

WOOD NORTON – PF/25/1192 - Installation of 36 ground mounted solar panels. The panels will be mounted on a frame system and max height of 1.5m. They are to be mounted alongside the western boundary of our curtilage 2m away from the boundary at Field Barn Cottage, Wings Lane, Wood Norton, Dereham, Norfolk, NR20 5DH

Target Date: 24 September 2025

Extension of time: N/A

Case Officer: Miss Isobel McManus

Full Planning Permission

RELEVANT SITE CONSTRAINTS:

The site lies within the Countryside for the purposes of the Core Strategy's spatial strategy
Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification
Landscape Character Assessment – within the Tributary Farmland landscape type

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

None.

THE APPLICATION:

Site Description

The proposed ground mounted solar panels would be sited on land associated with Field Barn Cottage and would serve the host dwelling. The application site is situated within an area designated as Countryside for the purposes of the adopted North Norfolk Core Strategy. The site is adjoined by agricultural fields to the north, east and south. There is a dwelling situated to the west. The site is accessed off Wings Lane to the South from Foulsham Road.

Proposal

The application proposes the installation of 36 ground mounted solar panels. The panels will be mounted on a frame system and with a maximum height of 1.5 metres. They are to be sited alongside the western boundary of the property's curtilage, 2 metres away from it.

REASONS FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE:

In the interests of transparency as set out within the council's constitution as the applicant works in Property Services at North Norfolk District Council.

“(d) Planning applications made or submitted on behalf of staff within Planning or Property teams, Senior Management Team (Directors/ Assistant Directors / Corporate Leadership Team and Members shall be determined by Development Committee. All other applications can be determined under delegated powers. Where appropriate the Director for Place and Climate Change will seek advice from the Monitoring Officer”

CONSULTATIONS:

Wood Norton Parish Council: No comments received to date.

North Norfolk District Council Landscape: No objection subject to the statutory BNG implementation condition.

REPRESENTATIONS:

No representations were received following publicity via site notice in accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

It is considered that the proposed development may raise issues relevant to

Article 8: The Right to respect for private and family life.

Article 1 of the First Protocol: The right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions.

Having considered the likely impact on an individual's Human Rights, and the general interest of the public, approval of this application as recommended is considered to be justified, proportionate and in accordance with planning law.

CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 - SECTION 17

The application raises no significant crime and disorder issues.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

The application raises no significant equality and diversity issues.

LOCAL FINANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Under Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the council is required when determining planning applications to have regard to any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application. Local finance considerations are not considered to be material to this case.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

North Norfolk Core Strategy

Policy SS 1 Spatial Strategy for North Norfolk

Policy SS 2 Development in the Countryside

Policy SS 4 Environment

Policy EN 2 Protection and enhancement of landscape and settlement character

Policy EN 4 Design

Policy EN 7 Renewable Energy

Policy EN 9 Biodiversity and Geology

Policy CT 5 The transport impact of new development

Material Considerations:

National Planning Policy Framework

Chapter 2: Achieving sustainable development

Chapter 4: Decision-making

Chapter 12: Achieving well designed places

Chapter 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment (2021)

North Norfolk Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2021)

North Norfolk Emerging Local Plan

The NNDC draft plan has reached the **Main Modifications** stage following examination by the Planning Inspectorate. Public consultation on the modifications was undertaken during August and September 2025, and the Inspector's final report is pending. Adoption is currently anticipated November / December 2025.

Application of NPPF Paragraph 48

In accordance with Paragraph 48 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), weight may be given to policies in emerging plans based on:

1. **Stage of Preparation** - *The more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given.*
The plan is at an advanced stage in the examination which supports giving **moderate weight to its policies**
2. **Extent of Unresolved Objections** - *The less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given.*
 - If there are major unresolved objections, especially to policies relevant to the application, the weight is reduced.
 - If objections are minor or resolved, more weight can be given.

There are no significant unresolved objections and therefore **SIGNIFICANT** weight may be afforded to the following relevant Emerging Local Plan Policies:

CC10 - BNG

SS1 – Spatial Strategy (Except Small Growth Villages which is apportioned no weight)

SS2 - Development in the countryside

ENV2 - Protection & Enhancement of Landscape & Settlement Character

ENV4 - Biodiversity & Geodiversity

ENV 6 - Protection of Amenity

ENV8 - High Quality Design

There are some unresolved objections and therefore **MODERATE** weight may be afforded to the following relevant Emerging Local Plan Policies:

CC2- Renewable & Low Carbon Energy

3. **Consistency with the NPPF** - *The closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given.*
The overall Plan as modified is considered to be consistent with national policy.
This supports giving greater weight to the policies identified above.

Conclusion on Weight

The Plan has been found legally compliant and capable of being found sound and is in conformity with the NPPF. Having reached main modification stage, the Plan, as modified, remains a material consideration. The examination is still ongoing, and some objections remain unresolved / unknown, and as such, there remains the potential for further alterations prior to the issuing of the Inspectors final report and prior to adoption by the Council.

Taking into account the above factors, it is considered appropriate to give moderate and significant weight to the policies as set out above of the emerging North Norfolk Local Plan (as modified) in the determination of this application.

OFFICER ASSESSEMENT:

Main issues for consideration:

- 1. Principle of development**
- 2. Effect on landscape**
- 3. Effect on residential amenity**
- 4. Whether the proposed development would have any effect on highway safety**
- 5. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

1. Principle of development

This site within the area on land designated as 'Countryside' under Policy SS 1 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy (CS). Policy SS 2 limits development within the Countryside to that which requires a rural location and where it is for a type of development listed in the policy. This includes for renewable energy projects and as the development would serve the applicant's dwelling, it requires a rural location. The proposal therefore complies with CS policies SS 1 and SS 2.

CS Policies SS 4 and EN 7 also indicate renewable energy proposals will be permitted subject to there being no significant adverse impacts either individually or cumulatively on:

- the surrounding landscape, townscape and historical features / areas;
- residential amenity;
- highway safety and;
- biodiversity

Each of these matters are considered below.

2. Effect on landscape

The 36 solar panels will be located on the western boundary of the application site to the southwest of the dwelling and are intended to generate electricity. The proposed panels will have an overall height of 1.5m. The site is well screened by a cluster of trees to the north. A public right of way (Wood Norton FP2) runs to the west of the site. Further, there are intervening landscape features such as trees and hedges when viewed within the wider landscape. Given the relatively small-scale proposal, together with the low-level height, the proposal raises no significant issues with regard to landscape and visual impact. Nonetheless, to ensure the effect on the landscape is minimised in the longer term, a condition requiring the panels to be removed when no longer required for electricity generation for the application dwelling is recommend.

For the reasons stated, it is considered that the proposed development would not result in any significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. It is therefore in accordance with CS Policies EN 2, EN 4 and EN 7.

3. Effect on residential amenity

CS Policy EN 4 states that proposals should not have a significantly detrimental effect on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers. Solar glare can sometimes be a concern in this respect. Given the separation distance between the site and the closest dwelling to the west, along with intervening landscape features, it is considered that the proposed development would not result in any material harmful effects. The proposal therefore complies with CS policies EN 4 and EN 7.

4. Whether the proposal would have an impact on highway safety

The application is considered acceptable in terms of highway impact, in accordance with CS Policies EN 7 and CT 5.

5. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The Landscape section has reviewed the Small Site Metric and Baseline Habitat Plan submitted by the applicant in support of the application and are satisfied with the baseline calculations presented within. On this basis the habitat unit baseline can be agreed, and the applicant has complied with their BNG obligations for this stage of the process.

The Landscape section considers the proposal to offset habitat unit losses through planting trees to be appropriate and as the land is not classified as private garden, gains can feasibly be delivered on site.

The statutory BNG implementation condition would ensure the biodiversity gain plan (BGP) is submitted and additional implementation conditions will secure delivery. Subject to the imposition of conditions the proposal would accord with the aims of CS Policy EN 9.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

Relevant Core Strategy policies are supportive of this type of development, and it is considered that the proposal will not result in any significant adverse effects for the reasons stated above. The proposed development complies with all relevant policies and would have benefits in terms of renewable energy generation and carbon reduction in terms of climate change.

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVAL subject to conditions to cover the following matters:

- Time Limit for commencement (3 years)
- Development in accordance with the approved plans
- Removal of equipment when no longer required
- BNG implementation condition

Final wording of conditions and any others considered to be necessary to be delegated to the Assistant Director – Planning.