Submission ID: S9FA95C8B

I am writing in response to Historic Englands WR for deadline 1
Historic Englands recent written representation draws important questions regarding the overall impact of any solar development overall, but in particular on site 8 and the Shotesham conservation area. I am concerned that the assessment of Site 8 does not adequately demonstrate how the proposed development would affect the wider rural landscape and setting of Shotesham Conservation Area.
The landscape is described by Historic England and East Pye as a highly tranquil rural landscape of high sensitivity. The applicants landscape assessment predicts significant adverse landscape effects during operation, with effects still assessed as Moderate and Significant at year 15, despite mitigation. The arrays would be clearly visible from viewpoint VL9 on Wash Lane due to the elevated land rising up to Brooke Road and Baxters Lane, plus from residential homes on Baxters Lane, Footpaths 22 and 19, and Boudicca's Way. However the question is not simply one of visibility from footpaths surrounding and crossing Site 8, but also the wider change in the experience and character of the landscape – from an existing rural valley with agricultural land, open views and tranquillity to a landscape containing extensive solar infrastructure and associated planting.
It should also be noted that the surrounding landscape contributes significantly to the Shotesham Conservation area, by its historic and spatial relationship. There needs to be a full assessment of how the introduction of a solar infrastructure and associated planting would impact on the wider conservation area and significantly change it.
Any mitigation in terms of planting would serve only to attempt to screen the solar arrays, and would fundamentally change the open rural landscape, which is recognised by East Pye as being of High Value. Planting of any trees and hedges will significantly alter the landscape, and any benefits would depend entirely on future management – which would need careful monitoring and penalties in place, in the eventuality of failure to maintain any planting. Even after decommissioning the landscape could not be returned to it's present high value, due to new plantings which would reduce to open nature of the landscape.
Has the introduction of solar infrastructure and associated planting been fully assessed on the effect of the existing open views with few intrusive built features .
I would ask the ExA for a full assessment to distinguish between screening infrastructure from view and genuinely mitigation any adverse impact on landscape character and heritage significance.
I would also request the ExA to ensure that the assessment of Site 8 adequately demonstrate how the proposed development would affect the wider rural landscape and setting of Shotesham Conservation Area.