



EAST PARK ENERGY

East Park Energy

EN010141

Applicant Response to Bushmead Estate

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this Document

- 1.1.1 This document sets out the response of BSSL Cambsbed 1 Limited ('the Applicant') to the Deadline 4 submission made by **Bushmead Estate [REP4-046]** in relation to the Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the East Park Energy project (the 'Scheme').
- 1.1.2 The documents submitted with the application and at previous examination deadlines are referenced using the reference number assigned by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) i.e. **[APP-XXX]**.

1.2 Note about National Policy Statements

- 1.2.1 Section 1.6 of the 2026 NPS EN-1 confirms that for schemes accepted for examination before the final publication of the approved 2025 amendments, the 2024 suite of NPSs should have effect. East Park Energy was accepted for examination in October 2025 prior to the final publication of the 2025 amendments. The 2024 NPSs therefore have effect for decision making.
- 1.2.2 All references to the NPSs in this document made by the Applicant are to the 2024 NPSs unless stated otherwise.
- 1.2.3 The Applicant has prepared a separate **Note on updated National Policy Statements EN-1, EN-3 and EN-5 [PDA-018]**.

2.0 APPLICANT RESPONSE TO BUSHMEAD ESTATE

Table 1: Applicant Response to Bushmead Estate [REP4-046]

Our Ref.	Bushmead Estate Comment	Applicant Response
BE-D6-01	1. Introduction and Standing 1.1 This written representation is submitted on behalf of the Bushmead Estate, Bedfordshire, as an Interested Party in the examination of the Development Consent Order application for East Park Energy (EN010141). 1.2 The Bushmead Estate has a direct and material interest in this application by reason of: • Ownership of land on both sides of Bushmead Road and of several private access points and field entrances directly off it, which are named in the Applicant's own application documents as proposed construction, operation and decommissioning traffic accesses for Site B; • The Estate's proximity to Site B of the proposed development, situated between Pertenhall, Keysoe and Little Staughton — immediately adjacent to the Bushmead Estate's landholding; • The potential loss of, or adverse impact upon, agricultural land farmed in connection with the Estate; • The significant adverse visual impact upon the Estate's property, landscape setting and amenity.	The Applicant acknowledges the representation submitted by W.A. Wade-Gery, Managing Director of W.A. Wade-Gery Ltd, on behalf of Bushmead Estate. The Applicant has carefully considered the matters raised. However, in order to provide a complete and fully informed response, the Applicant requires confirmation from Bushmead Estate and/or W.A. Wade-Gery Ltd as to the land to which the representation relates, together with details of the nature and extent of any relevant interest in that land. The representation made does not identify the extent of the Bushmead Estate landholdings, nor does it explain how those landholdings interact with the Order Limits or the Scheme. The Applicant has undertaken enquiries to identify land registered to W.A. Wade-Gery Ltd. Those enquiries indicate that land registered under title numbers BD103131, BD130661, BD181769, BD296414, BD299217, BD299219, BD299220 and BD73123 is owned by W.A. Wade-Gery Ltd. The Applicant has prepared a visualisation showing the extent of land registered under those title numbers in relation to the Scheme's Order Limits. On the basis of the information presently available, there does not appear to be any interaction or overlap between the land identified as being within Bushmead Estate's ownership and the Scheme's Order Limits. In the absence of confirmation from Bushmead Estate and/or W.A. Wade-Gery Ltd, the Applicant is not able to verify whether the factual assertions made in the representation are accurate. The response below is therefore provided on the basis of the

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		information currently available to the Applicant and the assumptions set out above in respect of land owned by Bushmead Estate.
BE-D6-02	2. Access Points and Land Ownership: Bushmead Road 2.1 Bushmead Road is a public highway maintained by the highway authority. However, the Bushmead Estate owns land on both sides of Bushmead Road and owns several access points and field entrances directly off it. These accesses are not in the ownership of the highway authority and are critical to the day-to-day farming and estate management operations of Bushmead Farm. 2.2 The Applicant's own proposals for Site B identify new accesses off Bushmead Road and upgrades to existing accesses off Bushmead Road for construction, operation and decommissioning works traffic. Several of the accesses referred to in the application documents are in the ownership of the Bushmead Estate. The Applicant does not appear to have secured, or sought, the consent of the Estate to use, alter or upgrade these privately owned access points. The Examining Authority is respectfully asked to note that: • The Estate's private accesses onto Bushmead Road are not public highway. Any works to alter, widen, reinforce or otherwise modify them require the landowner's consent. No such consent has been given; • The application documents do not appear to include the Estate's access points within any compulsory acquisition or temporary possession schedules. If the Applicant intends to rely upon private agreement, no such agreement exists; • The use of Bushmead Road as a primary HGV construction route, with the Estate's land on both sides, would create serious risk of obstruction, damage and interference with the Estate's own access points and farming operations over a three-year construction period; • If consent is granted, the Estate requires that any DCO requirement or associated planning obligation provides that no	The Applicant requests confirmation from Bushmead Estate as to the extent of the landholdings referred to in the representation. Until that information is provided, the Applicant is unable to provide a conclusive response in relation to alleged impacts on land within the Estate's ownership. If the extent of Bushmead Estate's ownership corresponds with the land identified by the Applicant in Appendix A to this response, the Applicant does not seek to acquire, use or develop any land owned by W.A. Wade-Gery Limited or William Alexander Wade-Gery.

Our Ref.	Bushmead Estate Comment	Applicant Response
	works shall be carried out to any access point in the ownership of the Bushmead Estate, and no such access point shall be used for construction traffic, until a legally binding Access Agreement has been executed between the Applicant and the Estate to the Estate's reasonable satisfaction. 2.3 The Estate reserves all rights to take such legal action as may be necessary to prevent any unauthorised interference with, or alteration to, its privately owned access points, including injunctive relief.	
BE-D6-03	3. Construction Traffic: Impact on the Estate 3.1 The proposed construction programme is anticipated to span approximately three years from Summer 2027. The Estate owns land on both sides of Bushmead Road, and the road runs through the heart of the Bushmead Farm agricultural operation. During the construction period, the use of Bushmead Road as a primary HGV route would cause: • Structural damage to the private road surface and verges beyond normal wear and tear; • Serious interference with the day-to-day agricultural and estate management operations of Bushmead Farm, including safe access for farm machinery, livestock movements and deliveries; • Dust, noise and vibration impacting on the Estate's residential and commercial occupiers throughout the construction period; • Safety risks to farm workers, residents and visitors using the road. 3.2 The Estate requests that, if consent is granted, the following are secured as DCO requirements: (a) A pre-construction road condition survey of Bushmead Road and all affected estate roads, agreed with the Estate; (b) Full reinstatement of all Estate access points and field entrances to at least their pre-construction condition at the Applicant's cost, with a financial bond or security in place prior to commencement, and coordination with the highway authority regarding the condition of Bushmead Road itself; (c) Restriction of construction HGV movements to agreed hours, with	The Applicant is not proposing any works in the close vicinity of the Bushmead Estate land identified in Appendix A, as demonstrated by the separation between the Bushmead Estate land and the Order limits. The public highways that pass through the Bushmead Estate will not be used by construction or operational traffic. With regard to Bushmead Road, no traffic will travel along Bushmead Road, with the only use of Bushmead Road being a highway crossing between points SA19 and SA20 shown on ES Vol 3 Figure 2-4f [APP-124]. This crossing is within the Order limits to the north of Eaton Socon Substation, and the separation between the crossing and the Bushmead Estate land can be seen on the plan provided at Appendix A. The Applicant would like to point out that the draft DCO [REP5-005] and the documents proposed to be certified under it, including the outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [REP4-094], secure the framework for construction management and mitigation. These documents set out the controls that will apply during construction of the Scheme, including measures relating to construction traffic management, access, routing, working practices and the mitigation of construction effects.

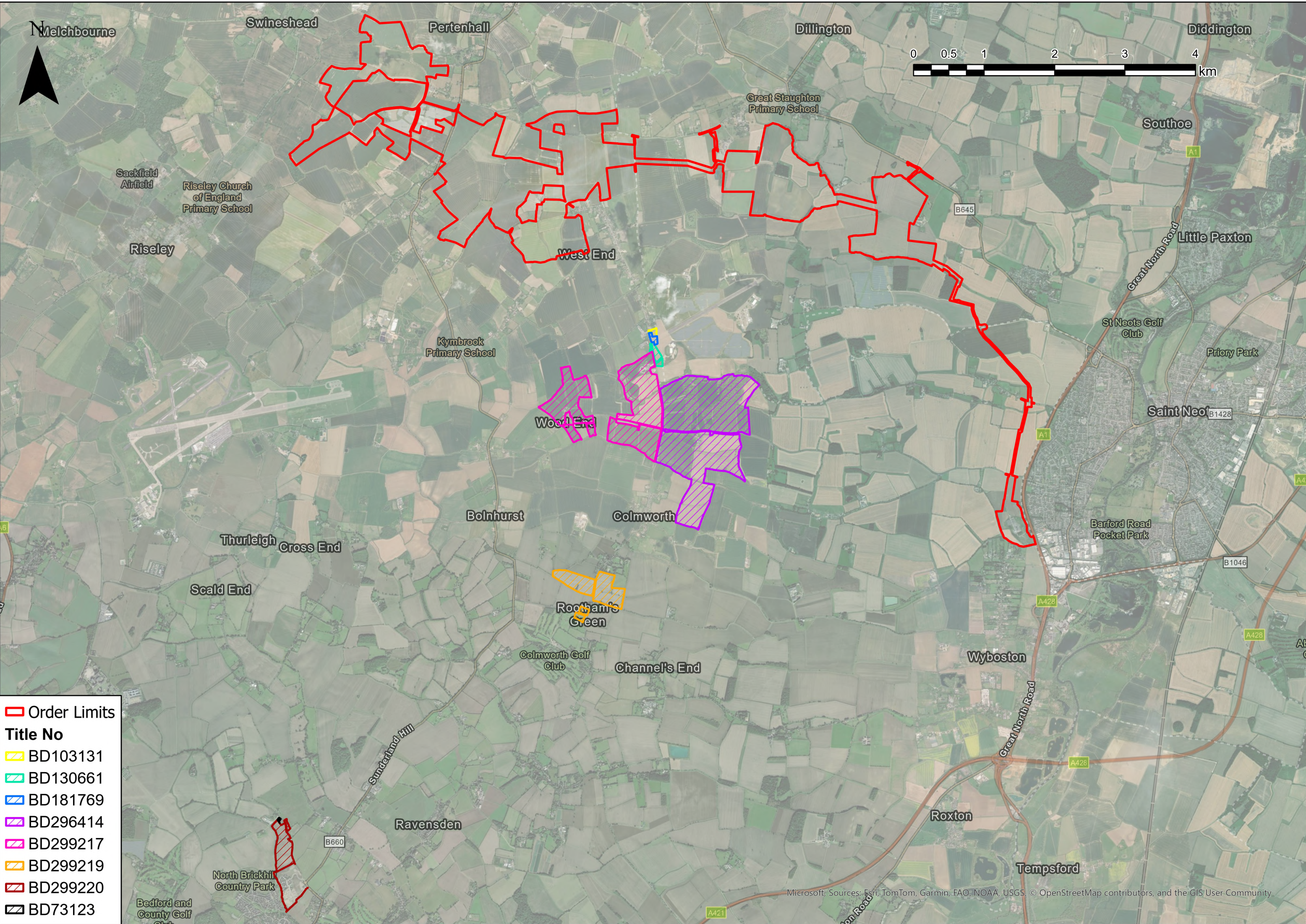
Our Ref.	Bushmead Estate Comment	Applicant Response
	a prohibition on early-morning, late-evening, weekend and bank holiday movements past the Estate's residential buildings; (d) Appointment of a Community Liaison Officer with direct responsibility for responding to complaints and concerns from the Bushmead Estate within 24 hours.	
BE-D6-04	4. Agricultural Land and Tenancy Impacts 4.1 The Bushmead Estate farms and manages agricultural land in the area directly affected by Site B. Approximately 74–75% of the land within the East Park Energy project boundary is classified as Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land of grade 2 and grade 3a. The Estate is deeply concerned by the permanent loss of productive agricultural land to solar development for a minimum period of 40 years. 4.2 The Estate notes that government policy, including the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3), requires decision-makers to give significant weight to the protection of BMV land. The Estate submits that the Applicant has not demonstrated that the use of BMV land is unavoidable, nor that the harm to agricultural productivity has been adequately addressed. 4.3 The Estate further requests that, if consent is granted, robust soil management and restoration conditions are imposed to ensure that affected land is returned to its pre-existing agricultural grade and capability upon decommissioning, with an independently verified restoration bond in place.	The Applicant notes the comments raised under the heading “Agricultural Land and Tenancy Impacts”. The issues concerning agricultural land classification, best and most versatile agricultural land and soil management have been considered in detail during the examination. The Applicant refers Bushmead Estate to the Written Summary of the Applicant's Oral Submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) and Action Points [REP1-059], which records the detailed consideration given to these matters at the public hearings. The Applicant's position remains that national policy does not require an applicant to identify, or compulsorily assemble, a wholly best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land-free solar site. Neither do the National Planning Policy Framework or National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) require decision-makers to give <i>significant weight</i> to the protection of BMV land. National Policy Statement EN-3 is clear that land type should not be a predominating factor in determining site suitability, although where agricultural land is necessary, poorer quality land should be preferred and best and most versatile agricultural land should be avoided where possible (paragraph 2.10.29). EN-3 also expressly states that ground mounted solar is not prohibited on best and most versatile agricultural land (paragraph 2.10.30) and recognises that, at utility scale, solar schemes are likely to use some agricultural land, requiring applicants to explain their choice of site rather than eliminate agricultural land impacts altogether (paragraph 2.10.31). The policy test is therefore one of

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		explanation, justification and preference where possible, not absolute avoidance. The Applicant has explained the approach taken to identifying lower-grade agricultural land, including in its oral submissions at Issue Specific Hearing 2 and in ES Volume 2 Appendix 3.1 Site Identification Report [APP-058]. The balancing exercise undertaken in rejecting alternative search areas is set out in Sections 6 and 7 of that report. The Applicant has also prepared an outline Soil Management Plan [REP3-060], which sets out the framework for how soils will be managed across the lifetime of the Scheme. This includes a commitment at paragraph 4.1.30 that <i>“The final Soil Management Plan will include measures to ensure that agricultural land disturbed by the Scheme, including temporary construction areas, access tracks, compounds, cable corridors and grid connection works, is reinstated so that the land is returned to the Agricultural Land Classification grade recorded in the pre-construction ALC survey”</i>. Should the Scheme be consented, the DCO requires that a final Soil Management Plan is prepared and approved prior to construction.
BE-D6-05	5. Visual Impact on the Bushmead Estate 5.1 The Bushmead Estate occupies a prominent position within the North Bedfordshire landscape. The proposed 1,900-acre development, involving 700,000 photovoltaic panels on 250,000 pile-driven metal posts, would cause a fundamental and irreversible change to the character of the landscape within which the Estate sits. 5.2 Site B, located between Pertenhall, Keysoe and Little Staughton, is directly adjacent to the Estate. The Estate submits that the visual impact assessments submitted by the Applicant underestimate the degree of harm to the Estate's landscape setting, amenity and heritage character. The Bushmead	The Applicant notes the Estate's request that a specific viewpoint assessment from key locations on and around the Estate be carried out and included in the Examining Authority's site inspection, and that landscape screening and mitigation be secured as a requirement before any development commences on Site B. A zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) produced as part of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and submitted as ES Vol 3 Figure 5-3b [APP-129] demonstrates that there would be limited to no visibility between the Bushmead Estate land and the Scheme. This was subsequently confirmed by sites visit

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	Estate has historic and architectural significance, and the industrial character of the proposed solar infrastructure would be visible from Estate buildings, gardens and land. 5.3 The Estate requests that a specific viewpoint assessment from key locations on and around the Estate be carried out and included in the Examining Authority's site inspection, and that meaningful landscape screening and mitigation is secured as a DCO requirement before any development commences on Site B.	undertaken as part of the preparation of ES Vol 1 Chapter 5 Landscape and Visual [REP4-008]. In addition, Bushmead Priory has been assessed (Asset Number 11 and 80) within ES Vol 2 Appendix 6-4 Settings Impact Assessment [REP1-022] where the conclusion is that there would be no effect on the setting of the designated heritage assets. The Applicant's position is that there would be no adverse visual impact on the Bushmead Estate land, and no adverse effect on the setting of designated heritage assets.
	6. Property Value and Estate Amenity 6.1 The Bushmead Estate comprises residential, commercial and agricultural property. The proposed development, both during its three-year construction phase and throughout its 40-year operational life, is likely to cause material diminution in the value and marketability of Estate property. The Applicant's application does not contain any provision for compensation to affected landowners and estate owners beyond those whose land is directly subject to the DCO. 6.2 The Estate requests that the Examining Authority recommends that the Secretary of State requires the Applicant to enter into a Land Value Impact Agreement with affected neighbouring landowners, and that the Legacy Fund of £6 million referenced in the Applicant's supporting material is structured and governed so as to provide direct, meaningful benefit to immediately affected estates and landowners, not merely to wider community projects.	The Applicant notes the concerns raised in relation to property value and estate amenity. Effects on private property value are not, in themselves, matters which attract weight as material planning considerations in the examination of an application for development consent. The Applicant has assessed the environmental and planning effects of the Scheme through the application documents and the examination process. The Legacy Fund or Community Benefit Fund referred to in the Planning Statement [APP-031] does not form part of the planning balance and is not relied upon by the Applicant as mitigation for the purposes of the development consent application. The fund will be delivered in partnership with an independent third-party organisation with expertise in the management of community funds, and its purpose is to deliver benefits to the local community.
BE-D6-06	7. Summary and Requests 7.1 For the reasons set out above, the Bushmead Estate: • Objects to the grant of development consent in its current form; • Requests that the Examining Authority	For the reasons set out above, whilst the Applicant awaits more information in relation to the land owned by Bushmead Estate, on the information presently available, the land identified as being

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	requires the Applicant to demonstrate that it has secured, or will secure, the necessary legal rights over Bushmead Road before any consent is granted; • Requests that, if consent is granted, robust DCO requirements are imposed covering road reinstatement, traffic management, landscape mitigation, soil restoration and community liaison, as detailed above; • Requests a hearing session to enable the Estate to present its case orally before the Examining Authority; • Reserves the right to submit further representations as the examination progresses and further information is made available. 7.2 The Estate is willing to engage directly with the Applicant and the Examining Authority to seek to resolve its concerns. However, in the absence of satisfactory legal agreements and DCO protections, the Estate maintains its objection to the grant of development consent.	associated with W.A. Wade-Gery Ltd does not appear to overlap with the Order Limits, and the issues raised concerning construction traffic, agricultural land, soil management, visual effects and community benefit have been addressed through the application documents and the examination process. The Applicant will review any further information provided by Bushmead Estate and/or W.A. Wade-Gery Ltd identifying the relevant landholdings and any specific interaction with the Scheme.

APPENDIX A



Order Limits

Title No

BD103131

BD130661

BD181769

BD296414

BD299217

BD299219

BD299220

BD73123

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