

President: Rt.Hon. the Lord Randall of Uxbridge Kt.PC.

Planning Casework Unit
Dept. for levelling Up, Housing and Communities
23 Stephenson Street
Birmingham
B2 4BH



27th June 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act 1938. Application by National Grid to compulsory purchase part of Mansfield Farm and Round Coppice Estate, Iver Heath for construction of a electricity sub station

We understand that government has to consider requirements of the 1938 Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act and those of the 1989 Electricity Act. We wish to highlight a number of concerns relating specifically to this site that we believe should be taken into consideration.

Principally, how remaining land at Mansfield Farm will be safeguarded in line with the 1938 Act, and precisely how the proceeds from the sale of this important and uniquely pressured Green Belt site will be used in line with the 1938 Act and the 1989 Act

As things stand, we are obliged to object to the current application from National Grid.

Context:

The purpose of the 1938 Act was the “...*preservation from industrial or building development of land*” which would be beneficial to the amenities of London and the localities in which the Green Belt land was situated, and the health of the inhabitants of London and those localities.

The land has served the purposes of the Green Belt for many decades. We urge government to consider the wider benefits of the Green Belt to millions of people and its long-term potential to provide access to the natural environment close to where they live, with all the health and well-being benefits this brings.

The proposals of National Grid will result in large-scale release of land for development, outside of any strategic review of this part of London's Green Belt. We feel strongly that this should not be considered in isolation, but viewed in the crucial context of the cumulative impact of many other large development proposals in and around Iver Heath.

For further context on the scale and number of threats to the future of this part of the Green Belt we make the point that there has been very limited precedent nationally of applications for disposal of 1938 Green Belt Act land nationally for over 80 years then three applications locally in the Iver/Uxbridge area within just 6 months.

Colne Valley Park Trust
Charity Registration Number: 1181303

Registered Office: c/o Colne Valley Park Visitor Centre, Denham Court Drive, Denham,
Buckinghamshire, UB9 5PG
www.colnevalleypark.org.uk

Realising the potential of the Green Belt

If government approves the application from National Grid we request that means are found to make a significant and strategic contribution to realising the potential of remaining Green Belt locally.

This strategic mitigation should be made in line with the 1938 Green Belt Act and the 1989 Electricity Act that states "it (compulsory acquisition) shall have effect subject to such restrictions, exceptions and conditions as may be included in the licence for the purpose of qualifying that provision as so applied or any power or right conferred by or under it". In other words, the Act specifically contemplates the possibility of conditions being placed on compulsory acquisition.

Mitigation should include:

- Proceeds being used to purchase land locally into public ownership. The area of search for suitable purchase should be within an agreed radius of the site (say five miles), and not restricted to Buckinghamshire: this site is on the very border of the county and lies close to four other local authorities. Making such an enormously important decision solely on a county basis is in our view arbitrary and will miss a significant and genuine opportunity for local benefit.
- Proceeds being allocated to improve the remaining local Green Belt (along the same geographical lines as above). Use of proceeds should be informed by the Colne Valley Green Infrastructure strategy and the Ivers Neighbourhood Plan. Opportunities could include a countryside management service, river restoration for the Alderbourne catchment, biodiversity enhancement, a contribution to the work of Iver Environment Centre, and appropriately addressing the 'orphan field' problem – see below.

People should be able to reasonably expect Green Belt land held on their behalf to be safeguarded and, if sold, capital receipts to be used locally. This is entirely in line with the 1938 Green Belt Act.

Compulsory purchase boundary and the 'orphan' field

An unintended consequence of the Section 6 boundary in National Grid's application is that a relatively small field is left marooned between the compulsory purchased land and Iver Environment Centre. This land is outlined in purple on the attached map.

It will be 'orphaned', with no productive use in line with the intentions for its purchase as part of the 1938 Green Belt Act because it is not part of the purchased land or of what remains of Mansfield farm. The farm itself will no longer be viable for agriculture if the compulsory purchase is approved. Without a plan to address this situation, the land will remain unmanaged and become derelict. A solution must be found.

Options could include (but are not limited to):

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- Include the land in the Section 6 notice and then reallocate it in perpetuity as part of Iver Environment centre.
- Oblige its current owner – Buckinghamshire Council – to transfer the remaining land lying outside the Section 6 boundary to Iver Environment Centre

In both cases an endowment should be provided to the managers/operators of Iver Environment Centre (or another suitable body) to manage this in perpetuity.

If there are any other isolated parcels of land remaining on the edges of the Mansfield Farm site owned by the council, we urge that a similar approach be adopted to ensure their positive use can be retained in line with the 1938 Green Belt Act

Yours sincerely,

S.Pomeroy

Stewart Pomeroy, Managing Agent
For, and on behalf of, the Colne Valley Regional Park Trust

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