



North Herts Council
Development and Conservation
North Hertfordshire District Council
PO Box 10613
Nottingham
NG6 6DW

Our ref: 19550
Date: 23 July 2026

For the attention of: Naomi Reynard

Application ref: 26/01499/SO
Location: Land Between Knebworth Golf Club And A1M Old Knebworth Lane Knebworth Hertfordshire
Proposal/Description: Screening Opinion: Proposed solar photovoltaic farm and associated infrastructure.

Thank you for consulting with Place Services on the above application. This letter sets out our consultation response on the landscape impact of the application and how the proposal relates and responds to the landscape setting and context of the site.

This review is based on a desktop study of the above-referenced application and its submitted documents. Our Landscape comments are as follows.

We previously provided Pre-Application comments under 25/02898/PRE dated 30th March 2026.

1.0. Site Context

- 1.1. The Site is located between the A1(M) and Knebworth Golf Course, on a triangular parcel of arable farmland and a small parcel of woodland to the north. Old Knebworth Lane runs through the Site towards the northern edge. Tree belts and dense vegetation enclose the site on most boundaries.

2.0. Planning Policy Context

North Hertfordshire Local Plan (Adopted 2022)

- 2.1. Policy NE12: Renewable and low carbon energy development is relevant to this pre-application. Other policies to be considered relevant to landscape include Policy ENV3, ENV5, NE1, NE2 and SP12.

3.0. Review of the proposal/submitted information:

- 3.1. The application has been accompanied by the submission of a Request for Screening Opinion Letter by DWD Property and Planning Limited dated 10th June 2026. Details on landscape and visual impact are included on Page 11.
- 3.2. We welcome the proposal to submit a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) as part of any planning application.
- 3.3. The site is located within Landscape Character Area 37 Datchworth Settled Slopes of the North Herts and Stevenage Landscape Character Assessment. Key characteristics of the LCA include:
 - sloping intermediate area with extensive views up to Datchworth plateau
 - farms and villages linking the plateau settlements to the urban edges - a curving link between Knebworth and Digswell
 - large-scale open arable farmland, lacking hedges
 - large area of woodland and a few scattered blocks
- 3.4. We advise that the following are included as landscape receptors:
 - The Site
 - The Surrounding Context
 - Landscape Features (i.e. landform, vegetation)
 - LCA 37 Datchworth Settled Slopes
- 3.5. There are limited visual receptors located surrounding the Site, however the visual effect of the proposals may be considered. The following visual receptors should be included within the assessment [but not limited to]:
 - PRoW Knebworth 016
 - PRoW Knebworth 017
 - A1(M)
 - Old Knebworth Lane (from the north and west)
 - Knebworth Golf Course/Club
 - Knebworth House
 - Park Lane
- 3.6. We advise that the proposed viewpoint receptors are overlaid with a ZTV to demonstrate how the chosen viewpoints were selected, and identify any longer distance receptors.
- 3.7. As confirmed within the submitted letter, the Site is not subject to any landscape designations which would increase sensitivity of the Site. However, the proximity of the Site to Knebworth Registered Park and Garden (RPG) may be heavily considered within any proposals, to ensure the character of the RPG is not affected by the proposals.
- 3.8. The proposals would result in a change to the land use, a loss of arable farmland, tree removals, and some visual effects on the surrounding area. Adverse landscape and visual effects may arise on some individual receptors; however, these should be identified in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA).

- 3.9. Overall, the proposed development is unlikely to give rise to significant landscape and visual effects beyond the local area. We therefore judge that the scheme is not EIA.
- 3.10. Minimising the effects of the proposals should be considered, for example:
- Although the boundaries are well-vegetated, some are gappy which would benefit from some mitigation planting to fill in existing gaps. This includes on the western boundary to the A1(M) where some open views are currently available of the Site owed to gaps in the vegetation.
 - The proposed panels cover the entire red line boundary area, including over some of the minimal existing vegetation and trees which exist within the south of the site. We advise that panels are not proposed in place of existing vegetation and trees, since the panels are temporary features which should not promote the removal of existing landscape structure.
 - Minimising tree removals at the site entrance and XE cable route should be prioritised, as the northern boundary vegetation contributes heavily to mitigating visual effects from the north, and to the rural character of Old Knebworth Lane.
 - The fence line is located close to the vegetation which exists on the site boundaries. It is important that the fence line does not physically impact on the surrounding vegetation which will contribute to visual mitigation.
- 3.11. We advise our Pre-Application comments (dated 30th March 2026) are considered in regard to the receptors to be included and the Methodology for the LVA, as well as the design recommendations.
- 3.12. Submission documents should include:
- Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA)
 - Landscape Strategy
 - Hard and Soft Landscape Plans
 - Landscape Management Plan

4.0. Summary

- 4.1. From a landscape perspective, there will be likely adverse negative effects on landscape character and visual receptors arising from development of the site. However, we do not consider these effects significant enough to require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) from a landscape perspective.
- 4.2. The submitted LVA should provide judgements on the potential landscape and visual impacts, which will inform mitigation and landscape strategies for the development. The LVA should be conducted in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), 3rd edition, and all other relevant Technical Guidance Notes (TGN).
- 4.3. We advise that our Pre-Application comments under 25/02898/PRE are considered within any forthcoming proposals.

Please contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Place Services – Landscape Team

Email: landscape@essex.gov.uk



Place Services provide landscape advice on behalf of North Herts Council

Please note:

This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter.

We are unable to respond directly to applicants/agents or other interested parties. Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant/agent or other interested parties may have, must be directed to the Planning Officer at the relevant LPA, who will seek further advice from us where appropriate.

