5km from the nearest access onto the SRN at the A46/A617 roundabout. The A1 trunk road is approximately 4.5 km to the east of the site.

National Highways has not been consulted on any pre-application for this proposal.

Previous Responses – November 2023 & February 2024

Access

The immediate vehicular access is proposed to be taken from the A617. National Highways is not responsible for this road and as such we have no comments to make on this access proposal.

Traffic Impact – Operational Phase

It is understood that once operational, the site will be managed remotely with monthly maintenance checks. National Highways considers that the traffic impact on our network once operational will be negligible and we have no further comments to make.

Traffic Impact – Construction Phase

According to the Transport Statement, construction is expected to take place during the hours of 0800 to 1800 (Monday to Friday) and 0800 to 1600 hours (Saturday), with deliveries arriving between those times. Construction is expected to last around 6 to 12 months with the majority of vehicle movements carried out within the first six months.

The TS suggests that approximately 790 deliveries will take place between the first six months of construction, constituting 1,580 individual vehicles movements. The highest number of deliveries is expected to take place in the first month (225 deliveries). The transport statement has equated this to approximately five deliveries per day (10 vehicle movements), based on a six-day working week.

The TS does not contain any further detail relating to the routing of construction traffic however we have reviewed the Technical Note dated 8th February 2024 which includes a traffic routing map. With regards to HGV movements, we consider that these are unlikely to impact the SRN.

In terms of staff movements, the Transport Statement states that construction will employ approximately 50 staff members who will be transported to/from the site in a 'crew cab'. Our previous response requested more information on this matter. We do not consider that the February 2024 Technical Note satisfactorily addresses this point.

At present, without further evidence/detail as set out above, it is unclear how traffic generation associated with the construction of this development will impact the SRN.

Abnormal Loads

The Transport Statement does not refer to the need for abnormal loads movements. Nonetheless, the applicant should be made aware of National Highways process for managing the movement of abnormal loads on our network. More information on this can be found [here](#).

Construction Traffic Management Plan

A construction traffic management plan should be submitted by the applicant which clearly sets out how the impact of construction traffic on the surrounding highway network will be managed and minimised. We consider that this should be submitted prior to planning consent.

Boundary and other impacts

The site does not share a common boundary with the SRN and as such, we have no comments to make on potential boundary issues.

Notwithstanding this, National Highways are currently planning major improvement works to the A46 Newark bypass which will widen the existing single carriageway to a dual carriageway, to provide two lanes in each direction between Farndon and Winthorpe roundabouts.

In connection with these improvements, National Highways' A46 Newark Bypass project team are planning some flood plain compensation works which are adjacent to the solar farm site. In light of this, the team have been engaging with the relevant landowners and Assured Asset Solar 2 Ltd (AAS2), promoting the solar farm development.

These discussions have resulted in an outline Heads of Terms being developed between the landowner, AAS2 and National Highways to ensure that the A46 Newark Bypass project does not prevent them from carrying out their works and vice versa. As construction programmes are further developed, agreements for construction access will be reached during future engagement between both parties.

As such when other outstanding matters mentioned earlier are resolved, we will be requesting that any planning consent makes reference to the Heads of Terms with National Highways, as described above.

Updated response – May 2024

We have received no further consultation materials since our previous response of February 2024. As such, our above comments are unchanged.

Summary and Recommendation

The remaining outstanding for National Highways are further consideration of construction worker traffic, and the completion of a Construction Traffic Management Plan.

In light of the above, **we recommend that this planning application not be determined for a period of three months from the date of this letter** whilst further information is provided.

Standing advice to the local planning authority

The Climate Change Committee's [2022 Report to Parliament](#) notes that for the UK to achieve net zero carbon status by 2050, action is needed to support a modal shift away from car travel. The NPPF supports this position, with paragraphs 73 and 105 prescribing that significant development should offer a genuine choice of transport modes, while paragraphs 104 and 110 advise that appropriate opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport should be taken up.

Moreover, the build clever and build efficiently criteria as set out in clause 6.1.4 of [PAS2080](#) promote the use of low carbon materials and products, innovative design solutions and construction methods to minimise resource consumption.

These considerations should be weighed alongside any relevant Local Plan policies to ensure that planning decisions are in line with the necessary transition to net zero carbon.