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| **Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.** |
| **Signed:** | **Officer:** | BT | **Date:** | 10/10/23 | **Manager:** | **LH** | **Date:** | **11/10/23** |
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| **Application Ref:** | 3/2023/0590 |  |
| **Date Inspected:** | 24/8/23 & 21/9/23 | **Site Notice:** | 24/8/23 |
| **Officer:** | BT |
| **DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:**  | **REFUSAL** |
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| **Development Description:** | Proposed free-standing solar panel array to the back of the existing earthworks bund with associated solar battery backup storage building. |
| **Site Address/Location:** | Wiswell Manor, Pendleton Road, Wiswell, BB7 9BZ. |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Parish/Town Council** |
| **Wiswell Parish Council:** | Consulted 23/8/23 – no response. |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies** |
| **RVBC Countryside:** | No objections subject to no excavation works being undertaken to facilitate installation of the solar panels. |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Additional Representations.** |
| None. |
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| **RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:** |
| **Ribble Valley Core Strategy:**Key Statement DS1: Development StrategyKey Statement DS2: Sustainable DevelopmentKey Statement EN2: LandscapeKey Statement EN3: Sustainable Development And Climate ChangePolicy DMG1: General ConsiderationsPolicy DMG2: Strategic ConsiderationsPolicy DME1: Protecting Trees & WoodlandPolicy DME2: Landscape & Townscape ProtectionPolicy DME5: Renewable EnergyNational Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) |
| **Relevant Planning History:****3/2017/0032:**Earthworks mound to field boundary to the bottom of the paddock (Approved)**3/2017/0030:**Proposed new garden storage building with potting shed and greenhouse (Approved)**3/2017/0005:**Discharge of conditions 3 (landscaping) and 6 (external lighting) from planning permission 3/2014/0053.**3/2016/1094:**New outbuilding to contain garden store, potting shed and greenhouse (Withdrawn)**3/2016/0659:**Amendment of approved proposed access gates and gateposts to include new capping detail and stone flanking walls (Approved)**3/2015/0819:**Proposed new Haha across paddock land to rear of site to allow lower section of grassland to be maintained by grazing livestock (Approved)**3/2015/0240:**Discharge of condition1 (approved plans), 2 (stone details,) 3 (landscaping,) 4 (compliance with tree surveys,) 5 (compliance with protected species survey ) of planning permission 3/2014/0053 (Approved)**3/2014/0053:**Demolition of all buildings on site (existing house, kennels and various outbuildings) and erection of dwelling house (including bed and breakfast element). Reduced footprint scheme of existing approved application 3/2012/0010 (Approved)**3/2012/0010:**Proposed demolition of all buildings on the site (existing house, kennels and various outbuildings) and erection of a new dwelling house (including Bed & Breakfast element) (Approved)**3/2011/0498:**Demolition of all buildings on the site (existing house, kennels and various outbuildings) and erection of a new dwelling incorporating a Bed and Breakfast Business (Refused) |
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| **ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:** |
| **Site Description and Surrounding Area:**The application relates to a detached property situated on the North-eastern outskirts of Wiswell. The application property comprises a sizeable Georgian style manor house set within extensive grounds which extend to the North-west from the rear profile of the dwelling towards open countryside. The North-western extent of the application property’s approved domestic curtilage area adjoins a wildflower meadow area which subsequently adjoins to a ‘ha-ha’ feature. The land to the North-west of the ha-ha feature comprises a paddock area with its North-western perimeter comprising an earthworks bund lined with young tree planting. The North-eastern and South-western perimeters of the application site are lined with mature tree cover. The surrounding area is predominantly rural and comprises a mixture of woodland, agricultural land and open countryside with the Forest Of Bowland AONB abutting the South-eastern side of Pendleton Road. |
| **Proposed Development for which consent is sought:**Consent is sought for the installation of a freestanding solar panel array comprising two rows of 74 solar panels. The proposed solar panel array would extend along a large majority of the application site’s North-western boundary on the North-western side of the site’s earthworks bund. The panels would be linked to a battery storage shed via cabling with the battery storage shed sited at the North-eastern end of the solar panel array. |
| **Impact Upon Residential Amenity:**No adverse impacts upon neighbouring amenity are identified with respect to the works proposed.  |
| **Visual Amenity/External Appearance:**Paragraph 130 of the NPPF states:*‘Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting’.*Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy provides additional general design guidance as follows: *‘All* *development must* *be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing and style…particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character.’*With respect to development within the AONB, Paragraph 176 of the NPPF states:*‘Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty…development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.’*Key Statement EN2 of the Core Strategy provides similar guidance: *‘The landscape and character of those areas that contribute to the setting and character of the Forest of Bowland Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected and conserved and wherever possible enhanced. As a principle the Council will expect development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials.’*Policy DME5 of the Core Strategy seeks to support the use of renewable energy schemes, subject to assessment of the visual impact of the proposal, including design, colour, scale and impact upon the surrounding landscape, with a greater degree of scrutiny to be applied to proposals for renewable energy schemes within or close to the Forest Of Bowland AONB.In this instance, the application site lies outside of the defined settlement area of Wiswell within a predominantly rural area with the designated Forest Of Bowland AONB abutting the South-eastern extent of the site. The solar panel array proposed would be extensive comprising two rows of 74 individual solar panels spanning a total distance of approximately 84 metres along the North-western side of the site’s earthworks bund. Public Right Of Way FP0347003 provides clear and long range views both towards and beyond the application site therefore the proposed development would be clearly read in the context of the surrounding open countryside and setting of the wider AONB landscape. Furthermore, there is a notable absence of microregeneration equipment of the scale and extent proposed within the locality. Accordingly, the visual impact of the proposed development would be pronounced, with the extensive solar panel scheme reading as largely juxtaposed against the backdrop of the unspoilt surrounding open countryside and wider AONB landscape.As such, the proposed solar panel scheme would read as a harmful addition to the area in as much that its introduction would undermine the natural beauty of the area. The proposed development would therefore fail to satisfy the requirements of Paragraphs 130 and 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1 and DME5 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy. |
| **Highways and Parking:**No changes to the application site’s existing parking arrangement are proposed as part of the development. |
| **Landscape/Ecology:**TreesThe proposed solar panel array would be sited in close proximity to numerous young trees which line the application site’s earthworks bund. Construction and installation of the proposed solar panel array would be implemented by way of a ‘no dig’ specialised ground screw system designed for low impact construction in close proximity to trees and other natural features. The methodology proposed for the installation of the panels has been reviewed by the Council’s Countryside Officer who has deemed this to be acceptable subject to the applicant adhering to the ‘no-dig’ approach specified. |
| **Other Matters:**CurtilageThe proposed development has been submitted under a Householder planning application however the proposed location for the solar panel array and associated battery housing falls outside of the property’s domestic curtilage area approved under planning application 3/2015/0819. The application’s cover letter provides additional confirmation of this. As such the works cannot be dealt with under the householder planning application submitted and would need to be submitted under a full planning application, however given the visual and landscape harm identified this would likely not be supported by the Council. |
| **Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:**The proposed development by virtue of its design, scale, prominence and incongruity with the surrounding landscape would result in the introduction of an anomalous and unsympathetic form of development that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding open countryside and setting of the wider AONB landscape.Moreover, Paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework states:***‘****Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design’.*As such, for the above reasons and having regard to all material considerations and matters raised that the application is recommended for refusal.Furthermore the application is not considered to be for householder development as the proposed development falls outside of the lawful domestic curtilage. |
| **RECOMMENDATION**: | That planning consent be refused for the following reason: |
| **01:** | The proposed development would result in the introduction of a poorly designed, prominent, incongruous and unsympathetic form of development that would undermine the natural beauty of the surrounding open countryside and setting of the wider AONB landscape. The proposal is therefore considered to be in conflict with Paragraphs 130 and 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1 and DME5 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy. |
| **02:** | The development proposed falls outside of the application property’s lawful domestic curtilage area. As a result such works cannot be considered under the householder planning application submitted.  |