

TECHNICAL NOTE

Project Title:	Beane Solar Farm
Report Reference:	794-PLN-TRP-JNY11727-04
Date:	10 th June 2025

Beane Solar Farm Technical Note

Introduction

- 1.1 This Technical Note has been prepared by RPS to address comments recently received from Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Highways, on two RPS reports produced to support a planning application (East Hertfordshire District Council Planning Application Reference 3/24/2245/FUL) for the installation and operation of a solar farm including co-located energy storage facilities, onsite substation, ancillary infrastructure and landscaping, on land to the West of the A507 between Cottered and Cromer, Hertfordshire.
- 1.2 It should be noted that a Technical Note (RPS Report Reference 794-PLN-TRP-JNY11727-01a) was undertaken for the purposes of obtaining Highways Pre-Application Advice from Hertfordshire County Council (HCC). The Technical Note sought feedback on the initial access considerations to the development from HCC.
- Highways Pre-Application Advice was received from HCC, with a response dated 11th July 2024.
 A copy of the response is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.4 Based on the Highways Pre-Application Advice received, a Transport Statement (TS) (RPS Report Reference JNY11727-02B) and a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) (RPS Report Reference JNY11727-03B) were submitted to HCC, which provide further information regarding the development proposals, and addressed the points raised in the Highways Pre-Application Advice response.
- 1.5 HCC provided a written response, dated 23rd January 2025, to the documents submitted in support of the planning application.
- 1.6 The HCC recommendation as detailed in their response is as follows:

"Notice is given under article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority recommends that permission be refused for the following reasons:

1) The application lacks sufficient information to correctly assess the highway matters for the site to ensure that it meets standards and is acceptable and



safe. This therefore means that it has the potential to conflict with policies stipulated in Hertfordshire County Councils Local Transport Plan (Policy 5) (adopted 2018) and the National Planning Policy Framework (Policy 116)."

1.7 A copy of the comments are attached at **Appendix 2**, and the comments raised by HCC in response to the TS and CTMP are detailed below.

HCC Consultee Comments

Construction Traffic Management Plan and Highway Drawings

HCC Consultee Comment

1.8 The HCC Highways comments are as follows with regard to the CTMP:

"3.8 - This section states "Delivery vehicles are likely to attend the site for approximately one hour per vehicle. There will be sufficient space within the site along the access track as well as the curtilage of the temporary construction compounds to ensure that no vehicles would have to wait on the surrounding highway network."

However, Drawing number 05003-RES-ACC-DR-PT-001 Rev 3 (Site entrance layout) illustrates a 4 metre internal access route width which is not wide enough to even allow two vans to pass one another let along large HGV's. This causes grave safety concerns that vehicles may have to wait within the highway network to enter the site when vehicles are exiting which is not acceptable."

RPS Response

- 1.9 With regard to the access track, it should be noted that paragraph 4.15 of the CTMP states that construction HGVs will be subject to a booking system with fixed arrival times. A banksperson will be situated at the access to assist HGVs in accessing and egressing the site and will only instruct HGVs to depart the site when the major road is clear of traffic within the vicinity of the site access and it is safe to do so. All arrivals will be known in advance as part of the HGV booking system, and all departing HGV movements will be managed on-site to ensure no departing HGVs meet an arriving HGV through the access junction.
- 1.10 The construction compound will accommodate a waiting HGV. HGVs will not be able to depart from the construction compound if another HGV is scheduled for arrival, so the two vehicles do not meet on the internal access track or through the access junction.
- 1.11 Paragraphs 3.10 to 3.15 of the CTMP detail the construction staff movements. It should be noted that construction staff will typically arrive in teams of up to 10 persons in working 10-person minivans, as per most construction sites.
- 1.12 Car sharing promotion by the contractor will reduce the number of cars, and this will be achieved through management of staff travel patterns and actively encouraging car sharing as set out in Section 6 of the CTMP.



1.13 Paragraph 3.14 of the CTMP states that all staff are anticipated to arrive at the construction site during the 30-minute period preceding the start of the operating day (i.e. 07:30 to 08:00 Monday to Saturday) and depart during the 30-minute period that follows the end of the operating day (i.e. 18:00 to 18:30 Monday to Friday and 13:00 to 13:30 on Saturdays). As such, there will not be any conflicting movements associated with staff arrivals and departures.

HCC Consultee Comment

"4.9, 4.16, 4.17 - Any temporary signage to be installed on the public highway will require prior approval from the HA. This needs to be included in wording."

RPS Response

1.14 The temporary signage to be implemented on the public highway will be agreed with HCC Highways prior to installation.

HCC Consultee Comments

"- Extra information is needed on the use of stop/go boards including frequency, times they will be used, is there a proposal to hold traffic, how will operatives communicate?

- If accepted the use of stop/go boards will require an approved permit from the HA."

RPS Response

- 1.15 The Principal Contractor will erect temporary signage utilising existing street furniture, at locations to be agreed between the Principal Contractor and HCC prior to installation.
- 1.16 Bankspersons will be situated at both accesses on Cromer Heath to assist construction vehicles in accessing and egressing the northern and southern portions of the Site. Paragraph 4.21 of the CTMP states that stop / go boards will also be utilised to hold traffic along Cromer Heath, to enable construction vehicles to travel between the Northern and Southern parcels, as shown on **Figure 1.**
- 1.17 The stop / go boards arrangement will be deployed in accordance with Chapter 8 of the Traffic Signs Manual (DfT / Highways Agency, 2009). Bankspersons will radio to the other bankspersons on site to coordinate the movement of construction vehicles along Cromer Heath.
- 1.18 It should also be noted that all construction work will be conducted between 08:00 and 18:00 hours Monday to Friday with limited construction activities on Saturdays between 08:00-13:00, as stated in paragraph 2.9 of the CTMP. The stop / go boards arrangement would only be deployed when a construction vehicle needs to travel along Cromer Heath during these hours. A permit will be obtained from HCC by the Principal Contractor.





Figure 1: Traffic Management Between the Northern and Southern Parcels for Construction Vehicles

1.19 The configuration and management of the Cromer Heath crossing will manage the potential conflict between users of the highway and construction vehicles travelling along Cromer Heath, by preventing an emerging HGV crossing from one portion of the construction site to another, if a vehicle is travelling along Cromer Heath.

HCC Consultee Comment

"5.5 - information needs to be provided on measures that will be in place to protect the PROW

- There needs to be before and after photos.
- The CMP lacks information around delivery times."

RPS Response

- 1.20 Regarding the PRoW, paragraphs 5.4 and 5.5 of the CTMP state that fencing will be erected around the construction site to segregate users of the PRoW from the construction area (both existing and proposed should they be implemented prior to construction).
- 1.21 Paragraph 5.5 of the CTMP states that a banksperson will be situated where the construction track crosses the PRoW. The banksperson will hold back HGVs whilst there are users of the PRoW within the vicinity of the construction site. Users of a PRoW will have priority where construction HGVs have to route across the path of a PRoW.



- 1.22 Suitable fencing and signage would be erected, where appropriate, to form a safe corridor for users of the PRoW. It is envisaged that this fencing would be in the form of 2.45m high tensile fixed knot fencing; however, the Contractor will be responsible for the procurement of the fencing and crossing infrastructure, and this will be implemented during the temporary construction period.
- 1.23 The site manager will be responsible for photographing all PRoW within the site prior to construction, and once the site is operational. All photos will be made available to HCC.
- 1.24 It should also be noted that all construction work will be conducted between 08:00 and 18:00 hours Monday to Friday with limited construction activities on Saturdays between 08:00-13:00, as stated in paragraph 2.9 of the CTMP. No construction activities will take place on a Sunday or Bank Holiday. As such, construction activities seek to avoid the busiest times for recreational users of the PRoW where possible.

HCC Consultee Comment

"- As per figure 3 the largest vehicle to the site will be a 17.8 metre crane which would need to be tracked using a swept path to ensure that it can reach and access the site.

RPS Response

- 1.25 A swept path analysis has been undertaken of a 17.8m crane accessing the site from the east via the A10, as this is the shortest route on the A507 of approximately 5.2km and a signposted route to the A10.This route also avoids Baldock to the northwest of the site. The swept paths are attached at **Appendix 3**, which demonstrate that a crane can travel safety along the proposed access route.
- 1.26 There will only be one entry movement, and one exit movement, of a vehicle of this size during the construction period.

HCC Consultee Comment

- Drawing number 05003-RES-ACC-DR-PE-003 Rev 1 and 05003-RES-ACC-DR-PE-004 Rev 1 illustrates a 16.5 metre lorry entering from Cromer Heath which is not suitable for such a vehicle. The CMP says that this access will not be used by HGV's - this needs to be clarified.

RPS Response

1.27 Paragraph 4.5 of the CTMP states that construction materials will all enter the site via the A507 access into the northern parcel, and materials designated for the southern parcel will be transhipped onto smaller vehicles (e.g. tractor and trailers, or light goods vehicle) within the temporary construction compound (west from the A507). From here, they will be moved internally within the site, and to the southern compound for storage and transit between the northern and southern land parcels via tractor and trailer along Cromer Heath. This approach will reduce / minimise the distance travelled by construction HGVs along constrained sections of the public highway, and appropriate traffic management measures can be adopted where necessary.



1.28 A swept path of a tractor and trailer moving through the southern access, to and from the north, is shown at **Appendix 4.**

HCC Consultee Comment

- There is significant concern with construction vehicles exiting the site and driving North West along the A507. Parts of this route is deemed to not be acceptable for large HGV's such as 16.5 metre lorries. Significant concern is Baldock town centre and the Clothall road Junction with the A507 both of these along with this whole route west out of the site will need to be swept pathed."

RPS Response

- 1.29 It should be noted that all construction HGVs arriving and departing to the west will arrive via the A1(M) junction, or the A505 as shown on Figure 6 of the CTMP. On this basis, no construction HGVs will route through Baldock town centre.
- 1.30 A swept path analysis has been undertaken of the A507 to the northwest and southeast of the site, inclusive of the Clothall Road junction, shown at **Appendix 5A-D**, which demonstrates that construction HGVs can travel safely along the proposed access route.

HCC Consultee Summary

"Therefore owing to the points raised within this response for the lack of information provided, HCC Highways must recommend refusal for this proposal until such time additional information has been provided. This is to ensure that the proposal does not conflict with policies stipulated within Hertfordshire county Council Local Transport Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and to ensure that the site does not greatly impact the safety of the highway network during the construction phase."

RPS Response

1.31 This Technical Note responds to all the points raised by HCC, and refers to sections of the TS and CTMP where information was initially provided.



Appendices



Appendix 1 – Hertfordshire County Council Pre-Application Advice

Environment and Infrastructure



North-west Of Cottered And Southwest Of The A507, Cottered, Hertfordshire. Nearest post code SG9 9PU Development Management Hertfordshire County Council

> Farnham House Six Hills Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 2ST www.hertfordshire.gov.uk

Tel: 07812 322764 Email: George.Fermer@hertfordshire.gov.u k My ref: EH/20313/2024 Your ref: Date: 11/07/2024

Dear J. Gunn,

Thank you for your pre-application enquiry on behalf of your client. I am pleased to provide the following advice.

Proposal

The views of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) as Highway Authority (HA) have been sought on pre-application proposals for a Solar Farm - Construction and operation of an electricity generating station with a capacity of 49.9MW with associated ancillary development on Land North-west Of Cottered And South-west Of The A507, Cottered, Hertfordshire. As attached.

From a highways and transport perspective, particular reference and consideration in any full application would need to be made to the following policy and guidance documents:

- o National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2023
- o Hertfordshire County Council: Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4), 2018
- o Place and Movement Planning Design Guide (PMPDG), 2024
- o Manual for Streets (MfS), 2007 & Manual for Streets 2 (MfS2), 2010

The proposal for the access for the Solar farm includes 3 separate access options along with a total of five potential access points ranging from Access A to Access E in alphabetical order – as presented in the submitted Technical Note dated 8th March 2024. This pre application request was a review in principle on the potential of each access arrangements and their proposed access points for both construction trips and future maintenance of the Solar farm. The area surrounding the site, both the northern and southern parcels is located within a rural area of East Hertfordshire with many of the routes surrounding the site being narrow and

County of opportunity

unsuitable for large vehicles. These routes would include Cromer Heath, B1037 West of Cottered and the highway network through Cromer. Having investigated all the access routes along with their associated accesses, and in the absence of detailed on-the-ground assessments from the applicant at this stage, the only potentially acceptable access for large HGV movements during the construction phase would be Access A onto the A507. We do however need additional detailed information to make any informed recommendation. Therefore, this means that out of all the proposed access arrangement only this access (subject to routing) would be appropriate for HGV movements during construction.

Nevertheless, the issue that a new A road access such as this presents is that Policy 5 f of Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018) states HCC as the Highway Authority (HA) will; "Only consider new accesses onto primary and main distributor roads where special circumstances can be demonstrated in favour of the proposals". As such, our Strategic Transport Infrastructure Board (STIB) needed to consider the proposal and if it met the 'special circumstances' test. In this case they have agreed in principle to a temporary construction access at this location, subject of course to the usual technical checks.

The access onto the A507 for construction traffic would need to be subject to detailed designs which would include access arrangements, swept paths, visibility splays and a stage 1 safety audit. Along this section of the A507 HCC have identified issues with speeding and therefore, I would expect that a speed survey be conducted on this section of the A507, however, it noted that some information has been provided for a speed survey on this road within the pre app document, but no raw data has been provided which would be required. There is currently in process a weight limit restriction of 7.5 tonnes along the A507 which is likely to come into effect in the near future and likely before this proposal reach any sort of planning stage. The applicant will need to demonstrate their site is covered under any 'except for access' exemption to this TRO.

The associated works are likely to be finished August/September 24. These will be subject to access requirements but something to keep in mind. There would need to be a full construction management plan for construction vehicles that would access the A507 which would need to fully incorporate all aspects of the construction details for the site. I would state that this access as it is an A road should only be used for construction vehicles and that other accesses should be sought for maintenance of the site. Consideration should also be made for the decommission of the site in around 40 years and how the solar panels will be removed from the site and where from.

For the three options of how material will be moved from the northern parcel to the southern parcel, none of the options are favourable in my opinion as crossing Cromer Heath would require the construction of Access D and Access E along with traffic management measures. Alternatively, the crossing of the Public rights of Way route "Ardeley Footpath 049" in principle is deemed acceptable but I would expect either that a temporary closure order be in place if for a short period of time, if not then the crossing will need warning signage for vehicle users and for path users, for vehicles a slow speed limit should be considered. Secondly, that the management of users be coordinated by banks men on site during the time vehicles are in use, a swing gate either stopping vehicle use or, when closed, stopping RoW use should be used to physically stop adverse interaction. This would all need to be detailed at any potential full planning application.

Therefore, any construction movements to the South-western parcels of Land may not be achievable unless there is a very strong case as to why and how construction material can be transported onto this parcel without considerable disruption and safety concerns along the highway network surrounding the southern parcel.

County of opportunity

Overall, in principle the access arrangements for this site have been addressed within this response with construction access from the A507 likely to be the only potentially acceptable access for this phase. All the arrangements are subject to detailed design and until such time, I cannot investigate the proposal further in any real detail.

It is necessary for me to conclude with observing that in accordance with Hertfordshire County Councils Highways DM Protocol for pre-application advice (https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/planning-in-hertfordshire/planning-applications-decisions/pre-application-advice.aspx) any advice given by County Council officers for transport pre-application enquiries does not constitute a formal response or decision of the Council with regards to future planning consents. Any views or opinions expressed are given in good faith, and to the best of ability, without prejudice to the formal consideration of any planning application, which will be subject to public consultation and ultimately decided by the Planning Authority. The County Council cannot guarantee that new issues will not be raised following submission of a planning application and consultation upon it. It should be noted that the weight given to pre-application advice will decline over time.

Please be aware that Hertfordshire County Council is subject to requirements under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Where the County Council receives a request to disclose any information in relation to this discussion, it will notify and consult with you concerning its possible release. However, the County Council reserves the right to disclose any such information it deems appropriate and shall be responsible for determining at its absolute discretion whether the information is exempt from disclosure in accordance with the EIR or FOIA.

Should you wish to discuss any of the matters set out, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely

George Fermer BSC Senior Development Officer (Highways) Hertfordshire County Council



Appendix 2 – Hertfordshire County Council Highways Consultee Response



Mark Youngman Development Management Group Manager Hertfordshire County Council Postal Point CHN115 Farnham House Six Hills Way Stevenage SG1 2ST

Response to Planning application from Hertfordshire County Council (T and CP GDP Order 2015)

Director of Planning

East Herts District Council Wallfields Pegs Lane Hertford Hertfordshire SG13 8EQ District ref: 3/24/2245/FUL HCC ref: EH/23424/2024 HCC received: 23 December 2024 Area manager: Matthew Armstrong Case officer: George Fermer

Location

Land To The West Of The A507 Between Cottered And Cromer Hertfordshire SG9 9PU

Application type Full Application

Proposal

Installation and operation of a solar farm including co-located energy storage facilities, onsite substation, ancillary infrastructure and landscaping

Recommendation

Notice is given under article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority recommends that permission be refused for the following reasons:

1) The application lacks sufficient information to correctly assess the highway matters for the site to ensure that it meets standards and is acceptable and safe. This therefore means that it has the potential to conflict with policies stipulated in Hertfordshire County Councils Local Transport Plan (Policy 5) (adopted 2018) and the National Planning Policy Framework (Policy 116).

Reason

The proposal is for the installation and operation of a solar farm including co-located energy storage facilities, onsite substation, ancillary infrastructure and landscaping on Land To The West Of The A507 Between Cottered And Cromer. HCC Highways at this stage would like to recommend refusal for the site owing to a lack of information regarding the surrounding highway network which has the potential to cause conflict on the highway network without additional information provide

Hertfordshire County Council has reviewed the site and surrounding area along with the provided documents and found the following points missing;

Construction management plan (Sections at beginning of points) and Highway Drawings

3.8

- This section states "Delivery vehicles are likely to attend the site for approximately one hour per vehicle. There will be sufficient space within the site along the access track as well as the curtilage of the temporary construction compounds to ensure that no vehicles would have to wait on the surrounding highway network."

However, Drawing number 05003-RES-ACC-DR-PT-001 Rev 3 (Site entrance layout) illustrates a 4 metre internal access route width which is not wide enough to even allow two vans to pass one another let along large HGV's. This causes grave safety concerns that vehicles may have to wait within the highway network to enter the site when vehicles are exiting which is not acceptable.

4.9, 4.16, 4.17

- Any temporary signage to be installed on the public highway will require prior approval from the HA this needs to be included in wording

4.21

- Extra information is needed on the use of stop/go boards including frequency, times they will be used, is there a proposal to hold traffic, how will operatives communicate?

- If accepted the use of stop/go boards will require an approved permit from the HA.

5.5

- information needs to be provided on measures that will be in place to protect the PROW

- There needs to be before and after photos.

- The CMP lacks information around delivery times.

- As per figure 3 the largest vehicle to the site will be a 17.8 metre crane which would need to be tracked using a swept path to ensure that it can reach and access the site.

- Drawing number 05003-RES-ACC-DR-PE-003 Rev 1 and 05003-RES-ACC-DR-PE-004 Rev 1 illustrates a 16.5 metre lorry entering from Cromer Heath which is not suitable for such a vehicle. The CMP says that this access will not be used by HGV's - this needs to be clarified.

- There is significant concern with construction vehicles exiting the site and driving North West along the A507. Parts of this route is deemed to not be acceptable for large HGV's such as 16.5 metre lorries. Significant concern is Baldock town centre and the Clothall road Junction with the A507 both of these along with this whole route west out of the site will need to be swept pathed.

Therefore owing to the points raised within this response for the lack of information provided, HCC Highways must recommend refusal for this proposal until such time additional information has been provided. This is to ensure that the proposal does not conflict with policies stipulated within Hertfordshire county Council Local Transport Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and to ensure that the site does not greatly impact the safety of the highway network during the construction phase.

Signed George Fermer

23 January 2025



Appendix 3 – 17.8m Crane Swept Path Analysis







Appendix 4 - Tractor and Trailer Swept Path Analysis





Appendix 5 – HGV Swept Path Analysis

www.rpsgroup.com











	N
Scale 1:5000 0 100 200	300 400
Scale 1:500	
Scale 1:500	30 40
Scale 1:500	
Scale 1:500	
Scale 1:500	
Scale 1:500	JON
Scale 1:500 0 10 20 10 20 Status FRELIMINARY NRELIMINARY AJ Project Number Scale @ A1 P&E-NI2747 1:5000	JON PM/Checked by JG Date Created 11/03/2025
Status Drawn By PRELIMINARY AJ Project Number Scale @ A1 P&B-NI2747 1:5000 RPS Drawing/Figure Number 794NI-P&E-NI2747-DR-003	JON PM/Checked by JG PM/Checked by JG Date Created 11/03/2025 Rev -



