

Item 4	Contents
<p>15/00190/FUL</p> <p>London Southend Airport Southend Airport Rochford SS2 6YF</p> <p>Installation of a photovoltaic solar farm and associated infrastructure, including photovoltaic panels, mounting frames, transformer building and connection to the airport's electricity ring main for the life of the solar farm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Environment Agency Response <li>2. Additional Information Received from Agent/Applicant <li>3. Officer Comments <p>1. Environment Agency Response</p> <p>We refer to your email dated 27 April 2015, informing us that you consider this proposal to be classified as 'essential infrastructure' in accordance with Table 2: Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification of the Planning Practice Guidance. We have now reviewed the information submitted in support of the application, and wish to raise a holding objection, both on flood risk grounds, and regarding the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p><u>Fluvial Flood Risk</u></p> <p>According to the Environment Agency's Flood Maps the site falls partially within fluvial Flood Zones 2, 3a and 3b. We have been informed that you consider the development to be 'essential infrastructure' in accordance with Table 2: Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The site is undefended.</p> <p>For the development to be acceptable in this location, even if you consider it to be essential infrastructure, the applicant has undertaken the sequential test and you agree that there are no other sites at a lower flood risk available, the FRA should demonstrate why the solar farm has to be located here and how it can continue to remain operational during times of flooding (these are requirements stated in Table 2 of the PPG).</p> <p>The FRA submitted with this application does not comply with the requirements set out in Paragraph 030 (Reference ID: 7-030-20140306) of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).</p>

The submitted FRA prepared by RPS Ltd, referenced RCEF33301-002R, and dated March 2015, does not provide a suitable basis for assessment to be made of the flood risks arising from the proposed development, therefore we are raising an objection to this application.

In particular, the submitted FRA fails to:-

1. Adequately consider and calculate the impact of the proposed development on flood flows and flood water storage capacity, thereby potentially increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere.

Overcoming our Objection

You can overcome our objection by submitting an FRA, which covers the deficiencies highlighted above and demonstrates that the development will not increase risk elsewhere and, where possible, reduces flood risk overall. If this cannot be achieved we are likely to maintain our objection to the application.

Biodiversity

Water Framework Directive (WFD)

The water course adjacent to the development is an official WFD water body (GB105037028740, River Roach, Nobles Ditch and Eastwood Brook), which is at moderate ecological potential. In line with the WFD, we must see no deterioration in this condition and, where possible, enhancements to the riparian habitat and in-channel morphology. One of the mitigation measures not in place is to 'Increase in-channel morphological diversity'. A WFD Compliance Assessment should be submitted to demonstrate the proposal will not cause deterioration to the water body. No WFD Compliance Assessment has been submitted, therefore we are raising a holding objection.

Overcoming our Objection

The applicant can overcome our objection by submitting a WFD Compliance Assessment (see attached form). The applicant is advised to contact Tim Gardiner in our Fisheries, Biodiversity and Geomorphology team on 01473

706017, for further information.

There should be no pollution or abstraction/discharges to the watercourse as part of this scheme.

Protected Species

There are records of protected species such as great crested newts and water voles in the area; undoubtedly there will be nesting birds in the scrub to be removed, plus the outside possibility of reptiles in the grassland. Surveys and mitigation will be required for these species if present.

Ecological Benefits

There is a 9m buffer strip proposed along the main river. We would like this to be designed as an area of ecological value, and an enhanced riparian strip created, bearing in mind WFD considerations. Tree planting could provide shaded areas as fish refuges, or banks could be re-profiled to a shallower angle, with berms.

Ecological enhancements, including wildflower rich grassland for pollinators, as set out in the National Pollinator Strategy, should be incorporated into the design of the solar farm, where possible.

Flood Defence Consent

We note that the plan submitted within appendix A (ADM-SYZ-LSA-008 RevA) of the FRA includes a 9 metre buffer strip from the Eastwood Brook. It is important that this 9 metre easement is maintained for our access and maintenance requirements. Under the terms of the Water Resources Act 1991 and the Anglian Land Drainage and Sea Defence Byelaws, the prior written consent of the Environment Agency is required for any proposed works or structures, in, under, over or within 9 metres of the top of the bank/foreshore of the Eastwood Brook, designated a 'main river'. In addition, byelaw 18 states '*No person shall without the previous consent of the Authority (Environment Agency) construct, erect, form or cause or permit to be constructed, erected or formed on land adjacent to the normal channel of the main river and over which flood*

	<p><i>waters may flow any heap of material which is of such size or character or is placed in such a position as to be likely to divert or obstruct the flow of flood water and (either on its own or together with other heaps of material which have been or are likely to be so constructed, erected or formed) to affect adversely the efficient working of the drainage system of the Authority area'. Therefore, Flood Defence Consent may also be required for any heaps of material planned within the flood plain in excess of 9 metres from the Eastwood Brook. If required, a Flood Defence Consent controls works in, over, under or adjacent to main rivers. A consent application must demonstrate that:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ There is no increase in flood risk, either up stream or down stream;○ Access to the main river network and flood defences for maintenance and improvement is not prejudiced, and;○ Works are carried out in such a way as to avoid unnecessary environmental damage. <p>Mitigation is likely to be required to control:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Off site flood risk. <p>We will not be able to issue our consent until this has been demonstrated.</p> <p>2. Additional Information Received from RPS</p> <p>Additional information/clarification has been received from RPS with regard to the flood risk points raised by the Environment Agency and a preliminary Water Framework Directive Compliance Assessment has been completed.</p> <p>3. Officer Comments</p> <p>A response to the applicant's further information regarding flood risk from the Environment Agency is expected shortly and will be reported to the Committee verbally.</p>
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