To: Davies, Rebecca S
Subject: RE: S/21/0518 -Proposed data centre and associated infrastructure. National Data Centre, Old Burderop Hospital Site Brimble Hill Wroughton, Swindon

Dear Peter

Apologies for the delay, I have just been out at the Ridgeway as the visibility of the site and proposed development from this locality is my main concern along with external lighting.

We would always discourage large industrial buildings of this scale from the AONB due to the sheer massing of these buildings and the urbanisation they can cause, however the site is a brownfield site, therefore it is essential that any building within this site, sits comfortably within the landscape to the point that it is subservient to it rather than a dominating feature within.

I am aware that design changes have been made to reduce the height, particularly the flues after pre app discussions, however the upper part of the building and the roof will be visible from the Ridgeway particularly during the winter months when there is limited to no leave cover. The agents have tried to blend the building by using a grading effect of colour to the external cladding. I agree with the landscape assessment that the development would have a moderate adverse effect, however I do not agree that this will reduce when the planting and wildflower meadow mature and establish as these do not negate the visual impact but merely offset some of the harm by improving local biodiversity. Narrow vertical cladding in these colours will only act to draw your attention to the building as it will visually extenuate the height of a building. The blocks of colour need to be wider blocks of colour. A dark roof its important and welcomed, although the pale grey of the plant equipment on the roof only acts as a contrast and as such becomes more visible, the plant equipment should also be a dark shade.

We have recently produced colour guide documents. The survey identifies the existing tones and hues of the different landscape character types that make up the North Wessex Downs AONB landscape, including existing buildings, these are documented in colour swatches and photos. This is then used in the guidance to create developed palettes of colours appropriate to a range of building materials and finishes, which will help integrate new development into that specific landscape type, along with this are a series of colourways, these are examples of how colours, selected from the developed palette, can be combined to harmonious and interesting affect.

The guidance is based on the principle that a colour is never seen in isolation from surrounding colours. Selecting colours for buildings or any other form of development, therefore, has to take account of the site context, the landscape character area in which it is located.

Using these documents to better colour the building will ensure the negative impacts of the development on the character of the AONB are minimised. Please find both documents attached. We are happy to work with the agents on this and are happy to deal with it as part of a condition for the finished external appearance/colour to be first approved by the LPA prior to construction on the new data centre. The site falls within the Downs, Plain and Scarp character area (5), but given its woodland context colours from either character area 5 or 3 (wooded Plateau) would be acceptable.

Dark skies are a special quality of the AONB and one which we are aiming to enhance by improving existing lighting and ensure any new lighting is essential and the correct type of lighting. Although new lighting columns aim to direct lighting down to prevent upward spill of lighting, in a countryside location such as this, lighting from higher points such as the Ridgeway will still be visible as the ground glow will be evident. Therefore we would encourage the agents to limit lighting to only what is essential and that lighting on data centre is confined to entry points and that these are dimmable and set on timers/sensors to ensure they are only operational when in use. The lighting columns within the car park area should be low level pollards (I note some pollards are already being utilised) as this will limit potential light visibility from the Ridgeway, given the security at the site lighting should only be

necessary for lighting the way rather than shedding light on a wider area, lighting blocks within the walkways is another option. Again the lights should be dimmable and on timers/sensors.

It is disappointing that the development will result in some loss of the improved grassland habitat in the north western area. I note the evolution of the development which has seen the building re-positioned and a secondary building (existing being retained) is now proposed to be demolished and a new grassland habitat created. This effort is appreciated, and although the original impact has been reduced some loss/impact is inevitable and therefore a mitigation and biodiversity net gain package is essential, all of which is unlikely to be achieved on site. It is disappointing that the neighbouring landowners have not been open to discussions with the agents but there are other areas in the local area, potentially around Chisledon that could be used as an offsite mitigation area, this along with monitoring/maintenance costs would need to be secured by a S106 or CIL (I believe its been altered to include biodiversity net gain).
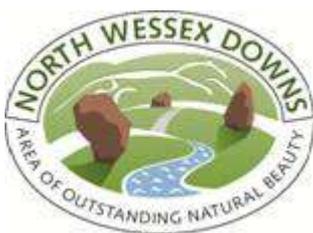
Kind regards

Rebecca Davies
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Currently, the team are working at home and homeschooling and delays may occur in responding to enquiries and emails. We appreciate your patience during this time.

www.northwessexdowns.org.uk

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are some of the most beautiful and cherished landscapes in Britain. They need to be cared for, now and in the future.

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