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## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH ON 17 JUNE 2013

**Members Present:** Councillors Serluca (Chairman), Harper (Vice Chairman), Hiller, Todd, Shabbir, Lane and Ash

**Officers Present:** Simon Machen, Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering  
Nick Harding, Group Manager Development Management  
Amanda McSherry, Principal Development Management Officer  
Jez Tuttle, Senior Engineer (Development)  
Sarah Hann, Acting Senior Engineer (Development)  
Carrie Denness, Senior Solicitor  
Jeremy Pike, Legal Advisor  
Gemma George, Senior Governance Officer

### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors North, Simons, Kreling, Sylvester and Harrington.

Councillor Ash was in attendance as substitute.

### 2. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

### 3. Development Control and Enforcement Matters

The Chairman addressed the Committee and advised that there had been a request received from the press to be permitted to take photographs throughout the proceedings. The Committee's approval was sought and this was agreed unanimously.

There had been a further request from a member of the public to be permitted to audio record the proceedings. The Committee's approval was sought and this was agreed unanimously.

#### 3.1 **12/01905/R3FUL – Installation of Solar Farm, with an installed power capacity of up to 26MW, comprising the installation of photovoltaic panels, associated boundary fencing, security and CCTV cameras, site access and associated electrical infrastructure including inverter units, transformer and temporary construction compounds, electricity substation and 2no. terminal towers, Land to the East of Black Drove, Thorney, Peterborough**

The site area was approximately 100.6ha and was predominantly Grade 2 agricultural land. To the west of the application site were residential properties which ran parallel to Black Drove, one of which (Thorney Lodge) was Grade 2 Listed.

To the south was Thorney Golf Club, which benefitted from partial screening by an established row of conifers. To the south-east was Priest Farm.

The site was located within the Peterborough Fens character area (Policy CS20 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011)). To the north and east, as with the immediate

surroundings, the landscape was predominantly flat/level with open drainage ditches within and adjacent.

The Nene Wash, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and RAMSAR site was located approximately 6km south of the application site. Within 1km of the application site there were several sites of known archaeology. The site was within a Flood Zone 3 and a Mineral and Waste Safeguarding Zone.

Permission was sought for;

- 144,060 panels, which would be arranged in sections of either 50 metres x 5.85 metres or 16.7 metres x 5.85 metres and would stand at 700mm above ground level and 3.4 metres to highest point;
- The panels would be affixed to piled metal frames;
- Within a Substation compound would be the control building and operation centre (40 metres (l) x 15 metres (w) x 6.5 metres (h) and two switch stations and transformers, surrounded by a 3 metre high palisade fence;
- Twenty-three invertors buildings each with a floor area of 5.4 metres (w) x 3 metres (l) and a height of 2.8 metres;
- A 2.4 metre high mesh fence to surround the site;
- Underground cables to a depth of 1.15 metres;
- 18 x CCTV stands at 5 metres in height; and
- A network of internal roads to be compacted hardcore.
- Access to the site from Black Drove, at the southern most point of the application site.

The proposal would create 14 full time equivalent jobs and produce up to 26MW of electricity.

In response to the Local Planning Authority's concerns the site compound and its control building, associated apparatus and access had been relocated to the eastern edge of the application site (Drwg S2-ENG-301 B).

As indicated by drawing NTS-2(R) A3 the parcel of land west of Black Drove was no longer proposed for development. This had led to a reduction in the overall site area and the number of proposed solar panels.

The following applications for planning permission had also been submitted to the Local Planning Authority;

- 12/01904/FUL - Installation of a solar farm with an installed power capacity of up to 8MW, comprising the installation of photovoltaic panels, associated boundary fencing, security and CCTV cameras, site access and associated electrical infrastructure including a switch station, inverter units and transformer and temporary construction compounds at Land To The South Of America Farm, Oxney Road, Peterborough (Pending Consideration).
- 12/01906/R3FUL - Installation of a solar farm with an installed power capacity of up to 49MW, comprising the installation of photovoltaic panels, associated boundary fencing, security and CCTV cameras, site access and associated electrical infrastructure including a switch station, inverter units and transformer and temporary construction compounds at Land To The East Of Peterborough Road, Crowland, Peterborough (Pending Consideration).

These proposals were potentially relevant to this application, in the context of potential cumulative environmental impacts resulting from the proposals in combination.

The Chairman advised that there had been an urgent update to the report for consideration by the Committee.

The Group Manager Development Management stated that since the publication of the committee report there had been a change to the recommendation contained within. The recommendation was now to defer consideration of the application to a future meeting of the Committee.

The reason for the revised recommendation was that a late set of comments had been received, which put forward a revised position statement for English Heritage. They were now seeking a programme of archaeological, palaeoenvironmental and hydrological work prior to the application being determined. It was for this reason that the recommendation was for the application to be deferred to enable discussions to take place with English Heritage so that a way forward could be established which could involve additional archaeological works.

On 13 June 2013, communication had also been received from the Secretary of State. He had issued the Council, as the local planning authority, with a direction not to issue a planning permission for the development proposal unless there was specific authorisation to do so; however this direction did not prevent the Committee from considering the application. Also, the direction did not mean that the application would be automatically called in by Secretary of State for his own determination, it merely indicated that the application was being looked at by the Secretary of State and that it may be called in.

The Chairman addressed the Committee and summarised the recommendation. A proposer was sought for the revised recommendation.

The recommendation was proposed and seconded. A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed to defer the application.

**RESOLVED:** (Unanimous) to defer the application, as per the revised Officer recommendation.

**Reasons for the decision:**

The decision was deferred to allow for further archaeological works to be undertaken on the site following the additional comments received from English Heritage.

17.00pm – 17.10pm  
Chairman

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