

REPORT TO:	PLANNING COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 5
DATE OF MEETING:	31 MAY 2022	CATEGORY: Delegated
REPORT FROM:	HEAD OF PLANNING AND STRATEGIC HOUSING	RESTRICTED
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	JENNY BLAIR JENNY.BLAIR@SOUTHDERBYSHIRE.GOV.UK	DOC:
SUBJECT:	NSIP CONSULTATION FOR OAKLANDS SOLAR FARM	REF: DMOT/2022/0585
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	LINTON AND SEALES	TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Committee raise any matters for the consultation response to the Head of Planning and Strategic Housing during this Committee, or in time for the 6th June 2022 deadline.

2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1 This report has been written to consider a consultation response to the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) called Oaklands Solar Farm, which is a proposal to develop a solar farm of 163MW of solar power, and 37.5MW of energy storage capacity, in the general location of south of Drakelow, east of Walton on Trent, west of Rosliston and north of Coton in the Elms.

3. Background

- 3.1 NSIPs were introduced by the Government through the Planning Act 2008 in the fields of energy, transport, water, wastewater and waste. Due to the scale of these applications, they do not follow the usual planning application process, but go through a Development Consent Order (DCO) process whereby the application is made directly to the Planning Inspectorate. The District Council is therefore a consultee in the process rather than the decision-making authority.
- 3.2 This NSIP is at the 'pre-application' stage, and the formal statutory consultation was launched on 21st April 2022 and runs until 6th June 2022. The main document for consultation is the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) which is available to view on the BayWa r.e. website (the applicant).
[Oaklands Solar Farm – BayWa r.e. \(baywa-re.co.uk\)](https://www.baywa-re.co.uk)

4.0 Discussion

- 4.1 Once the application is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, the District Council has obligations to provide further comments including a Local Impact Report. Due to the work involved, the District Council intend to work jointly with Derbyshire County Council to share technical expertise. At this stage also, a response is required from South Derbyshire County Council, and it is currently intended that this will be submitted jointly with Derbyshire County Council.
- 4.2 South Derbyshire District Council are therefore invited to submit comments on the current consultation including the PEIR. Technical opinions from officers within the Council such as Environmental Health, Conservation Officer and Biodiversity Officer have been sought, and are in the process of being compiled. At this stage, more detail may be required for technical specifics to be commented upon.
- 4.3 Matters relating to highways, landscape and flood risk, will be picked up by the County Council, as the joint response is made.
- 4.4 Officers are aware that there is likely to be a mix of views coming through the consultation response, given the conflict between renewable energy being something the Council would likely support in principle in terms of its commitment to tackling climate change, balanced against the impact upon the locality itself in terms of visual impact and potential highway impact during construction, amongst others matters.
- 4.5 Members are also advised that they and their constituents are able to make their own representations to the consultation should they wish to do so.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 Given the tight timescales involved and the joint response with Derbyshire County Council, a draft response is not available to view, however, members are asked to consider this consultation and feedback any comments they may have in time for the 6th June deadline.

6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 None

7.0 Corporate Implications

- 7.1 The proposal would contribute towards the key aim of the Corporate Plan to tackle climate change. However, it is acknowledged that there may be mixed views on the attractiveness of solar farms and therefore there is potential conflict with the key aim of the Corporate Plan to enhance the attractiveness of South Derbyshire.

8.0 Community Implications

- 8.1 The required public consultation is currently underway.