

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

1 October 2014

AUTHOR/S: Planning and New Communities Director

Application Number: S/1615/14/FL

Parish(es): Sawston

Proposal: Solar Farm and Associated Development

Site address: Land North of Dales Manor Business Park,
West Way

Applicant(s): Sawston Solar Farm Ltd.

Recommendation: Delegated Approval (as amended)

Key material considerations: Green Belt/Countryside
Landscape Character
Agricultural Land
Heritage Assets
Archaeology
Ecology
Biodiversity
Trees and Landscaping
Flood Risk
Public Footpaths

Committee Site Visit: Yes

Departure Application: No

Presenting Officer: Karen Pell-Coggins

Application brought to Committee because: Major Application of Local Interest

Date by which decision due: 27 October 2014

Update to report

Paragraphs 14, 18 and 20 - Consultation by South Cambridgeshire District Council as Local Planning Authority

1. **Landscape Officer** – Views of the site are visible from the following locations
 - i) View adjacent to the upper north western edge of Fox's Burrow (block of woodland to the north of the site on the chalk hills), looking south-southwest.

Due to the elevation of the site the proposed development would be visible. The land use and character would change from agricultural to semi-industrial. The rear view of

the panels would be 80% visible and only a small proportion of glare would be visible. This magnitude of change would be considered as medium.

Mitigation measures proposed on the Northern boundary of the site inclusive of large native trees and hedgerow planting would reduce the visibility of the site within 10 to 15 years, and therefore over that timescale the effect will be reduced to slight / moderate and therefore not significant.

- ii) View from the footpath on Little Trees Hill, part of the Magog Downs, looking south-southwest.

The proposed development from this location would be visible. The rear view of the panels would be 100% visible with no solar glare. This magnitude of change would be considered as medium.

Dales Manor Business Park which is located adjacent to the site is also visible which also reduces the visual impact of the development.

Mitigation measures proposed on the Northern boundary of the site inclusive of large native trees and hedgerow planting would reduce the visibility of the site within 10 to 15 years, and therefore over that timescale the effect will be reduced to slight / moderate and therefore not significant.

- 2. **Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team** – Comments that the nature and significance of the archaeological remains have been discussed with the agent following a geophysical survey and the location of trial trenches has been submitted. No objections are raised providing the agreed scheme is set out in a condition attached to any consent. This is designed to protect the archaeological interest of the area and to remove the need for prior archaeological excavation. No piled mounts should occur within the central zone delineated by blue lines, but the PV panels can be surface mounted in this zone (see the example of surface mounting type attached to this email). Cable trenches/ access tracks should deflect around the edges of the zone.

Paragraphs 44, 48 and 49 - Material Planning Considerations

- 3. An agricultural vision for the site has now been submitted to demonstrate the continued use of the site for agriculture. The scheme includes sheep farming, chicken farming, soft fruit growing and bee hives.
- 4. Revised plans have now been submitted to address the Landscape and Ecology Officer's concerns. This includes an established area for biodiversity management as an education resource for local schools.

Paragraph 71 - Recommendation

- 5. It is recommended that the Planning Committee grants officers delegated powers to approve the application (as amended) subject to the comments of the Landscape and Ecology Officer's and the following amendments to the conditions in the original report and additional condition: -

Condition ix – The condition in the original report should be replaced with the following condition: -

An area of archaeological remains occurs within the site, which should not be subject to intrusive construction impacts or those from future maintenance schemes in order to conserve the interest of the archaeological remains in the long term. PV panels

should be surface mounted within the zone delineated in blue (see 'Figure 3') and cable runs/access tracks should be routed as appropriate at the perimeter of the area. Pile mountings, and the location of cable trenches and access tracks, can be used in all other parts of the development area according to the approved design. (Reason - To safeguard the archaeological remains present in the demarcated area of the site.)

Condition xii- The condition in the original report should be replaced with the following condition: -

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the Agricultural Vision Statement reference (to be confirmed) and thereafter retained during the operation of the development.

(Reason - To ensure the continued use of the site for agricultural purposes.)

New Condition

No development shall commence until details of any buildings to be provided to ensure the continued use of the site for the purposes of agriculture have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and thereafter retained throughout the operation of the development.

(Reason – To safeguard the Green Belt in accordance with Policy GB/1 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

Case Officer: Karen Pell-Coggins- Senior Planning Officer
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