

Land North of Little Cheveney Farm, Sheephurst Lane, Marden (22/501335/FUL; APP/U2235/W/23/3321094)

Noise Response provided by Mick Lane, Acoustic Director of dBC Consultation Limited BSc(Hons) DipIOA MIOA.

I have been asked to comment on the noise issue raised by Peter Radmall, the Council's landscape witness, at paragraph 5.15 of his Proof of Evidence (CD12.4). Mr Radmall refers to the possibility that noise from the compounds and inverters "may be audible from the nearest PRowS" and expresses the view that this is "likely to be perceived as a source of disturbance".

The original assessment of this project was undertaken to determine potential impact upon receptor locations using BS 4142:2014-A1:2019 guidance. The assessment was detailed in document reference dBC/Origin/10253/ML/04 Core Document number CD1.39. As part of this assessment ambient noise levels were measured over four days close to the two identified and assessed receptor locations, 8 Little Sheephurst Cottages and Willow Cottage, Sheephurst Lane. No ambient noise data was measured on any of the various footpaths on the site.

The noise impact assessment concluded that due to the site layout, equipment locations and use of low noise emitting equipment the development is likely to have a low impact on these two receptor locations.

The conclusion of the noise impact assessment has been agreed with the Council and the subsequent planning condition 19 has been agreed with the Council with all parties understanding how this Condition will be fulfilled post development. As a consequence of this agreement the Council has withdrawn the reason for refusal related to noise impact.

No other acoustic assessment was requested by the Council for this development.

Mr Radmall's concern about possible disturbance to users of PRowS from equipment noise was not identified as an issue in the Council's Statement of Case (either in paragraphs 35 to 50 dealing with landscape and visual impact, or paragraphs 87 to 91 dealing with noise).

A noise is audible if heard at a particular location, in this case on a PRow. The audibility or how loud the noise is perceived is dependent upon the equipment noise level and the existing ambient noise level at that location. At times when other noise sources around the site e.g. tractors and farm machinery and trains passing, are absent equipment noise may be audible on the PRowS. But without ambient noise data measured on the PRowS (which was not gathered when the noise assessment was undertaken because this was not understood to be a concern) a robust quantitative assessment of audibility is not possible. I have therefore sought to provide a brief qualitative response.

Mr Radmall asserts that audible equipment noise is likely to be perceived as "disturbing", but it is not possible to gauge whether audible noise on a PRow will be perceived as disturbing by users of the PRow. The suggestion that this is "likely" is simply a subjective expression of opinion and whether it would be perceived as source of disturbance will depend on the individual's perception of the noise and can also depend upon ambient noise levels, weather, hearing health, mental state and development acceptance. There is no scientific scale of disturbance.

Any equipment noise audible on a PRoW is likely to be relatively low in terms of emission, and as Mr Radmall appears to accept it would be too low to give rise to any nuisance.

Subjectively, during certain times of day equipment noise may be audible on the PRoWs on the site. It should be emphasised, however, that audibility does not equate to disturbance and in my view the expected equipment noise levels are unlikely to be considered a nuisance by those using the PRoW in this case.