



**Murray Planning
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PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

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Wokingham Borough Council

Shute End

Wokingham,

Berkshire

RG40 1BN

Dear Sir/Madam,

Application under Section 73 - Variation of condition 14 (Operational Timeframe) of planning permission F/2014/1495 (Proposed solar Farm comprising the erection of solar arrays of photovoltaic panels, inverter/transformer sheds, fencing, site storage cabin, combined DNO and EPC switchgear housing, internal gravel access road, and associated equipment)

Site Location : Land at Sheepbridge Court Farm, Basingstoke Swallowfield.

Please find our planning application submission to vary Condition 14 of the above planning permission to adjust the proposed operational lifespan of the project from 25 years to 40 years.

As a result of market changes and technological advancement, which allow solar farms to be maintained for longer periods, the applicant is seeking to increase the period that the Solar Farm is permitted to operate for.

In this case, the original planning permission at this site granted consent for a 25 year period from the date that electricity is first exported to the electricity grid.

Importantly, this application proposes no physical changes to the solar farm or any of the mitigation measures previously permitted. The panels themselves are also capable of an electricity generating life much greater than the 25-year period. Therefore, whilst the efficiency of the installed solar panels and infrastructure will reduce over time it has been determined that the solar farm can continue to operate viably beyond the 25-year period in a subsidy-free market. In essence, the project can make very effective use of the existing infrastructure and grid connection during years 25-40 and continue to make a significant contribution to Government renewable energy generation targets.

The applicant seeks permission to alter Condition 14 of the permission which reads:

14 - The use of the site as a solar farm shall be discontinued on or before 25 years from the date of connection (the point at which the solar panels are connected to the National Grid). All materials shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition (apart from in terms of the proposed landscaping) within six months of the date of disconnection (the point at which the solar panels stop supplying to the National Grid).

For ease and simplicity, it is proposed that the revised condition should state:

14 - The use of the site as a solar farm shall be discontinued on or before 40 years from the date of connection (the point at which the solar panels are connected to the National Grid). All materials shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition (apart from in terms of the proposed landscaping) within six months of the date of disconnection (the point at which the solar panels stop supplying to the National Grid).

The proposed amendment to condition 14 to allow an increased period of solar farm operation remains consistent with the original purpose of the condition, which is to ensure the proper decommissioning of the solar farm at the end of its operational life. Other than an extension to the solar farms operational period the site will remain unchanged. The site has been in operation for several years without issue and there would appear to be no reason why the solar farm would cause any additional harm to continue to operate for the proposed extended period of time.

The solar farm will continue to make a positive contribution to meeting renewable energy targets, reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with fossil fuelled electricity generation, contribute to security of supply, and to an extent enhance biodiversity. The Government has recently committed further to switching the UK's energy generation to renewables and this scheme will be essential to meeting these ambitious targets. We hope the Council will agree to this change and allow the variation.

Yours Faithfully

RICHARD MURRAY

On Behalf of Murray Planning Associates