

GORING-ON-THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

Authority to Hold Virtual Public Meetings

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 [LACP 2020] came into effect on the 4th April 2020

LAPCP 2020, allows for the use of Virtual Public Meetings until 6th May 2021, to enable local councils to continue to work and support their communities, and legally allow the council as a body to make decisions.

Please note, LAPCP 2020 also removed the requirement to hold an Annual Council Meeting during the month of May 2020. All appointments normally approved in the ACM now rollover to the next ACM in May 2021, with the current appointments and committees continuing by extension.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE GORING ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL Tuesday 26 January 2021 at 7.30pm, Virtual Meeting

Members Present:

Chairman	Matthew Brown (MBr)
Members	Lawrie Reavill (LR)
	Bryan Urbick (BU)
	John Wills (JW)
	David Brooker (DB)
	Sonia Lofthouse (SL)

Officers Present:

Clerk	Laura White (LW)
Assistant Clerk	Mike Ward (MW)

5 members of the public were present at various stages of the meeting

21/1 To receive apologies for absence

Mary Bulmer (MBu).

21/2 To receive declarations of interests

None declared

21/3 Public forum

BU gave a short presentation of the document forming the basis of GPC's proposed objection to P20/S4706/FUL. LR questioned whether Didcot Power Station had been consulted. One MOP presented statistics concerning the level of pollution that would be generated, and questioned why the landowner box 25 on the application had not been completed. Concerning application P20/S4403/HH one MOP presented a comprehensive analysis of why this application should be rejected. BU recommended that this analysis together with a comment by Prof. Brookes on the SODC website should form the basis for GPC's response.

21/4 To approve minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2020.

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Resolved: The minutes were approved and signed.

21/5 Matters arising from those minutes not elsewhere on the agenda.

None identified.

21/6 To review the following Applications:

1. P20/S4456/HH Hillcrest 37 Springhill Road Goring RG8 0BY

Thermal upgrade - external insulation and clear glass roof lights on the east, west and north face of the eastern pitched roof. Open plan kitchen-diner (wall removal and ceiling removal) Upgrading of bathrooms Air-source heat pump installation.

It was **resolved that GPC has a response:** *No objections subject to Environmental Officer's noise concerns being addressed.*

2. P20/S4603/HH The Beehive Station Road Goring RG8 9HB

Retrospective application for the demolition of an existing single storey rear extension and the erection of a replacement extension. Re-instating of side door.

Following discussion in the Public Forum, it was **resolved that GPC Objects for the following reasons:**

The Parish Council objects to the application as submitted on these grounds (as identified by Enid Worsley, currently on the Parish Council and SODC team working to develop the Conservation Area Appraisal):

The Beehive dates from the first part of the 1800s and is in a prominent position in the heart of the Goring Conservation Area, next door to The John Barleycorn, a Grade II listed building. Historically it was an ale house and the cellar remains evidence of this; it has also served as a shop and later as offices. While not listed, itself, the Beehive on the corner of Manor Rd and Station Rd makes a significant contribution to two historically important street scenes in the conservation area:

- a) looking north along Manor Rd including the John Barleycorn, Wey Cottage, Tudor Cottage, The Old Vicarage (all listed) and Norfolk House.*
- b) looking east along Station Rd, once the main route through Goring and lined with traditional village houses, towards the Catherine Wheel, The Old Farmhouse and its barn (all listed).*

- 1. The extension is visible from the road. It has the appearance of a crude garden shed and is totally out of keeping with the conservation area. Materials and finish are inappropriate.*
- 2. It appears to be larger than the previous wooden lean-to which housed an outside WC and stairs to the cellar. The current application gives no floor plan so it is not possible to judge the scale of the extension, its purpose or its mode of construction, for example, is there insulation? It is larger than the original and extends almost to the rear boundary.*

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3. Builders say this 'shed' houses a bathroom. This, plus the re-instated side door, points to the creation of two separate flats in here. The Clerk notes that there are already two separate addresses (one via front door, one via side door) registered yet there is no application for conversion from one to two units.
4. The property has a satellite dish on the roof, also visible from the road, and out of keeping with the conservation area. This is not mentioned in the application.

In application P03/E0685, where the change of use from office to a single dwelling was originally approved, SODC applied a sensible series of conditions to protect the character of the building and the conservation area. We suggest that SODC should re-apply these to the current proposal.

Also, the Parish Council is in agreement with the objections outlined by Prof. Alan Brookes (Sprimount House) which have been registered with SODC (with photographic images highlighting the points):

- 1) The timber shed type construction is quite inappropriate in this Conservation Area
- 2) The side door fitted is a 1950s style glass decorated door not in keeping with the character required in this Conservation Area.

3. P20/S4657/HH Haydown Elvendon Road Goring RG8 0DT

To Erect a garden shed at the rear of the garden.

It was **resolved that GPC has a response:** No objections subject to the condition that the shed must not become a habitable space.

4. P20/S4706/FUL Land to the west of Wallingford Road Adjacent to Sewage Works between Goring and South Stoke RG8 0JA

Development and operation of a Transitional Hybrid Energy Project and associated infrastructure including access.

Following discussion in the Public Forum, it was **resolved that GPC objects for the following reasons:** See attached document (Appendix 2).

5. P20/S4779/HH Upper Gatehampton House Gatehampton Road Goring RG8 9LT

Single storey side extension and alterations to existing garage to facilitate additional residential accommodation.

It was **resolved that GPC has a response:** No Objections subject to the condition that it is not to become or to be used as a separate dwelling.

6. P20/S4805/HH Hairoun Icknield Road Goring RG8 0DG

Detached Oak Framed Garage.

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It was noted that the property already appears to have a substantially sized garage. Although the plans on the website were not entirely clear, and 'superseded' plans had not been replaced, the new structure appeared to be larger than one would expect for a garage.

It was **resolved that GPC objects for the following reasons:** *The 'superseded' plans on the website do not appear to have been replaced. It is impossible to consider this application without seeing these plans. The superseded plans do not show how the 'garage' will be accessed. Unclear as to why this property needs two large garages.*

7. P20/S4812/HH 3 Milldown Road Goring RG8 0BA

Two storey side and rear extension, single storey rear extension and roof conversion.

It was agreed that comments on the SODC website from a neighbour should form the basis for GPC's response.

It was **resolved that GPC objects for the following reasons:** *Plans are not clear; as noted by one of the neighbours, the file 'Site and Roof Plans Proposed Drawings' suggests that the extension will extend beyond no. 5 Milldown Road but will be parallel to no. 1 Milldown Road. This drawing is inaccurate as no. 5 already extends beyond no. 1. (and no. 3), so if no 3 is to extend beyond no. 5, it will extend significantly beyond no.1. It is not clear what is proposed by way of a fence between no. 1 and no. 3 once the garage is removed.*

8. P20/S4818/FUL Icknield Lodge Icknield Road Goring RG8 0DG

Variation of condition 3 (Schedule of Materials) on application P18/S1108/FUL. Erection of new 5-bed dwelling with detached garage and new access from highway.

It was **resolved that GPC objects for the following reasons:** *Insufficient details; it is not clear exactly what changes are being made to the schedule of materials.*

9. P20/S4864/HH 51 Elvendon Road Goring RG8 0DP

Porch and Rear Extension

It was **resolved that GPC has no objections**

10. P21/S0096/HH 49 Springhill Road Goring RG8 0BY

Demolition of existing single storey rear extension, erection of new single storey rear extension in line with neighbour. Installation of front porch and alterations. Amendment to approval P20/S1569/HH.

It was **resolved that GPC has no objections**

11. P21/S0131/FUL Bromsgrove Croft Road Goring RG8 9ES

Variation of condition 2 (approved plans - to use alternative brick and tile) in application P19/S3382/FUL.

It was **resolved that GPC has no objections**

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21/7 To note the following South Oxfordshire District Council decisions:

- 1. P20/S3945/HH Upper Gatehampton House Gatehampton Road Goring RG8 9LT**
Outdoor swimming pool. As amplified by agent's emails of 7 and 9 December in relation to drainage and noise. **Granted (GPC had a response)**
- 2. P20/S3979/FUL Thurle Down Bridle Way Goring RG8 OHS**
Demolition of existing dwelling house and construction of replacement dwelling complete with associated external works. **Granted (GPC had no objections)**
- 3. P20/S3858/FUL Sheepcot Recreation Ground, Goring Tennis Club Gatehampton Road Goring RG8 0EN**
Erection of purpose built disabled toilet unit. **Granted (GPC had no objections)**
- 4. P20/S4051/FUL Heathercroft Elvendon Road Goring RG8 0DT**
Variation of conditions 2 (Approved plans) & 10 (Landscaping) on application P20/S0017/FUL (Additional Information received 8 December 2020) Demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings and the erection of three dwellings with detached garages. Associated landscaping works to include the formation of a new access. **Granted (GPC had no objections)**
- 5. P20/S4126/HH 6B Summerfield Rise Goring on Thames Oxfordshire RG8 0DS**
Construction of single storey rear and side extensions with the addition of a dormer window and roof light to existing pitched roof. **Granted (GPC had no objections)**
- 6. P20/S4126/HH 33 Springhill Road Goring RG8 0BY**
Single storey front alterations/extension replacing integral garage with study. Erection of bike store/shed(as amended by drwngno 9504 A to remove bike store/shed received on 14 December 2020). **Granted (GPC had no objections)**
- 7. P20/S4327/HH 23 Springhill Road Goring RG8 0BY**
Demolition of existing rear lean-to and erection of a single storey side extension to create larger kitchen with lantern roof light and new dining area, additional utility space with rooflight and new WC with rooflight. **Granted (GPC had no objections)**
- 8. P20/S4550/HH 10 Lockstile Way Goring RG8 0AJ**
Conversion of garage into a new kitchen and internal remodelling. **Granted (GPC had a response)**
- 9. P20/S4620/AG Mount Pleasant Farm Goring Heath RG8 7TB**
Erection of portal frame general purpose agricultural building. **Granted**

All were noted.

21/8 To note Discharge of Conditions (DIS), Modifications of Planning Obligations (MPO), Change of Use (NB5) and Permitted Development for the following applications:

None to note.

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- 21/9** **To note and review planning applications and decisions reported by West Berkshire Council**
1. **20/03083/FULMAJ West Lodge Reading Road Streatley** (Replacement house)
- Noted: It was **resolved** that GPC decided a response was not necessary.
- 21/10** **To consider an application for a full variation of a Club Certificate for Goring Social Club, High Street Goring**
- It was **resolved** that GPC decided a response was not necessary.
- 21/10** **Affordable Housing**
- To review action from previous meeting: District Councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers to invite an officer from SODC to meet with GPC to explain the policy.
- Action carried forward due to covid-19.
- 21/11** **To review Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) status / payments**
- Nothing to report.
- 21/12** **To note reports of action by SODC in respect of enforcement notices and consider reporting issues not already being progressed by SODC**
- Items listed in Appendix 1 were duly noted.
- 21/13** **To consider correspondence received:** None.
- 21/14** **Matters for future discussion:** None.
- 21/15** **To confirm the date of the next meeting – Tuesday 23rd February 2021**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 20.37 hrs.

Abbreviations (where used):

GPC	Goring on Thames Parish Council	CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
OCC	Oxfordshire County Council	NP	Neighbourhood Plan
MFR	Maggie Filipova-Rivers	SODC	South Oxfordshire District Council
		MOP	Member of the Public

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APPENDIX 1

CURRENT SODC ENFORCEMENT NOTICES

Please note this information has been compiled from the Enforcement Notices register on the SODC Planning website. We are aware that the register may not be completely up to date.

- 1 **SE19/463 (28.8.19)**: Without planning permission the material change of use of a residential property to a mixed use comprising 1) residential; and 2) parcel delivery hub. Status as at 21.1.21: Site visited 9.12.19. 'Investigation' (no change from previous report).
Note: following the sale of the property this activity appears to have ceased.
- 2 **SE19/552 (15.10.19)**: Breach of condition 13 of planning permission P19/S0538/FUL (tree protection measure). Status as at 21.1.21: Site visited 16.07.20. 'Investigation' (no change from previous report).
- 3 **SE20/6 (6.1.20)**: Without planning permission the erection of a building (see the attached plan showing the enforcement site on the island just south of Goring Bridge). Status as at 21.1.21: Letter sent 5.5.20. Site visited 20.5.20, 1.10.20. 'Monitoring'.
- 4 **SE20/204 (11.6.20)**: Use of the land for residential purposes in breach of an extant enforcement notice. Status as at 21.1.21: 'Investigation'.
- 5 **SE20/224 (25.6.20)**: Without planning permission the installation of an air conditioning unit. Status as at 21.1.21: 'Investigation' (no change from previous report).
- 6 **SE20/404 (9.11.20)**: Development not built in accordance with the approved plans for P19/S1699/FUL Additional flues on roof. Status as at 21.1.21 'Investigation' (no change from previous report)
- 7 **SE20/416 (20.11.20)**: Without planning permission the extension of a building housing flats. Status as at 21.1.21 'Investigation'. **Note**: a retrospective planning application has been submitted (P20/S4603/HH).
- 8 **SE21/24 (21.1.21)**: Building not built in accordance with the approved plans for P20/S0665/FUL.

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APPENDIX 2

RESPONSE TO PLANNING APPLICATION P20/S4706/FUL

Re: Planning Application P20/S4706/FUL, Land to the west of Wallingford Road, Adjacent to Sewage Works between Goring and South Stoke, RG8 OJA. Development and operation of Transitional Hybrid Energy Project and associated infrastructure including access

Goring-on-Thames Parish Council (GPC) would like to register its objection to this application on the basis that it does not comply with national policies, SODC Local Plan policies and the Goring Neighbourhood Plan policies and not even court precedent. There are also appear to be some process issues regarding the application that raise serious concerns. We note that neighbouring South Stoke Parish Council and Moulsoford Parish Council that were erroneously excluded in the original notifications have, thankfully, now been named as statutory consultees. This highlights that even though this is perceived as a 'minor' application, it has much wider community interest and should be considered accordingly.

1) National policies

a) The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), paras 170- 172 are quite clear in the protections that are afforded to AONBs. This application appears to be in contravention of those protections.

i) Para 172 indicates "...other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.", and later indicates that certain assessments need to be conducted (para 172 a-c).

(1) These assessments have not been properly made in the application, and most lacking is the justification for use of this specific site. Commercial convenience does not equate to genuine need.

(a) We request that SODC seek clarification on this particular point of local need before further considering the application.

(i) The local density of occupation is low and the site is located in any event within 10 miles of Didcot power station.

(ii) The majority of local new large developments are in the Didcot/Wallingford areas and are therefore closer to the existing power station at Didcot.

(iii) Any additional local power plant should surely be located close to the demand to minimise losses over the network

(iv) If there really is a local requirement for energy generation in this particular area, we would urge SODC to look at renewable sources linked to battery storage (which is the

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emerging solution to peak load demand) rather than this cheaper, more commercially lucrative fossil fuel approach.

- b) National Policy Statement for Energy – EN1 (NPS-EN1), 2011
- i) Importantly, NPS EN-1 does NOT directly consider standby energy generation. It was written in 2011 and states that at the time other back-up technologies to avoid fossil fuel generation are not currently available. This position has changed (as shown by the incorporation of a battery store in the proposal which could equally store energy from renewable technology).
 - (1) This is a lucrative commercial venture and not a renewable energy plant.
 - (2) The proposed plant is an outdated approach which is already being questioned elsewhere.
 - ii) NPS EN-1 does NOT therefore provide a policy presumption in favour of this form of power plant.
 - iii) National policy relating to provision of local power generation requires that they "should demonstrate good design in respect of landscape and visual amenity, and in the design of the project to mitigate impacts such as noise and effects on ecology. In relation to this we would note the following:
 - (1) Visual Impact on AONB
 - (a) The flues are 7m tall, so will be seen from significant a distance within the AONB.
 - (b) It is acknowledged that the shed they are adjacent to has an 8m pitch roof, however this is partially dug into the ground, and has a bund around it to reduce the visual impact.
 - (c) The planting intended to be installed to mitigate the visual impact of this development will not mature sufficiently during the life of the plant to fulfil its purpose. The views from the raised elevations along roads and public footpaths of the parishes of South Stoke and Goring (and possibly Moulsoford) will render any natural screening ineffective.
 - (d) The cumulative effect of further industrial type development on this site, will result in there being the perception of an industrial site between the two parish boundaries, attracting further requests for development in this area.
 - (2) Noise
 - (a) To meet the natural beauty criterion of an AONB, one of the requirements is “...for relative tranquillity, where natural sounds, such as streams or birdsong are predominant” [Gov.uk: Areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONBs): designation and management]. When this installation is in use, it will introduce noise to the AONB in direct contradiction to this requirement. Just because the trains make a noise does not justify adding to that noise.

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Two wrongs do not make a right. Courts frequently uphold the concept of “...*death by a thousand cuts...*” (see 5.a below).

- (b) There are a number of academic papers, detailing that both the noise, and the frequency of that noise, produced in the environment can have a detrimental impact on local wildlife, including but not limited to “masking sounds important to survival and reproduction, the imposition of chronic stress and associated physiological responses, startling, interference with mating and population declines.” [Jessica L. Blickley 1 & Gail L. Patricelli 2 (2010) Impacts of Anthropogenic Noise on Wildlife: Research Priorities for the Development of Standards and Mitigation, Journal of International Wildlife Law & Policy, 13:4, 274-292, DOI: 10.1080/13880292.2010.524564] . The application documents do not consider the implications of this research despite being in the AONB.
- (3) NOx emissions
 - (a) The application does detail a number of statutory requirements for this, however the proximity to a forest school, the national trail and local pick-your-own have not been considered, all are within the NOx zone of influence.
 - (b) "There is now stronger evidence for a relationship between long-term exposure to NO2 and respiratory effects, particularly the development of asthma in children." [U.S. EPA. Integrated Science Assessment (ISA) for Oxides of Nitrogen – Health Criteria (Final Report, Jan 2016). U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, DC, EPA/600/R-15/068, 2016.]
 - (c) The siting of this development adjacent to the Withymead nature reserve, used by many local primary schools for the provision of Forest School (attendance/dwell time greater than 1hr at a time), will expose the local children raised levels of NOx gases. No mention of this facility is made in the application.
 - (d) The Ridgeway National Trail also passes the site. Which, by its nature, attracts those who wish to enjoy the nature of the area, pausing, spending time and picnicking in the area. Again, not considered in the application documents.
 - (e) The pick-your-own is a wonderful local resource, providing activities for local families, particularly those with small children. It would be expected that visitors to this facility would spend longer than 1 hour there. Again, not considered in the application documents either in terms of impact on people or produce.

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(f) We also note that baseline NOx levels have only been used from historic data around Wallingford rather than specific to this site - presumably to limit costs of making the application.

(g) The proposed plant relies on burning fossil fuel not renewable energy and as such will form a source of direct pollutant within the AONB.

(4) Further concerns about this proposal and its situation in the Chiltern's AONB are addressed in detail throughout subsequent sections of this response, especially in 4. below, discussing relevant Goring-on-Thames Neighbourhood Plan policies).

c) The Government's Energy White Paper (Dec 2020), defines low-carbon electricity generating technologies as those that emit little or no carbon, including renewables, nuclear and CCUS (carbon capture, utilisation and storage). Natural gas is described as a fossil fuel.

2) SODC Local Plan

a) SODC Local Policy DES9 is particularly relevant.

i) The Council encourages schemes for renewable and low carbon energy generation and associated infrastructure at all scales including domestic schemes. It also encourages the incorporation of renewable and low carbon energy applications within all development. Planning applications for renewable and low carbon energy generation will be supported, provided that they do not cause a significantly adverse effect to:

(1) landscape, both designated AONB and locally valued biodiversity including protected habitats and species and Conservation Target Areas;

(2) *the historic environment, both designated and non-designated assets, including development within their settings;*

(3) *openness of the Green Belt;*

(4) *the safe movement of traffic and pedestrians; or*

(5) residential amenity.

ii) It is important to note that this proposal does not comply with Policy DES9. Though the scheme purports to offer 'lower carbon' than firing up a large power plant, the energy provided is neither 'renewable' nor 'low carbon'. With current battery/storage technology, it would be far better to capture excess energy from a large power plant and store it for peak periods when it may be needed. To provide a facility such as is proposed, in a protected area that is a great distance from

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the locations of need, makes no sense and is likely to do much more harm than any benefit it may provide. There are better options and more suitable locations.

iii) The serious adverse effects to the protected AONB have been highlighted throughout this document, and therefore render the proposed scheme to be non-compliant with DES9.

b) Pre-Application advice

i) It is unfortunate that SODC's Pre-application advice was prepared without a visit to the area to appreciate the potential damage to the AONBs.

ii) SODC's Pre-application advice to the applicant quotes extensively but inaccurately from NPPF (2019) as justification for the principle of development. NPPF paragraphs 151, 153 and 154 infers a presumption in favour of development for decentralised and renewable and low carbon energy projects, but this is not a renewable or low carbon project, should not be represented as such and so a presumption of support for this development will not apply. The NPPF Glossary defines:

(1) Decentralised energy: Local renewable and local low-carbon energy sources.

(2) Renewable and low carbon energy: Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

c) Climate Emergency; Tackling Climate Change

i) SODC has declared a Climate Emergency: "It is our intention to take a leading role in tackling climate change locally and ensure that our powers and incentives be used efficiently to reduce emissions in the community." Approval of this application is inconsistent with the Council's objectives.

3) Goring Neighbourhood Plan (GNP)

a) In her submission to SODC on this application, Enid Worsley raises some important issues. Enid was a member of the GNP committee and currently serves as a volunteer consultant on GNP matters and is well-versed in the detail and rationale behind the GNP. She was part of the group who wrote the policies and worked with SODC to ensure that those policies comply with the (then) existing SODC Local Plan/Core Strategy and the emerging SODC Local Plan (now adopted), as well as National policies. The examiner appointed by SODC to review the GNP and ensure its compliance did

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recommend it, with some minor adjustments, for adoption. The GPC concurs with and reiterates her comments regarding policies 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 & 16 – and the rationale as to why this application does not comply with those policies. *(It is with Enid's permission that we include in our formal response much of the detail as it clearly articulates the GPC views.)*

- b) Goring Neighbourhood Plan - Policy 11 Conserve the landscape
- i) The Goring Neighbourhood Plan (2019) reflects the priorities of the local community. These include, amongst others, preservation and protection of the landscape of the two local AONBs, maintaining access to them and minimising the impact of any development on local and distant views.
 - ii) Objective 4, Protecting the landscape, states that the Plan will “maintain, and where possible enhance, the natural beauty of Goring’s countryside, open spaces, river setting and the Chilterns and the North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including those areas of sensitive ecology and distinctive landscape characteristics.”
 - iii) Policy 11 states that planning permission for any proposal within the Chilterns AONB, or affecting the setting of the Chilterns AONB or North Wessex Downs AONB, in Goring will only be granted when it:
 - (1) conserves and enhances the AONB’s special qualities, distinctive character, tranquillity and remoteness in accordance with national planning policy and the overall purpose of the AONB designation;
 - (2) is appropriate to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Goring or is desirable for its understanding and enjoyment;
 - (3) meets the aims of the statutory Chilterns AONB Management Plan;
 - (4) avoids adverse impacts from individual proposals (including their cumulative effects), unless these can be satisfactorily mitigated.
 - iv) This proposal satisfies none of the above four requirements of Policy 11
 - (1) The 4 generators, flues, galvanised fences and other structures are bulky, intrusive and alien to the AONB’s special qualities and distinctive character.
 - (2) The installation will provide no economic or social benefit to the local community and does not meet a local need, unlike the adjacent waste water treatment plant. It has no local rationale. The plant will feed its electricity into the national grid so there is no reason it cannot be

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located within South Oxfordshire on brownfield or industrial land which is outside the AONB, while still providing 'local power' without adversely impacting the national grid.

- (a) While this is a small project in national terms, it will have a disproportionate impact on the local area and the Chilterns AONB.
- (3) It contravenes the statutory Chilterns AONB Management Plan. The development would formalise and intensify creeping industrialisation of a corner of the pick your own (PYO) field. Whilst the waste water treatment plant, established in the 1950s was essential for the area, and met no resistance, this proposal is not.
- (a) In contrast, the application in 2000 for the grain store (P00/W0139) records the planning and landscape officers' disquiet and reluctance to agree the proposal for such a large building in such an open landscape.
 - (b) Another application (P02/W0286) in 2002, is not mentioned in the planning history listed in the applicant's Planning Statement (P12). This was for a telecom mast, cabinets and a 1.8m fence; it was refused on landscape grounds. The current application cannot be satisfactorily mitigated and should be refused on the same grounds.
 - (c) SODC should note that local concern about visual impact in the Goring Gap of the GWR infrastructure supporting rail electrification, and the subsequent campaign, led to an acknowledgement by Network Rail of the damage caused and the funding of a major damage mitigation project (£3.75M). The investment this mitigation project most likely exceeds the cost of the proposed development. It would be perverse and evidence of an unbalanced planning decision to approve this application which would undo the benefits of the mitigation project being expensively funded by the taxpayer. SODC should refuse this application to avoid compounding the damage created by the electrification project.
- (4) Adverse visual impact of development on the landscape
- (a) The landscape north of Goring where the proposed site is located forms part of SODC's Landscape Character Area 6, Central Vale Fringes. Its scenic quality is 'high' and its management designation is 'conserve and repair.' It includes a distinctive belt of low, rounded hills acting as a transitional zone between the Chilterns escarpment and the low-lying clay vale and Thames floodplain. The smoothly rolling hills have sparse tree cover because of hedgerow removal. The Landscape Character Assessment notes that this landscape is likely to be similar to the earlier, bare open vista of the ancient common fields which would have dominated this area. The open landscape results in high inter-

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visibility and extensive views. This application demonstrably does not 'conserve and repair' and should be refused.

- (b) The structures on the site will be visible in elevated views from locations and routes extensively used as leisure resources by walkers and cyclists:
 - (i) The Icknield Way, is a minor lane, following a prehistoric route way. The site is clearly visible in the centre of long views across the Thames valley to the Berkshire Downs in North Wessex AONB;
 - (ii) Entrance to Wroxhills Wood and the Chiltern Way to the east;
 - (iii) Cow Hill to the south;
 - (iv) Grove Road, a minor lane, leading east from the B4009 up to Icknield Way which gives closer views of the site;
 - (v) Spring Lane, the nearest public right of way immediately south of the site, connecting to The Ridgeway national trail;
 - (vi) Points in North Wessex Downs AONB in West Berkshire as shown in the applicant's LVIA (Zone of Theoretical Visibility).
- (c) For road users approaching Goring from the north on the B4009, the site currently contributes to a distinctive rural entrance to the village through rolling arable land with extensive fields and chalk hilltops, typical clean-cut crests and views to the high land behind Streatley in the North Wessex Downs AONB.
- (d) Screening is proposed for the installation, but it is minimal. Only two rows of deciduous species are specified, which would leave the site exposed for much of the year, as is the grain store today. The grain store 'screen' was planted in 2002 but it still does not hide the building today being too low and too thin. Trees are still <5m in height, of poor quality and many still have tree guards.
 - (i) It will take shrubs and trees, with good care, 15-20 years or more to mature while the life of the installation is said to be only 25-30 years. The applicant also states that the 'hedge' will be clipped at 3m height, which will do little to hide the 4.5m generators, 7m high chimneys and 4m CCTV poles. The applicant does not give length and width dimensions for the generators and other equipment. As dimensions cannot be scaled accurately from the plans it is not possible to judge the potential 'bulk' that would need screening. It is evident though that the heights will be closely comparable to the

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grain store which has eaves at 3.45m and a ridge height of 7.85m. Any screening which did hide this infrastructure would need to be even taller and create a major adverse impact on the AONB.

- (ii) If neglected, as are the current green screens for the grain store and waste water site, plants will die and the result will be, as now, a thin, inadequate screen with gaps. It is evident that the imposition of planning conditions on both sites requiring maintenance of the screen, with replacement of trees and shrubs if necessary, to the Authority's satisfaction has been ineffective and that SODC do not have the resources to enforce such compliance. Since mitigation cannot be effectively enforced, approval cannot rely on planning conditions which require recurring expenditure and are unlikely to be implemented.

(5) Development in the AONB

- (a) Despite being owned by the same landowner who proposed two large sites to the Goring Neighbourhood Plan, this site was not offered for development. One of the sites proposed by the landowner is a neighbouring field just 500m to the south, known in the Plan as site GNP5. It lies within the same landscape area, has a very similar aspect and character, and was offered for residential development. GNP5 was assessed by the Plan's landscape consultants for susceptibility to visual impact in Bramhills' Landscape Capacity Study. The site was excluded from development on grounds of visual damage with an overall effect on the landscape described as major adverse.
 - (i) The 2014 SODC's Kirkham/Terra Firma 2014 landscape report on the same site similarly concluded medium/high sensitivity and site was not recommended for development then either.
 - (ii) Both LVIAs concluded that this is a landscape of a particularly distinctive and highly valued character and the management strategy 'Restore' indicated that it was unsuitable for development. This would suggest that a similar decision would not be unreasonable on the field 500m north which, if anything, is even more visible in the AONB.
 - (iii) If development is permitted on the current site there is a danger that a precedent might be established for future development of GNP5. Development of GNP5 would extend the built-up area of Goring northwards, encroaching into the AONB, closing the

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green gap between Goring and South Stoke and jeopardising the Goring

Neighbourhood Plan's spatial strategies and Objective 4: Protecting the landscape.

- c) Goring Neighbourhood Plan – Policy 12 Conserve and enhance biodiversity
- i) Protection and enhancement of Goring's rich biodiversity is fundamental to the sustainability of the village.
 - ii) Any new development should conserve, restore and enhance landscape features (mature trees, hedgerows, ponds, grass banks, ancient walls etc), improve existing wildlife habitats, and protect and enhance wildlife corridors in Goring, including protection of the Habitats of Principal Importance and Designated Wildlife Sites.
 - iii) All proposals for new development sites, including infill, should:
 - (1) demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity;
 - (2) include management plans to ensure new and replacement biodiversity features are sustainable over the long term;
 - (3) protect and retain all mature trees and hedgerows wherever possible;
 - (4) protect and conserve all rare species.
 - iv) The proposal does not comply with Policy 12. The Biodiversity Impact Assessment suggests very limited attempts to conserve and enhance biodiversity and rejects any requirement to demonstrate a net gain.
 - v) The exceptionally long access from the B4009 to the site across the PYO field is likely to become compacted over time and, apart from being visually damaging, will be unfriendly to wildlife in the hedges. Moving the access from one point on the B4009 to another equally unsuitable point some few metres further north seems perverse and requires a second opening in the hedge, again unfriendly to wildlife. The safest and most sensible access to both the proposed site and the PYO field is via the lane accessing the waste water plant and the grain store, where the 4-way cross roads onto the B4009 has good visibility. This would reduce the number of accesses onto the B4009 and improve the hedge habitat to the east of the field.
- d) Goring Neighbourhood Plan – Policy 13 Light pollution
- i) Proposals must include external lighting schemes which include design features and mitigating measures that avoid overlighting and limit the adverse impact of lighting on neighbouring residents, the rural character of the countryside and biodiversity.

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- ii) The proposal fails to demonstrate that it will comply with Policy 13 and there are indications it may not do so. The Planning Statement says that lighting at the site will be motion activated only and downward-focused. The site will not be maintained out of daylight hours. PIR lights however, can intrude into night time wildlife habitats.
- e) Goring Neighbourhood Plan – Policy 14 Air quality and pollution
- i) Any development should seek to minimise the impact of air pollution on immediate neighbours and the wider community of Goring. In order to protect public health from the impacts of poor air quality:
 - (1) development in Goring must be compliant with the measures laid out in the district council's Developer Guidance Document and the associated Air Quality Action Plan, as well as the national air quality guidance and any local transport plans;
 - (2) all development proposals should include measures to minimise air pollution at the design stage and incorporate best practice in the design, construction and operation of the development;
 - (3) where a development has a negative impact on air quality, including cumulative impact, developers should identify mitigation measures that will sufficiently minimise emissions from the development. Where mitigation is not sufficient the impacts should be offset through planning obligations;
 - (4) development will only be permitted where it does not exceed air pollution levels set by European and UK regulations.
 - ii) The Air Quality Assessment concludes that the air quality impact will be 'not significant' for local residents, but it fails to mention the potential impact on users of the PYO field who commonly spend more than an hour there and any nutrient deposition or acid nitrogen on the fruit and vegetables themselves.
- f) Goring Neighbourhood Plan – Policy 15 Water, sewerage and drainage capacity
- i) All development proposals must demonstrate that there are or will be adequate water supply and water treatment facilities in place to serve the whole development. For phased development proposals, each phase must demonstrate sufficient water supply and water treatment capacity.
 - ii) In the case of this type of development, the proposal must demonstrate that it meets appropriate standards of sewerage and drainage provision so as to minimise adverse impacts on immediate neighbours and the wider community of Goring.

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iii) The Flood Risk Assessment found potential for 1 in 100 year groundwater flood risk and SuDS measures have been incorporated. Drawing 101 shows a proposed scheme to manage excess run off, but does not show how the area allocated for the proposed water garden around the southern and south eastern corner of the site will also be able to accommodate the screen planting, shown in Appendix 1, and the security fence within the site boundary. The site proposed appears to be too small to accommodate these.

g) Goring Neighbourhood Plan - Policy 16 Building Design Principles

i) Policy 16 requires that all development respects and maintains the character of the village and the surrounding rural AONB. Proposals will be supported which:

(1) comply with SODC's Design Guide and the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide;

(2) respond positively to scale, mass, density and design of the immediate area and the village context;

(3) conserve and enhance the characteristics of the Conservation Areas and their settings that make a significant contribution to the area;

(4) in edge of village locations, acknowledge the Plan's spatial strategy and are sensitive to the transition from urban to rural character;

(a) sympathetically introduce high quality, modern design in appropriate locations;

(b) particularly in the conservation area, consider the use of locally distinctive features and materials such as decorative red and grey brickwork, flint work, tile work, chimneys and porches, as described in the Goring Design Statement;

(c) respect and protect the AONB.

ii) The proposal fails to comply with Policy 16. The Planning Statement states that the proposed development "has been designed with consideration to respect and maintain the character of the area." The Design and Access Statement however, fails to address these requirements, apart from producing an Arboricultural Survey and LVIA and a proposal for screening in an attempt to mitigate the visual impact.

4) Application process issues

a) Surveys and Assessments

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- i) It appears that the screening opinion (P17/S0539/SCR) for this site was for a different proposal. A proper screening opinion for this specified plant must be completed (see below for rationale that a full EIA may be required).
- ii) The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, Schedule 2, Table 1, states that for: (a) Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water (unless included in Schedule 1), above 0.5 hectare, are considered to be Schedule 2 developments. If this development is above 0.5 hectares it therefore requires an Environmental Impact Assessment. The planning statement states that this development is 0.42 hectares, however, missing from the drawings is the water garden which is a requirement of the design, and would push out the hedge further than the boundary currently indicated on the drawings. SSPC request that careful consideration be given to the drawings, to ensure they are to the correct scale and include all features, and the total area be recalculated. Being so close to the 0.5 hectares requirement and in the AONB, SSPC ask that a full Environmental Impact Assessment be completed before the application is considered.
- iii) We would reiterate some significant issues highlighted in Dr Peter Wardle's response (38 Elvendon Rd). These raise questions as to the accuracy of the application and the validity of the detail in the proposal.
 - (1) There are errors on drawings as they are not at the required scale. The elevation drawings appear to be a scale of 1:110 not 1:100. The scale bar appears obviously to be wrong.
 - (2) The schedule of buildings in the planning statement lists a container for spare parts which is not shown on the drawings.
 - (3) Para 4.3.29 of the planning statement says cabling and pipework required to connect the development to the substation and the mains gas pipeline will be undertaken by Statutory Undertakers under their Permitted Development Rights. These works will be extensive. Cabling to the sub-station is not normally the responsibility of statutory undertakers and planning consent is sometimes required. This, and what the exact extent of the development is (eg is the tree planting solely included within the redline?).
 - (4) There are no details about the access road which will be approximately 200m long and 6m wide other than the statement in para 2.3.3 of the planning statement which states: Aside from the hardstanding lain to the field access, the remaining access will comprise matting to allow vegetation to come through, to reduce the visual appearance of the internal road. While the use of materials like geo-cell is possible it requires a proper foundation which means there

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will be a requirement to archaeologically examine, and there will have to be root protection measures. This trackway must be strong enough for emergency vehicles (eg fire engines), and include a turning point; it also has to be readily visible at night. This is a basic design point.

- (5) No information is supplied about why this application is for a hybrid energy project not a gas powered power station (ie what the hybrid energy sources are). There is a provision for 1 x containerised battery energy storage module (lithium-ion type). There is not enough information to determine how much weight should be given to this claim.
- (6) No information is given about the life expectancy of the development. The DAS states that: These transitional and temporary projects typically have a lifespan of 25-35 years and can be run as much or as little as is require during this time. This is important as the visual mitigation is expected to take 15 years to mature that is there will be no adequate mitigation for half of the life expectancy of the project.
- (7) The Landscape and Visual Impact Statement does not follow the guidelines in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition), Published by the Landscape Institute 2013; for example considering the impact on Listed Buildings or producing CGIs (Computer Generated Images). They do however produce a zone of theoretical intervisibility see figure 3 on unnumbered page (page 58 of the file) which indicates the need for more detailed studies.
- (8) The Height of the proposed buildings is not fixed: Drawing: Elevation AA Proposed drwg no 201 states Height confirmed by AQ specialist 7m free standing flues .
- (9) Drawing 101 Drainage Strategy on unnumbered page 31 shows a 3m wide Water Garden with a polycellular crate with 95% void ration, a pipe and a grass bed where a hedge is shown to be planted. This therefore increases the size of the land required to achieve the water garden and the hedge.
- (10) Paragraph 3.5.5 of the Planning Statement The total site area for the application is approximately 0.42 hectares and as such it falls below the threshold for EIA. It is suggested that careful consideration of the amount of the land area that is affected, given the size is close to this threshold, the EIA should be undertaken (see 4.a.ii above)

5) Court precedent

- a) In the judgment in *Lensbury*, Sales LJ highlighted the danger of “death by a thousand cuts” identified by Sullivan J in *R (Heath and Hampstead Society) v. Camden LBC* [2007] EWHC 977 (Admin); [2007] 2 P&CR 19, [37]: “...a series of planning permissions being granted for developments each apparently

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reasonable in itself but having a serious cumulative detrimental effect on the important public interest in the continuing openness of MOL [metropolitan open land] and the Green Belt...” The same rationale could easily be transferrable to developments within AONBs.

- b) We argue, though, for all the reasons stated above, that there are material considerations that lead to the conclusion that this application is not reasonable and should be refused. If there is some thin rationale being used to put forward this “...small-scale energy project of this type...”, it is strongly recommended to consider the concept highlighted in the court cases referenced above about ‘...death by a thousand cuts’ and to make the decision to properly protect the AONB as intended in all relevant laws, policies and regulations.

The application purports to be something it is not and for all the numerous material planning reasons stated above, GPC urges SODC to deny approval for this planning application.

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