

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held in the THE CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Monday, 22nd January 2024

PRESENT: Councillor D L Mickelburgh – Chair.

Councillors R J Brereton, E R Butler, S J Corney, L Davenport-Ray, I D Gardener, S R McAdam, S Mokbul, J Neish, T D Sanderson, R A Slade, C H Tevlin and S Wakeford.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors D B Dew, K P Gulson and P A Jordan.

42 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18th December 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

43 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor S Corney declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 45 (b) by virtue of the fact that the application related to the Ward he represented.

Councillor S McAdam declared an Other Registrable Interest in Minute No 45 (a) by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Huntingdon Town Council, but had not taken part in any discussions or voting on the application.

Councillor T Sanderson declared an Other Registrable Interest in Minute No 45 (a) by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Huntingdon Town Council, but had not taken part in any discussions or voting on the application.

Councillor S Wakeford declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 45 (a) by virtue of the fact that the application related to the Town he represented but not his Ward. Councillor Wakeford also stated that he was not a Member of Huntingdon Town Council.

44 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT - OTHER APPLICATION - INSTALLATION OF A SOLAR PARK TO EXPORT UP TO 25 MW (AC) ELECTRICITY, COMPRISING UP TO 65,000 PHOTOVOLTAIC PANELS, 10 INVERTER/TRANSFORMER CABINS ASSOCIATED WORKS - LAND NORTH EAST OF BATES LODGE, PETERBOROUGH ROAD, HADDON - 22/00668/FUL

(Councillors Butler, Corney, Davenport-Ray, McAdam, Mickelburgh, Mokbul, Neish, Sanderson and Tevlin only were present in the room for this item).

Pursuant to Minute No 23/40 (a), by means of a report by the Planning Service Manager (Development Management) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Committee gave further consideration to the application for the installation of a solar park to export up to 25 MW (AC) electricity, comprising up to 65,000 photovoltaic panels, 10 inverter/transformer cabins associated works on land North-East of Bates Lodge, Peterborough Road, Haddon. The report contained analysis of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which had been published after the Committee's decision. Members were acquainted with the areas of the revised NPPF that were relevant to the development proposal. Having commented that the changes did not constitute grounds to alter the decision, it was

RESOLVED

- a) that the report now submitted be received and noted;
- b) that the revised NPPF does not materially alter the Committee's consideration of the application and the decision to refuse the application be confirmed, and
- c) that the reasons for the decision be confirmed as follows:
 1. By virtue of the siting of the development, the proposal would result in the loss of 8.3 hectares of Grade 3a Agricultural Land, designated as Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land (BMV Land) in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 and available for productive growth. The application fails to demonstrate the proposed development would not lead to the irreversible loss or degradation of BMV Land to the detriment of food production and its contribution to the local and rural economy, and contrary to policies LP10 and LP35 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Para 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.
 2. The application site forms part of the eastern slope of a valley located within the Northern Wolds Landscape Character Area, characterised by the ridged topography formed by streams flowing within valleys, and which includes the highest land in the District. Valley landscapes within this area are notable for being well vegetated and intimate in landscape character, with more open ridgelines and plateaux. By virtue of the significant scale of the development, located partially on the valley slope, the solar array would be visually dominant from views both near to and far from the site, particularly from Public Rights of Way (Bridleways 111/5, 111/8, 46/4 and 75/18, and Permissive Path CSS: 05/352/0003) and to users of the A605, Bullock Road and Haddon Road. It would undermine the distinctive and verdant character of the valley through the loss of vegetated fields, and the proposed landscaping scheme has not demonstrated it would be sufficient to mitigate such views given the significant topographical change across the

site and the visibility from longer views. The development therefore fails to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and would undermine its sensitive landscape character through inappropriate design, position, visual prominence, and the introduction of intrusive lighting into an otherwise dark landscape. The proposal would conflict with policies LP10 and LP35 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023, particularly paragraphs 135 and 180.

3. The proposed development, by reason of its scale, the need for lighting within an otherwise dark landscape and the introduction of glint and glare from the reflective panels, would materially harm the amenity of occupants at Bates Lodge, a residential dwelling 470m to the west of the site. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies LP14 and LP35 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, particularly paragraphs 135 and 191.
4. Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate the proposed development would not result in an adverse impact to the safe functioning of Sibson Airfield and RAF Wittering, or the operation of private aircraft utilising surrounding fields by virtue of glint and glare arising from reflected light from the solar panels, contrary to policies LP14 and LP35 and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023, particularly paragraph 191.

45 APPLICATIONS REQUIRING REFERENCE TO DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Planning Service Manager (Development Management) submitted reports (copies of which are appended in the Minute Book) on applications for development to be determined by the Committee. Members were advised of further representations, which had been received since the reports had been prepared. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- a) **Change of use of part of the premises from Class F1 (Educational Use) to Class E g) (iii) (Light Industrial) and associated improvements to hardstanding area and widening of the internal access road - 10 Old Houghton Road, Hartford, Huntingdon - 23/00766/FUL**

(J Wallace, applicant, addressed the Committee on the application).

See Minute No 43 for Members' interests.

that the application be approved subject to conditions to be determined by the Planning Service Manager (Development Management) to include those listed in paragraph 8 of the report now submitted with condition 3 being amended to

restrict use to Use Class E g) together with an additional condition so that external plant requires prior approval (including what is covered under PD).

- b) Change of use of the former Post Office (use class E) adjoining 30 High Street to form part of existing residential property (use class C3) - 30 High Street, Warboys - 23/01927/FUL**

(Councillor G Willis, Warboys Parish Council, Councillor C Lowe, Ward Member, and E Durrant, agent, addressed the Committee on the application).

See Minute No 43 for Members' interests.

that the application be refused because the proposal has failed to demonstrate that the site has been effectively and robustly marketed for its current use without success to demonstrate that there is no reasonable prospect of that service or facility being retained or restored. Subsequently, the application has also failed to demonstrate that the loss of the commercial site will not undermine the settlement's role in provision of services. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy LP22 part e) ii) of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

46 APPEAL DECISIONS

The Committee received and noted a report by the Planning Service Manager (Development Management), which contained details of two recent decisions by the Planning Inspectorate. A copy of the report is appended in the Minute Book.

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

Chair