



North Herts Council
Development and Conservation
North Hertfordshire District Council
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Our ref: 08372
Date: 12 March 2026

For the attention of: Ben Glover

Application ref: 25/01947/FP
Location: Land South Of A507 Near Cumberlow Green, Clothall Road, Clothall, Hertfordshire
Proposal/Description: Full Planning Permission: Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), ground mounted solar farm, associated infrastructure, access and landscaping.

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.

We previously provided comments dated 26th September and 20th November 2025.

1.0. Review of Submitted Information:

- 1.1. Additional information has been submitted, including an Environmental Statement Volume 1 Visual Assessment Addendum (January 2026) and Appendix 7.2.1 - Figure 16 Illustrative Photomontages (December 2025). We welcome these submissions to provide additional clarifications and information on the visual effects associated with the proposals.

Additional Receptors

- 1.2. Based on our request for additional viewpoint receptors to be included within the LVIA, the additional information provides an assessment of these receptors in Chapter 2 of the January 2026 Addendum.
- 1.3. Judgements are provided for each of the included receptors, which is welcomed. Overall, where our judgements differ from those included within the Addendum, these are not substantial.

Visualisations

- 1.4. Visualisations have been produced in line with our recommendations in our previous response dated 20th November 2025. Figure 16.1 'Illustrative Photomontage Viewpoints' demonstrates the inclusion of these Visualisations within the additional information. The submitted Visualisations are useful for understanding the visual effect that the proposals may have on the landscape.
- 1.5. The Visualisations for Viewpoint 5a highlight our previous concerns, that the proposed solar farm would impact long distance views to the south-east, and would also be further affected by the proposed landscape buffer which screens both the solar farm, and the long-distance views from this elevated position. We therefore remain concerned regarding the impacts of the development on BOAT Clothall 012.
- 1.6. Viewpoint 7 Visualisations demonstrate the impact of the proposals heading south on the A507. The Visualisations are however useful in understanding the extent of the view that is occupied by the panels. We do however continue to judge that the location of the Viewpoint 7 photograph contributes to reducing the visual effect of the proposals, where users travelling south will experience more expansive views of the panels than that represented by the submitted Visuals. As raised previously, we maintain that Field 3 is one of the larger contributors to the significant effects on the A507 receptor. We maintain our concerns regarding the visual effects on the A507 as a receptor, particularly in combination with other surrounding solar farm proposals.
- 1.7. Visualisations for Viewpoint 20 demonstrate that the proposed solar farm occupies a very large expanse of the horizon. We recognise that from the Visualisations, that the solar panels are located largely on the plateau to allow for existing hedgerows and boundaries to provide some screening and visual mitigation. We do also note, as below, that the adjacent solar farm scheme 3/24/2245/FUL may also further cumulatively contribute to industrialising a wider extent of this already very expansive development.
- 1.8. The Visualisations provided for the PRowWs within the site (Clothall 19 and 20) provide useful information on the sense of enclosure provided by development around the PRowWs and how the views may be affected. As demonstrated by the Visualisations, the available open views of the countryside will be significantly changed by both the proposals and the mitigation planting, however this was always acknowledged by the LVIA. The mitigation planting reduces the visual effects of the proposals, which is welcomed in the locations presented in the Visualisations. We do however maintain that in some locations where longer distance views are available, that both panels and planting will adversely affect

these longer views across the surrounding countryside.

Cumulative Effects

- 1.9. Details of the adjacent application under 3/24/2245/FUL have also been reviewed in context of this proposal. The adjacent solar development abuts the site to the east however is within the East Herts District. Cumulative effects are likely to arise from the proposed development in combination with this adjacent development, in the event that both are approved.
- 1.10. Chapter 8 of the LVIA (July 2025) makes specific reference to the Cumulative Effects associated with the development.
- 1.11. Para 8.5.23 of the CLVIA assesses a **low magnitude of change** and **minor adverse cumulative effects** on the local landscape character. In combination, the proposed solar farms occupy 20% of the Upper Beane Valley LCA (Para 8.5.22), with the indirect effects felt across a larger proportion of this character area. We would disagree that the proposals make only a “*minor contribution to the overall cumulative situation, and its cumulative addition it only slightly apparent*” (Low MOC, Table 8.1, Methodology). Para 8.5.23 acknowledges that **medium magnitude of change** would be experienced across some areas of the LCA, however we would consider this a more appropriate judgement when judging the worst-case scenario.
- 1.12. We do not disagree that the significant adverse cumulative effects on users of the A507 will remain, even beyond Year 15, as per Para 8.6.35. Owing to the topography, views across both sites will remain.
- 1.13. Para 8.6.16 of the LVIA judges that PRow Clothall 20 will experience a cumulative **high magnitude of change** and **major to moderate adverse** effects at Year 1, which we do not disagree with. However, at Year 15, this is reduced to **minor to moderate adverse** owing to the growth of intervening vegetation. PRow Clothall 20 offers long-distance views across the undulating Beane valley, for example further south of VP23, which will be obstructed by both the proposed solar panels and the mitigation planting. We therefore judge that the above judgement is reflective of some sections of the PRow, however the reduction in views of panels comes at a cost of obstructing views of characteristic landscape. This is similar to the obstruction of views from BOAT Clothall 012.
- 1.14. It would be useful for a submission of Visualisations to demonstrate the visual relationship between the application scheme and the adjacent East Herts scheme 3/24/2245/FUL. The following viewpoints will be cumulatively adversely affected by the adjacent developments:
 - Viewpoint 2
 - Viewpoint 11

- Viewpoint 14
- Viewpoint 20

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.

