

Submission to the Planning Inspectorate: Representation on Behalf of Hullavington Parish Council FB043E4E3

The Examining Authority's Second Written Questions (ExQ2) - ExA have requested a response from Hullavington Parish Council, ref SE2.3.

Project: Lime Down Solar Park

Subject: Impacts on Hullavington Village Hall (Construction and Operation of Lime Down Solar Park)

1. Background and Importance of Hullavington Village Hall

Hullavington Village Hall serves as the vital social, cultural, and recreational hub of our rural community. It is a key asset that hosts a wide variety of regular community groups, exercise and wellbeing classes, film nights, local council meetings, children's activities, and private event hire.

As a community-run facility, the ongoing operational and maintenance costs of the Village Hall are funded entirely through user lettings and event attendance. The viability of the hall depends directly on maintaining regular attendance across all scheduled clubs, groups, and public events.

2. Impacts Arising from Construction, Operation, and Decommissioning

While construction traffic and cable route works may not sit immediately adjacent to the physical boundary of Hullavington Village Hall itself, the extensive traffic disruption, potential road closures, and heavy goods vehicle (HGV) movements across the surrounding parish road network will severely affect access to the venue and jeopardise future community projects.

2.1. Traffic Disruption, Travel Delays, and Road Safety

- **Access Barriers for Attendees:** A significant proportion of individuals attending clubs, wellbeing classes, and events at the Village Hall travel from surrounding hamlets and neighbouring villages. Construction traffic, temporary traffic signals, single-lane controls, and local road diversions will introduce significant travel delays and unpredictability.
- **Peak Activity Conflict:** The majority of daytime and early-evening community groups, exercise classes, and activities take place during peak operational hours for construction traffic. Drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians attempting to navigate narrow rural lanes alongside increased HGV volumes will face heightened road safety concerns.
- **Deterrence Factor:** The inconvenience, prolonged travel times, and perceived hazards associated with traveling through construction zones will actively

dissuade regular users and hirers from traveling to the Hall, leading attendees to drop out or seek alternative venues outside the affected area.

2.2. Financial Impact

- **Loss of Existing Lettings Income:** Any sustained drop in attendance directly threatens the income stream generated by regular group bookings and private event hires. The hall relies on this steady cash flow to cover fixed operational overheads including energy charges, insurance, annual ground rent and ongoing maintenance.

3. Threat to Future Community Expansion

- **Risk to Future Amenities via the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP):** The Parish is actively working to secure dedicated community land through our Neighbourhood Development Plan to build essential amenities that Hullavington desperately needs.
- **Compounded Timing Crisis:** Realising these critical new facilities requires significant initial fundraising, applying for design and construction grant awards, and establishing long-term self-funding mechanisms once operational. The proposed construction window for the Lime Down Solar Park directly overlaps with this pivotal delivery phase. A drop in village hall usage, reduced community engagement caused by widespread local disruption, and impaired fundraising capacity during construction puts the entire future of these planned amenities at serious risk.

3. Impact on Community Life

The Village Hall is more than a building. It is one of the few community-owned facilities that regularly brings people together.

It provides opportunities for recreation, social contact, learning, volunteering and local decision-making. For many residents, particularly older people and those who live alone, these activities are an important part of community life.

The effect of the Scheme should therefore not be viewed simply as a transport issue. If people attend less often, activities may become unviable, community groups may struggle to continue and opportunities for social interaction may be reduced.

Even if those effects are difficult to measure, they are real and could have lasting consequences for the strength and resilience of the community.

4. Conclusion

Hullavington Village Hall depends on people being able and willing to use it.

The disruption associated with the Lime Down Solar Park has the potential to reduce attendance, weaken community participation, affect fundraising and undermine the long-term resilience of an important community asset.

The impact should therefore be viewed not simply as a transport issue, but as an effect on a key element of the parish's social infrastructure and community life.

Furthermore, plans to expand essential amenities on community land will be severely compromised, significantly reducing the likelihood of successfully delivering these vital facilities.

The Planning Inspectorate is asked to give appropriate weight to the potential impact of the Scheme on the Hall, its users and the wider community it serves.