

CHERHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Consultation Response

Erection and operation of ground mounted solar photovoltaic panels and associated works

Application: PL/2024/01599

Response date: 23rd July 2026

Council meeting: 23rd July 2026

Council resolution: OBJECT, subject to the matters set out below

Neighbourhood plan: Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan 2023–2038 (CCNP2), Parts A and B, made March 2025

Formal response

Cherhill Parish Council has considered the application documents, the relevant provisions of the Development Plan, and representations received from the local community. It must be noted that when the application was first submitted, the site was located within Calne Without Parish. Since then, there has been a community governance review, and the site is now within Cherhill Parish. Another significant change to the Development Plan is that the Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan 2, parts A and B, was made in March 2025.

Calne Without Parish Council and Cherhill Parish Council have both submitted comments on this application in the past. None of the comments made have been addressed by the applicant in revised documents and still stand; they are included in the Appendix 1 for reference.

The Community Fund agreement document submitted by the applicant is out of date, referencing the wrong parish amongst other things, and does not conform to what is recognised as best practice with respect to such agreements, such as index-linking payments.

The concerns regarding glint and glare have not been addressed, and so the amenity of the residents in parts of Lower Compton will be severely impacted if the scheme progresses as planned.

Cherhill Parish Council wishes to restate and reaffirm the comments previously made by it.

Appendix A — Previous Cherhill and Calne Without Parish Council's comments on this application (in reverse date order)

Cherhill Parish Council's comment

Comment Number

WC-25-09-348675

Text

Since this application was first made the site in question has now come under Cherhill Parish Council, following the CGR reorganisation of May this year. The revised documents submitted that have since been submitted, in our view, have not addressed the concerns previously raised by Calne Without Parish Council. Cherhill PC remains in total agreement with that range of concerns, which should be considered as restated. These concerns have still not been properly addressed by the applicant.

Date Created

24/09/2025

Cherhill Parish Council's comment

Comment Number

WC-25-02-326654

Text

The Cherhill Parish is in full agreement with the detailed objections already lodged in this matter by the Calne Without Parish Council.

Date Created

28/02/2025

Comment Name

Calne Without Parish Council's comment

Comment Number

WC-25-02-324851

Text

Calne Without Parish Council would like to submit a qualified objection to the application, due to our concerns detailed below. If these concerns were to be properly addressed, we would support the application as it would be a good use of a redundant landfill site and would make use of existing grid connections.

Further detail in attachment. To view please click the files tab above.

Date Created

11/02/2025

Calne Without Parish Council Planning Response

Application address: Sands Farm Quarry, Low Lane, Calne, Wiltshire, SN11 8TE

Application Number: PL/2024/01599

Date: 10th Feb 2025

Summary response – (support, conditional support, no objections, object (“No comment” not used))

Object

Original comment –

“Calne Without Parish Council would like to submit a qualified objection to the application, due to our concerns detailed below. If these concerns were to be properly addressed, we would support the application as it would be a good use of a redundant landfill site and would make use of existing grid connections.”

Some of the original concerns have been addressed, others not. Below are more details:

1. The Pre-Planning Consultation has been poorly executed – this is a statement of fact. No further consultation has been undertaken despite the council’s offer to discuss these issues with the applicant.
2. Construction access route. Whilst this has now been clarified, serious disruption is being caused along the access road by Viridor contractors starting to import material to put on top of the site. No provision was made to clean the wheels of the HGV’s causing mud to be spread all over the highway creating a dangerous road surface – this is contravention of the referendum version of Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan 2 (CCNP2) policy GA1. See notice from Hills regarding the mud on the road below:

“Statement – Mud on Sandpit Road

Following reports attributing mud along Sandpits Road to Hills’ vehicles, we can confirm that Hills is not responsible. Valencia Waste Management is undertaking works on their restored landfill site (formerly operated by Viridor), on land adjacent to Hills’ Sands Farm operations, and have vehicular right of way through our land to access their site.

The vehicles accessing the Valencia site are responsible for the current excessive mud on the public highway up to the Bug and Spider roundabout. Hills has repeatedly made Valencia aware of the problem and requested they put measures in place to resolve this matter.

We have been in touch with Wiltshire Council Planning Department, who have visited the site and confirmed that vehicles attending the site are the source of the mud.

We have also relayed the issue to the Environment Agency whose remit it is to regulate against the site permit. We understand that they are aiming to visit the Valencia site sometime this week.”

Communications Department, Hills. 21st January 2025

The Construction Transport Environmental Management Plan contains no proposals about controlling mud from vehicle movements and request a condition that the applicant provides a wheel wash to clean the wheels of vehicles and regular use of a road brush, as necessary, to keep the adjacent road network clean.

3. Community Fund. – A community fund proposal has been made. Whilst it is at the low end of what is usual for such solar farms an enhanced contribution should be made to reflect the overbearing impact that the site will have on many houses in Lower Compton and beyond.
 - a. Issues with break clauses – 7.1 is a break clause which the Parish Council has no influence or control on; 7.2 holds provisions to terminate on failure to meet the requirements of clause 4.6, which is harsh, without any process of prior escalation (such as serving notice).
 - b. The draft agreement doesn't appear to index link the payment. It defines what "Index Linked" means but it doesn't say that the annual payment will be index linked.
 - c. We think we should ask that Wiltshire Council benchmark the value of the fund against similar projects (although we think it is comparable to Forest Gate).
 - d. Note that it will need to be between the applicant and Cherhill Parish Council.
4. National Cycle Route 403 and permissive paths.
 - a. No new proposals were made in this area. CCNP2 policy GA6 seeks to promote the extension of route 403.
 - b. The council supports Wiltshire Council Rights of Way comment "National Cycle Way 403 runs to the North of the site. This route currently uses 1,240 meters of road to get to the junction of Marsh Lane. This could be cut to 560 meters of road walking/cycling to get to the Marsh Lane junction. We would make the request that a cycleway is conditioned which joins from Low Lane and extends to the land ownership boundary north of Trenchard Avenue. If you look at the map supplied by the applicant titled site location plan the current route of the cycleway is shown by green dots and green circles. If this is not acceptable then we would request a section 106 contribution towards surface upgrades and improvements on Cycleway 403. We would suggest a contribution of £1,000 per year for the life of the development to be paid prior to connection to the electricity grid. If the solar farm was to be granted an extension in timespan in the future then the figure of £1,000 per year should be index linked from 2024 to the date of the extension of permission."
 - c. the current S106 undertaking to restore the landfill site includes a permissive path within the restored landscape. This doesn't appear on the indicative solar farm layout.
5. Foundation proposals. Sufficient information has been provided.
6. Glare & Glint.
 - a. Housing – 34 of the 50 assessed dwelling receptors show that glare is geometrically possible. The planning application assesses that this will be mitigated by existing screening vegetation. Most of this screening is deciduous in nature and not on land owned by the applicant. See photo below showing the site from ground level. The site would be even more visible from first floor windows. Glare from winter / spring sun could easily impact the dwellings and there is a possibility that the owners of the land could remove the screening vegetation at some point in the future. As it is not

in a conservation area planning permission would not be required to do this. NPPF(2024) states in para 135f that developments should “create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users”. The potential for glare into many properties does not provide a high standard of amenity and does not promote health and well-being. CCNP2 policy BE1 mandates that developments must be appropriate in scale and size and not dominate the surrounding area. NPPF (2024) paragraph 135b says that developments should have appropriate and effective landscaping.

- b. The landform that is being built up under the existing planning consent 15/10219/WCM has steep gradients on the east and south-east boundaries of the site, which is likely to limit the effectiveness of the screening being provided.
- c. The landscape and visual impact study doesn't include any visualisations from different viewpoints, which we would expect to see in an application such as this.



- 7. Visibility from the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and glare into it. CCNP2 policy NE5 seeks to protect important views, such as the one from the National Landscape to St Mary's Church in Calne. This development will cause glare from the proposed solar farm into the National Landscape severely impacting this view. The NPPF (2024) states in para 189 “Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.

Comment Name

Calne Without Parish Council's comment

Comment Number

WC-24-03-296237

Text

Calne Without Parish Council would like to submit a qualified objection to the application, due to our concerns detailed below. If these concerns were to be properly addressed, we would support the application as it would be a good use of a redundant landfill site and would make use of existing grid connections.

- The Pre-Planning Consultation has been poorly executed. The proposal is located well inside the boundary of Calne Without Parish Council: we have received no contact from Valencia Waste Management and were unaware of the proposals prior to the submission of the planning application. Misleading information was provided in the consultation in respect to construction access. No fliers were delivered to residents along the proposed construction access route (Anchor Road and Low Lane). Only two feedback forms were received and just 67 website views.
- Construction access route. This needs to be properly thought through and consistent. Four different access routes are given in the documentation:
 - a) The public consultation stated that construction access will be from Gloucester Road, Lower Compton, which is a narrow residential road and a cul-de-sac.
 - b) The Statement of Community Involvement (p4) goes on to state that this was incorrect and that access will be Low Lane (and presumably Anchor Road). These streets are unsuitable for significant HGV traffic.
 - c) The Planning Information Pack (p17) states that it will be taken from the existing junction of the B430: this is near Bicester.
 - d) Elsewhere, the Planning Information Pack (p41) states that access will be Sand Pit Road and Spitfire Road, using the existing landfill access route. This would appear to be the best option.

There are further inconsistencies in the assessments of construction traffic. The Planning Information Pack (p17) describes 20 HGV deliveries (40 movements) per day over three months, but also (p82) a maximum of 10-15 HGV movements per day. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (p11-12) refers to a 6-month Construction Phase preceded by 9-12 months of soil importation, during which 81,000m³ of soil will be imported.
- Ecology. Sections of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal appear to have been redacted. In the interests of openness, full disclosure of findings and recommendations should be made. We would expect to see an application such as this putting forward clear proposals to deliver a biodiversity net gain in accordance with Core Policy 50. There is no biodiversity net gain calculation put forward as part of the application, although one is apparently referenced on p8 of the Planning Information Pack.
- Community Fund. Applications for other solar farms in the locality have included a Community Fund, so that the local community receives benefit from the installation. We would expect to see a proposal included as part of the application.
- National Cycle Route 403. The Sustrans National Cycle Network route 403 passes through land owned by Valencia Waste Management to the north of the site (along the alignment of footpath CALW16). The Parish Council has been unsuccessfully trying to make contact with Valencia Waste Management for a year about restoring the surface of the cycle track. This should be included as part of the proposal.

- Foundation proposals. We would expect further details to be provided of the proposed foundations for the solar panels, with supporting technical evidence to demonstrate that there would be no risk of the landfill capping layer being breached. (Typical mounting for solar panels installed on landfill sites consists of concrete blocks over a gravel base.)
- Glare & Glint. Housing – 34 of the 50 assessed dwelling receptors show that glare is geometrically possible. The planning application assesses that this will be mitigated by existing screening vegetation. Most of this screening is deciduous in nature and not on land owned by the applicant. Glare from winter / spring sun could easily impact the dwellings and there is a possibility that the owners of the land could remove the screening vegetation at some point in the future. As it is not in a conservation area planning permission would not be required to do this.
- Visibility from the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and glare into it. The North Wessex Downs National Landscape is very close to the site. The applicant quotes in section 5.22 of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment that the White Horse is 3.75km away and says that the solar farm would be a “distant view”. It fails to mention that this part of the downs which is furthest from which the solar farm; Blackland Down is approx. 2.5km away and the solar farm would clearly be visible from there ruining the view. The Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan, which is currently going through Regulation 14 Consultation, wishes to protect several views, including the one from the North Wessex Downs National Landscape towards St Mary’s church in Calne. The downs are also in the arc through which glare would be present in the afternoon / evening.

We would be very happy to meet with Valencia Waste Management to discuss our concerns further.

Date Created

12/03/2024