

Planning Committee
Solar Farm SPD Consultation

Specific Observations

a) Section 7 – Figure 4 (Agricultural Land Classification)

Extend the map to show the urban area of South Woodham Ferrers. The map appears to be out-of-date and many areas within the CCC need updating and clarifying.

The difference between grade 3a and 3b land is important for a solar farm SPD. Without this classification being shown, the map is quite ineffective within a Solar SPD for many CCC areas.

b) Paragraph 7.7

This paragraph is out of date and needs to be updated to include and consider the sensitive areas across the River Crouch and surroundings in South Woodham Ferrers.

The paragraph clashes with the definitions in the RAMS document.

c) Paragraph 7.11

Wildlife Sites should be avoided; replace the word should with must. There are not that many wildlife sites in the CCC area, so those that are identified, formally or otherwise, must not be allowed to be used for solar farm purposes.

d) Paragraph 7.20

Battery farms. Clarification should be provided on the type of battery farms and even batteries allowed as certain types and designs are more environmentally damaging than others.

e) Paragraph 7.36

CCC expects. Change expects to requires. Stronger language will mandate this as a requirement rather than just an expectation.

f) Paragraph 8.2 - Solar farm development (bullet points)

These points should be extended, in conjunction with other bulleted options to exclude land suitable for solar farm development that is designated as country park, public open space, common land, green necklaces and green wedges at county, district or parish level.

General Observations

In summary, we feel this document appears rushed and poorly put together and does not constitute an SPD document that can or will be used by planning professionals. Much of the content appears to be using out-of-date information or irrelevant reference points.

The document contains no policies of its own and makes a few general policy referrals to other planning documents. We would like to see this document tightened up, with stronger language and contain its own policies that become part of the planning process. Many sections of the document could be converted to specific policies.

In its current format, the Solar Farm SPD is nothing more than a rather verbose and waffling 'guide to applicants' and will not be used by planning consultancies or serious applicants in this space.

We also feel this SPD should be extended and re-written to become a professional Green Energy SPD to cover free-standing battery farms as these are an emerging requirement and can operate separately from solar farms or solar farms with batteries facilities within them.