

17/05825/FUL

Consultations and Notification Responses (received following receipt of amended information)

Ward Councillor Preliminary Comments

None received

Parish/Town Council Comments/Internal and External Consultees

Longwick cum Ilmer Parish Council

Comment: The Longwick cum Ilmer Parish Council has no objections but draws attention to the original agreement that the access for construction traffic is to be from the Thame Road.

Landscape Officer

Comment: No objection to amended scheme.

Control of Pollution Environmental Health

Comment: I have no objections to this application

County Highway Authority

Comment 8th June: Ilmer Lane is an unclassified rural lane that is subject to derestricted speed limits and therefore the national speed restriction applies. There are no parking or waiting restrictions in place on Ilmer Lane. The road does not benefit from pedestrian footways or street lighting. The road is between 4.2 – 4.3 metres in width with wider road widths provided at bends along the road. Prior to the site access, the carriageway of Ilmer Lane crosses a culvert (Q77061 Ray Farm) with a weight limit of 40T, the carriageway width is restricted to 3.8 metres in this location.

The application proposes the creation of a compound containing energy infrastructure connecting to the National Grid. The applicant has recently submitted additional information in the form of a Construction Traffic Management Plan. I note that the Highway Authority has previously raised concerns as to the capacity of the local highway network, specifically the length of Ilmer Lane between Thame Road (A4129) and the proposed site access.

Having assessed the proposed Construction Traffic Management Plan in conjunction with the prior Highway Access Appraisal document, the Highway Authority considers the proposals to have proposed sufficient mitigation for the impact of the predicted construction traffic subject to additional minor alterations. These measures for mitigation can adequately be secured by planning condition.

I note that section 2.4.1 states that the highway width of Ilmer Lane between Thame Road (A4129) and the proposed site access is between 4 – 5 metres in width and that this is sufficient to allow personal vehicles and construction traffic to safely pass each other. Following 'Manual for Streets' guidance, a minimum of 4.8 metres width is required for such a manoeuvre along a section of road with a straight horizontal alignment. On a site visit I found that Ilmer Lane regularly falls below 4.8 metres in width and the horizontal alignment of the road in many places is not straight.

The Highway Authority previously requested the proposal of passing bays in order to overcome the above issue, presented by restricted carriageway width and horizontal alignment. Due to the proposal of passing bays, the restricted width is considered to have been adequately addressed by the applicant.

The current version of the Construction Traffic Management Plan refers to the proposed passing bays as being a permanent feature. I note that the arrangement could be temporary, so as to mitigate for construction traffic during the construction phase, but to be removed afterwards and the highway verges reinstated to their previous conditions in line with the pre-commencement condition and post-

construction condition surveys. Such an arrangement would be considered by the Highway Authority to sufficiently provide for the safety of the publically maintained highway.

The request for passing bays was in order to ensure the safety of simultaneous two-way vehicular traffic and prevent reversing manoeuvres for extended distances. As such, temporary materials capable of accommodating personal vehicles, such as grasscrete, would be considered adequate materials for a temporary arrangement if such a proposal were to be proposed.

As previously requested by the Highway Authority, the applicant has committed to carry out pre-commencement condition surveys, to be followed up by post-construction condition surveys. These are proposed be used to identify any damage to the carriageway and verges caused by the construction traffic associated with the development. I request that the applicant include a commitment to repair damage done to the highway carriageway during the construction phase should damage to the highway occur during the construction period.

Transport for Buckinghamshire has arranged for a SCANNER vehicle to survey Ilmer Lane so as to inspect the road condition of the base and sub base due to the limited construction depth of the highway in this location. The results of this survey and a subsequent follow up survey should be included as a part of the pre-commencement and post-construction surveys in order to determine any deep structural effects from the construction traffic that may not be immediately evident in a visual survey. The Construction Traffic Management Plan should be amended to include the condition surveys of the Highway Authority.

My colleague Jonathan Clark, a Strategic Access Officer for Buckinghamshire County Council, has also requested information and commitments to be included in a Construction Traffic Management Plan, in a letter dated 4th May 2018. One request is for pre-commencement and dilapidation surveys to be carried out for the section of the proposed access that is shared with a public footpath. I therefore request that the Construction Traffic Management Plan be amended to include the public footpath in the pre-commencement and dilapidation surveys, with a commitment to repair any damage to the public footpaths resulting from the proposed construction traffic.

I also note that Jonathan Clark requested the inclusion of measures to inform construction vehicle drivers of the presence of pedestrians, and to notify pedestrians of the presence of construction traffic. As Ilmer Lane is a section of highway used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders to access the local rights of way network, I request that the Construction Traffic Management Plan includes a commitment by the applicant to ensure that all construction vehicle drivers are informed of the likely presence of these users within the vicinity of the site and along Ilmer Lane itself, prior to their being employed to drive construction vehicles to the site.

Proposals have also been submitted as a part of the Construction Traffic Management Plan to address the weight-limited culvert along Ilmer Lane. Having consulted the Highway Authority's structures team, I can confirm that the proposed two-tier approach to the culvert is considered appropriate. This approval is subject to the details of the proposals being agreed by the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with the Highway Authority, prior to their implementation.

Delivery times for construction vehicles are to be restricted to between the hours of 0900 – 1500. This time restriction is in order to prevent the use of Ilmer Lane by construction traffic during peak hours therefore preventing impact on peak hour flows by the construction traffic.

In order to overcome the issue of limited visibility to the right of the site access towards the railway bridge, the applicant has proposed the use of three way signalled lights at the site access onto Ilmer Lane. Exact details for this proposal should be agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority at a later date, however I can confirm that this proposal sufficiently addresses the limited visibility of the proposed site access.

My comments are given on the basis that the signalised arrangement will only change to allow egress of the site when it is required by construction vehicles, and that the signalised lights will not be on a timed loop.

Mindful of the above, I therefore request that the Construction Traffic Management Plan be amended to reflect my comments. I shall provide my final response once in receipt of this amended information.

Comment 27th June: Ilmer Lane is an unclassified rural lane that is subject to derestricted speed limits and therefore the national speed restriction applies. There are no parking or waiting restrictions in place on Ilmer Lane. The road does not benefit from pedestrian footways or street lighting. The road is between 4.2 – 4.3 metres in width with wider road widths provided at bends along the road. Prior to the site access, the carriageway of Ilmer Lane crosses a culvert (Q77061 Ray Farm) with a weight limit of 40T, the carriageway width is restricted to 3.8 metres in this location.

I note that the Highway Authority has provided three previous sets of formal comments for the proposed application. This letter should therefore be read in conjunction with my previous sets of comments dated 4th December 2017, 19th December 2017, and 8th June 2018.

The application proposes the creation of a compound containing energy infrastructure connecting to the National Grid. The applicant has recently submitted additional information in the form of a Construction Traffic Management Plan. I note that the Highway Authority has previously raised concerns as to the capacity of the local highway network, specifically the length of Ilmer Lane between Thame Road (A4129) and the proposed site access.

Having assessed the proposed Construction Traffic Management Plan in conjunction with the prior Highway Access Appraisal document, the Highway Authority considers the proposals to have proposed sufficient mitigation for the impact of the predicted construction traffic. I believe that these measures for mitigation can adequately be secured by planning condition.

Mindful of the above, I have no objections to the proposed development subject to conditions and informative points:

Representations

Ten further letters of objection have been received since this application was previously reported to Committee raising concerns relating to:-

- Access not in accordance with solar farm;
- Size, height and scale of the proposal;
- Negative impacts on the landscape;
- Safety of pedestrians;
- Damage to Ilmer Lane
- Industrialisation to the landscape;
- Background noise;
- Alternative access has not been properly explored;
- The culvert must be remain unencumbered at all times;;
- How will vehicles turn at the access?
- Has the railway authority commented on the swept path analysis and proximity of movements to the bridge?