

Planning Committee

Wednesday the 7th December 2022 at 7.00pm



Update Report for the Committee

The following notes and attached papers will be referred to at the meeting and will provide updated information to the Committee to reflect changes in circumstances and officer advice since the reports on the agenda were prepared

3. Requests for Deferral/Withdrawal

None

4. Schedule of Applications

- (a) **22/00001/NSIP/AS - Land at Bank Farm opposite Becketts Green, Bank Road, Aldington, Kent** – Solar photovoltaic array plus energy storage with associated infrastructure and grid connection, with a generating capacity of up to 99.9MW

Clarification

The Save Aldington Group have asked for clarification as to who the applicant for the scheme actually is.

The Council, as a consultee during the s.42 consultation process, may make comments with regards to the proposed scheme. The Council will also, if an application for the DCO is ultimately made, enter into the relevant legal documents with the applicant relating to that application.

At this stage, no DCO application has been submitted. Residents may make representations to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on any aspect of the process as they wish. Should a DCO application be submitted to PINS further to the s.42 consultation, PINS will consider whether to accept it or not. During this time, there will continue to be the opportunity for residents & interested groups to comment on the application to PINS.

Recommendation (A) Part 1 – 2nd line

Insert '*siting and*' after the word 'appropriate'.

Objection from a local resident

'EP just needed to find two things: a grid connection and a willing landowner who was ready to give up farming. THEN they had to make his land fit. It's ridiculous - like the tail wagging the dog.

LPAs are often caught wrongfooted by these bounty hunters because Local Plans cannot keep pace with the growth of this sector.

EP has completed so much work ahead of the consultation phase that the dye is pretty much cast as its 28-day consultation phase came to an end a week ago. Everything is slanted against an objector. Hardly anyone in this room has read and absorbed all 5000 pages of their proposal. EP don't have to submit every comment it receives with its application - just a summary. They don't even have to show other sites they've looked at. Government says that renewables infrastructure is basically a "good thing" – a given, and their inspectors must just consider what's put in front of them.

What chance is there for the little person to be heard in this environment? Tonight, you have a chance put a brake on this steamroller:

- The area is the size of 264 stadium football pitches!
- We need renewables in the right place, to the right scale, designed properly to ensure that landscape mitigation is effective.
- National guidance points to *flat land not undulating land* like this
- This scheme WILL unavoidably impact the future of Red List species like Yellowhammer and Skylark.
- It is disingenuous to say that agriculture is going to continue. Grazing sheep between the panels from time to time where fields of wheat once grew is a cheap shot.
- Why did EP think land covered with footpaths – at least 16 - was a good location? These are part of our heritage enjoyed by generations past and for us to protect for future generations.
- Offering an improved pathway between Aldington and Mersham in return for EP rerouting virtually every footpath around the edge of fields is a price that is too high for what we will have to bear. The village *will* get this improved route when the landowner achieves housing development in the village. The Church Commissioners, who own land on the route can also give something back and easily grant a route across their undevelopable flood plain land at that time.
- The applicant should gift the Flood Zone 3 land as new wetland habitat for real *biodiversity gain*. Otherwise, when the reservoir overtops all the debris being swept downstream will lodge in the security fencing on this area with disastrous implications.
- Why support a scheme which is just 340 m from the edge of the AONB? It will set a horrible precedent for new schemes between the motorway and the foot of the North Downs.
- The developer has started to look at cumulative impact very late in the day reluctantly realising it must address the adjacent 250-acre EDF scheme. Where will EP claim displaced species like Brown Hare will go? What about the impact on the tiny road network caused if both schemes are constructed concurrently?
- I'm disappointed that your report simply states the amount of £40,000 per annum. This is a *woefully* low figure. Based on my research nationally a *minimum of £100,000 per annum* should be payable. Why is nobody taking ownership of this?

Ashford's Land Commission – a good initiative - is due to report this month.

I hope it will extend the borough's green corridor policy and protect the East Stour Valley as an unspoilt green valley for the borough's citizens to enjoy running from the edge of Ashford southwards to Otterpool - bordered to the south by the AONB.

We will all reap the whirlwind if you support this scheme not only for the disaster it will be – but because of the green light it will give to the next bounty hunters that will find this precedent scheme so helpful.'

Jonathan Tennant
Forehead Farm
Aldington
TN25 7EH
05.12.22

- (b) **22/00136/AS - Liberty Barn, Canterbury Road, Brabourne, Kent** - Proposed erection of an off-grid residential dwelling (under paragraph 80 of the NPPF) utilising existing access. Alterations to existing barn, removal of stables and landscape enhancement works to wider site.

Design Review Panel Report Summary, July 2021

At the pre-application stage, a design review was conducted. The design review panel whilst commending the effort put into the design, were not convinced that the proposal met the high standards set out in paragraph 79 (now paragraph 80) of the NPPF. The following recommendations were made:

- Resolve the architectural identity of the proposal by studying contemporary farmhouse typologies and how these might sensitively respond to the site in the long term.
- Clarify the degree to which the building is hidden or expressed in the landscape through a series of accurate section drawings.
- Develop the relationship of the building to the landscape, in terms of the programme, form, elevational design and plan-roof relationship as this will strengthen the narrative of the proposal.
- Carry out further studies into species, prevailing habitat structure of woodland, scrubland and meadow, as well as surface water drainage and embed this into the landscape design.
- Consider alternative outlooks and positioning of the building in the landform following a detailed topographical study of the site.
- At para 4.3 of the report, it is stated, "The approach to materials and detailing was not discussed in great detail at this review. However, the choice of materials and quality of detailing should be significant contributors both to the enhancement of the setting and the outstanding nature of the proposal. The material choice should also be evaluated in respect of the building's carbon footprint with a view to achieve a net zero carbon development."

- At para 5.2., it is stated, “Our guidance is that at the planning application stage the proposal must produce a clear energy strategy which details how the development will optimise thermal performance, minimise the demand for energy, supply the remaining energy requirements efficiently and optimise the use of renewables in order to align with the Government’s emerging zero carbon policy. This strategy should be informed by detailed modelling work informed by respected calculation methods.”

To read the design review panel report in full, please see attached Appendix 1

- (c) **22/00569/AS - 240 Beaver Road, Ashford, Kent, TN23 7SW** - Convert 3-bedroom 2-storey house to 2 self-contained flats single occupancy, for social housing

None.