
2017/0117

Applicant: ADD Renewables Ltd. C/o Jake Stentiford, Surface Planning

Description: Erection of battery storage facility.

Site Address: Land West of Hopewell Street, Stairfoot, Barnsley

Two representations have been received from local residents. No comments have been received from any of the Ward Councillors. The application is referred to the Planning Regulatory Board for determination as the recommendation is subject to a S106 Agreement. In addition the proposal represents a minor departure to the land use planning policy designation affecting the site.

Background

Planning permission reference 2016/0296 was granted on 20 July 2016 subject to conditions, for 'Erection of enclosed battery storage area to assist with the balance of supply and demand of the national grid', on 'Land adjacent to existing Electricity Substation, West of Hopewell Street, Stairfoot, Barnsley.

The site lies to the **west** of the substation.

Site Location and Description

The site of the proposed development lies adjacent and to the **east** of an existing substation, located within a wider right triangular area of scrubland located immediately to the west of Hopewell Street (nearest residential properties), Stairfoot, from which it is accessed via a private track some 36m long.

The northern boundary of the scrubland is marked by the Trans Pennine Trail which runs towards Barnsley Town Centre to the west and further to the north is the Oaks Business Park, Hoyle Mill. The southern boundary is marked by a railway line some 105-165m away from the application site.

Proposed Development

The applicant is seeking planning permission for the installation of a battery storage facility. The proposal would contribute to the National Grid's requirements for frequency response development, which provides electricity to the grid only at times when demand rises above the supply available from conventional power stations.

The facility which would have a capacity of 40MW would consist of an array of battery containers (8 number) in a north to south alignment, with transformers and other components located between them, and enclosed by a 2.4m high perimeter palisade fence with gated access on the southern side, and would be connected to the adjacent substation via underground cabling. The system would be fully automated with infrequent visits (once per month on average) by a maintenance engineer.

The compound would occupy an area 44 x 52m. Battery containers would be the largest components at 2.5m x 15.7m x 2.7m high (excluding attached cooling components).

Materials are essentially galvanized steel with standard polyester coating. The colour is not specified in the application. A 4m wide planting belt would be established on the northern,

western and eastern boundaries of the compound and a 3m wide belt on the southern boundary adjacent to the access road.

The applicant states that the proposal is a revision of the previous planning permission 2016/0296, necessitated by a change in the precise location of the proposal, requested by Northern Powergrid.

Policy Context

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. The development plan consists of the Core Strategy and saved Unitary Development Plan policies. The Council has also adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes, which are other material considerations.

The Council has produced the Publication Consultation Document of the Local Plan. It establishes policies and proposals for the development and use of land up to the year 2033. The document is a material consideration and represents a further stage forward in the progression towards adoption of the Local Plan. As such increasing weight can be given to the policies contained within the document although this is still limited by the need to consider any comments received during the consultation and with the knowledge that the Inspector can require changes to the plan.

Barnsley Unitary Development Plan adopted 2000 (UDP) (Saved policies):

The site is allocated as 'Urban Greenspace'.

There are no relevant saved policies.

Barnsley Local Development Framework Adopted Core Strategy (CS):

CSP26 – New Development and Highway Improvement – states that new development will be expected to be designed and built to provide safe, secure and convenient access for all road users.

CSP29 – Design – sets out the overarching design principles for the borough to ensure that development is appropriate to its context and states that high quality development will be expected.

CSP35 – Green Space – refers to the criteria where we will allow the loss of Green Space to development.

CSP36 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity – development will be expected to conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geological features of the borough. Development which may harm such features will not be permitted unless effective mitigation and/or compensatory measures can be ensured.

CSP40 – Pollution Control and Protection – development will be expected to demonstrate that it is not likely to result in an increase in air, surface water and groundwater, noise, smell, dust, vibration, light or other pollution which would unacceptably affect or cause a nuisance to the natural and built environment or to people.

Publication version of the Draft Local Plan

Proposed allocation: Green Space

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole; or where specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted or unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Core planning principle 4 states that planning should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. Principle 9 promotes mixed use developments and recognises that some open land can perform many functions such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk and carbon storage.

Requiring good design:

- Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.
- Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments (amongst other things) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, respond to local character and history reflect the identity of local surroundings and are visually attractive.

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

- The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by amongst other matters, minimising impacts on biodiversity, preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of noise pollution.
- Decisions should aim to avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life as a result of new development.

Consultations

BMBC – Regulatory Services – No objections or comments.

BMBC Highways – No objections subject to the imposition of conditions on any grant of planning permission.

BMBC Public Rights of Way – No comments.

BMBC Policy – No comments received.

BMBC Drainage – No objections.

BMBC Biodiversity Officer – No objections subject to the imposition of conditions.

South Yorkshire Mining Advisory Service – No objections.

National Grid – No comments received.

Health and Safety Executive – No comments received.

Ward Councillors – No comments received.

Representations

The application has been publicised as being a departure from the local development plan and of local interest, by way of neighbour notification, press and site notices. Two representations have been received commenting as follows:

- A storage facility is the last thing we want on our doorstep. We already have unsightly allotments, power station and pylons to contend with. We don't have much of a view from our back yards. Would the people who put this in motion want such a structure in their back yard? I am also concerned about the potential health implications.
- The 'anticipated' noise level is 28 db. This is quite different to someone stating categorically that this is what it is going to be.

Assessment

Principle of Development

The National Grid has a statutory duty to ensure that the supply of electricity remains within certain limits in relation to demand. At times, the generation from baseload power stations is insufficient to meet demand when there are spikes in consumption. In order to avoid the need for blackouts and other extreme demand control measures at these times, the National Grid procures a range of balancing services.

The National Grid forecasts that the amount of frequency response required will increase by 3-4 times from the current level by 2030. The applicant states therefore that there is an urgent need for new frequency response assets to be secured and that battery storage has the benefits of requiring less physical infrastructure and faster response times whilst avoiding the emissions associated with reserve generators and would significantly improve the efficiency and security of the national grid. The technology also receives electricity from the grid which would otherwise be lost at times of over-supply. The application site represents an opportunity to secure the development close to an existing substation with a grid connection.

The applicant further states that meeting frequency response requirements from battery storage, does not involve curtailing of energy use by industrial users, does not have the same potential impacts on neighbouring land uses associated with short term generator schemes, and the scale/land take of development is smaller.

As noted above, the site of the proposed facility lies within an area designated as Urban Greenspace. The key policy therefore in terms of the principle of development is CSP35 which states that we will only allow development proposals that result in the loss of green space where:

- An assessment shows that there is too much of that particular type of green space in the area which it serves and its loss would not affect the existing and potential green space needs of the borough; or

- An appropriate replacement green space of at least an equivalent community benefit, accessibility and value is provided in the area which it serves; or
- The development is for small scale facilities needed to support or improve the proper function of the green space.

Green space is defined as green open areas which are valuable for amenity, recreation, wildlife or biodiversity.

The green space in question however, cannot be said to be valuable in terms of recreation as it is in private ownership and there is no public access. It does perhaps have some small benefit in terms of amenity in that it is visible from the TPT and a small number of residential properties.

With regard to biodiversity, the submitted ecological survey concludes that:

- The construction of the proposed facility would result in the loss of a small area of poor semi-improved grassland/scrub mosaic of low intrinsic nature conservation value. The loss of the scrub would be compensated for by the proposed woodland/scrub belts using native species.
- An area of Japanese knotweed lies immediately to the south of the access road which needs to be treated, prior to the commencement of construction works.
- From the information available, it is considered unlikely that reptiles occur on the site.
- The site is considered likely to support a limited range of birds. In order to reduce any impact, the site would be cleared outside of the main bird breeding season. If not possible, then a search for active bird nests would take place by a suitably qualified ecologist. Should any active bird nests be found, then they will be retained, along with a buffer zone, until fledging has occurred. In addition, two willow tit nest boxes would be erected on posts within the site or on the inside of the perimeter fence.
- There would be no appreciable impact upon the local bat population but in order to enhance the site for roosting bats, three bat boxes would be erected on the inside of the perimeter fence or a tall post within the fence.

The Council's Ecologist is content with the submitted Ecological Impact Assessment and its recommendations and has no objections subject to the imposition of conditions.

It is considered that the proposed development does not obviously meet the requirements of policy CSP35. However, it is also considered that the green space within which the site is located is not strictly functioning as green space as it has no value in terms of recreation and limited value in terms of amenity and biodiversity. Furthermore, bearing in mind the need for the type of facility proposed, the fairly modest size of the facility and that the proposed landscaping associated with its installation would have some significant benefits for the remainder of the green space in terms of ecological diversity and enhancements, the development could be considered to be a small scale facility which would support/improve the proper function of the green space. The fact that there is an existing substation within the green space is not only a material consideration in favour of the proposal in its own right but it also has the advantage of providing a grid connection for the proposal. On balance therefore, and subject to the imposition of conditions in respect of landscaping/ecological enhancements it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in principle.

Design/Residential and Visual Amenity

With regard to the design of the facility and visual amenity, none of the residential properties to the east off Hopewell Street and adjacent streets would directly face towards it. As noted above, a business park lies to the north across the TPT and there are no residential properties directly to the west. The rear elevations of the nearest residential properties to the south across the railway line would face towards the facility. However, the nearest property

is a minimum of 118m away and the facility would be largely screened by the proposed planting belt and existing vegetation running along the railway line. Furthermore, within the facility itself, the largest components, the battery containers, would be aligned in such a way that the width of each container (2.5m) would face towards the dwellings, limiting the visual impact, and the compound would be within a palisade fence. Views from the TPT would similarly be screened by existing vegetation running along the track and the proposed planting belt. In the circumstances, it is considered that there would be no significant adverse impact on visual amenity.

An updated noise statement submitted by the applicant concludes that the noise emission level of the proposed facility is 14 dB lower than the measured night time background noise level at the dwellings off Ashleigh Vale to the south and 9 dB lower in respect of the nearest sensitive receptor dwellings on Hopewell Street. Having considered the information, the Council's Regulatory Services is content with the proposed development from a noise perspective and has not raised any other concerns.

In view of the above, the proposal is considered to be consistent with policies CSP29 and CSP40, and the relevant planning policy statements in the NPPF.

Highway Safety

Considering that the facility would be served by an existing infrequently used access, the Council's Highways Section has no objections subject to the imposition of conditions including in respect of parking/manoeuvring and the submission of a construction method statement in compliance with policy CSP26.

Other Matters

As the proposal is stated to be a revision to the precise location of the previous approval, and in the interests of residential and visual amenity, it is considered that any planning consent should be subject to a unilateral undertaking to not implement planning permission 2016/0296 or seek compensation, statutory or otherwise, for foregoing the right to develop, amongst any other pertinent matters as advised by Legal Services.

Recommendation

Grant planning permission subject to the signing of a unilateral undertaking to not implement planning permission 2016/0296 or seek compensation, statutory or otherwise, for foregoing the right to develop, amongst any other pertinent matters as advised by Legal Services, and the following conditions:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun within 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 (as amended) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall only be carried out in accordance with the following documents:

- a) Drawing titled 'Location Plan', numbered P16-0851 01 and dated 15 March 2016;
- b) Drawing titled 'Existing Site Plan', numbered P16-0851 02 and dated 15 March 2016;
- c) Drawing titled 'Proposed Site Plan', numbered P16-0851 03 and dated 15 March 2016;
- d) Drawing titled 'Battery Container and HVAC Cooling Systems', numbered P16-0851 04 and dated 15 March 2016;

- e) Drawing titled 'Components', numbered P16-0851 05 and dated 15 March 2016;
- f) Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) of proposed battery storage facility, SLR reference 424.06749.00001 version 2, dated December 2016; and
- g) Updated Noise Statement produced by Environmental Noise Solutions Limited, for Proposed Battery Facility, Hopewell Street, Barnsley, and dated 28 October 2016.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of residential and visual amenity in accordance with CS policies CSP29 and CSP40 and the relevant planning policy statements in the NPPF.

3. All on-site vehicular areas indicated on the approved plan, shall be surfaced in a solid bound material (i.e. not loose chippings) and made available for the manoeuvring and parking of motor vehicles prior to the development being brought into use, and shall be retained for that sole purpose at all times.

Reason: To ensure that satisfactory off-street parking/manoeuvring are provided, in the interests of highway safety and free and safe flow of traffic, and in accordance with CS policy CSP26.

4. No development shall commence, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The approved statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The statement shall provide for:
 - a) The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
 - b) Means of access for construction traffic;
 - c) Loading and unloading of plant and materials;
 - d) Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
 - e) The erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate;
 - f) Measures to prevent mud/debris being deposited on the public highway;
 - g) Wheel washing facilities; and
 - h) Measures to control noise levels during construction.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety, residential and visual amenity, and in accordance with CS policies CSP26, CSP29 and CSP40.

5. Prior to any works commencing on-site, a condition survey (including structural integrity) of the highways to be used by construction traffic shall be carried out in association with the Local Planning Authority. The methodology of the survey shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority, and shall assess the existing state of the highway. On completion of the development, a second condition survey shall be carried out and shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority, and shall identify defects attributable to the traffic ensuing from the development. Any necessary remedial works shall be completed at the developer's expense in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to, and agreed in writing by, the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and to accord with CS policy CSP26.

6. Construction of the development hereby permitted shall only be carried out between the hours of 0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday and 0800 to 1300 on Saturdays, and at no time on Sundays and Bank/Public Holidays.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and to accord with CS policy CSP40.

7. No development shall commence until a landscaping scheme incorporating the recommendations set out within the approved Ecological Impact Assessment report has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall provide details (plant species, size, planting distance, numbers and planting method) of tree and shrub planting to be carried out. All tree and shrub planting as approved in the scheme shall be carried out in the first planting season following the completion of the development. Any trees or shrubs planted as part of the scheme which are removed, or in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority become severely damaged or are found to be dying or seriously diseased within five years of planting shall be replaced within the next available planting season with trees or shrubs of a similar size and species to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that a landscaping/planting scheme is submitted and implemented in the interests of visual amenity and biodiversity, and to accord with CS policies CSP29 and CSP36, and the relevant planning policy statements in the NPPF.

8. The development shall not be brought into use until two willow tit nest boxes and three bat boxes have been erected on posts within the site or on the inside of the perimeter fencing. The willow tit nest boxes shall be placed 2m above ground level, facing east, and shall be filled with sawdust or wood shavings. The bat boxes shall be installed 3m or more above ground level and be of a design which is self-cleaning. Photographic evidence of the installation of the willow tit nest boxes and bat boxes shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within 2 weeks of their installation and the facilities shall be maintained for the life of the development.

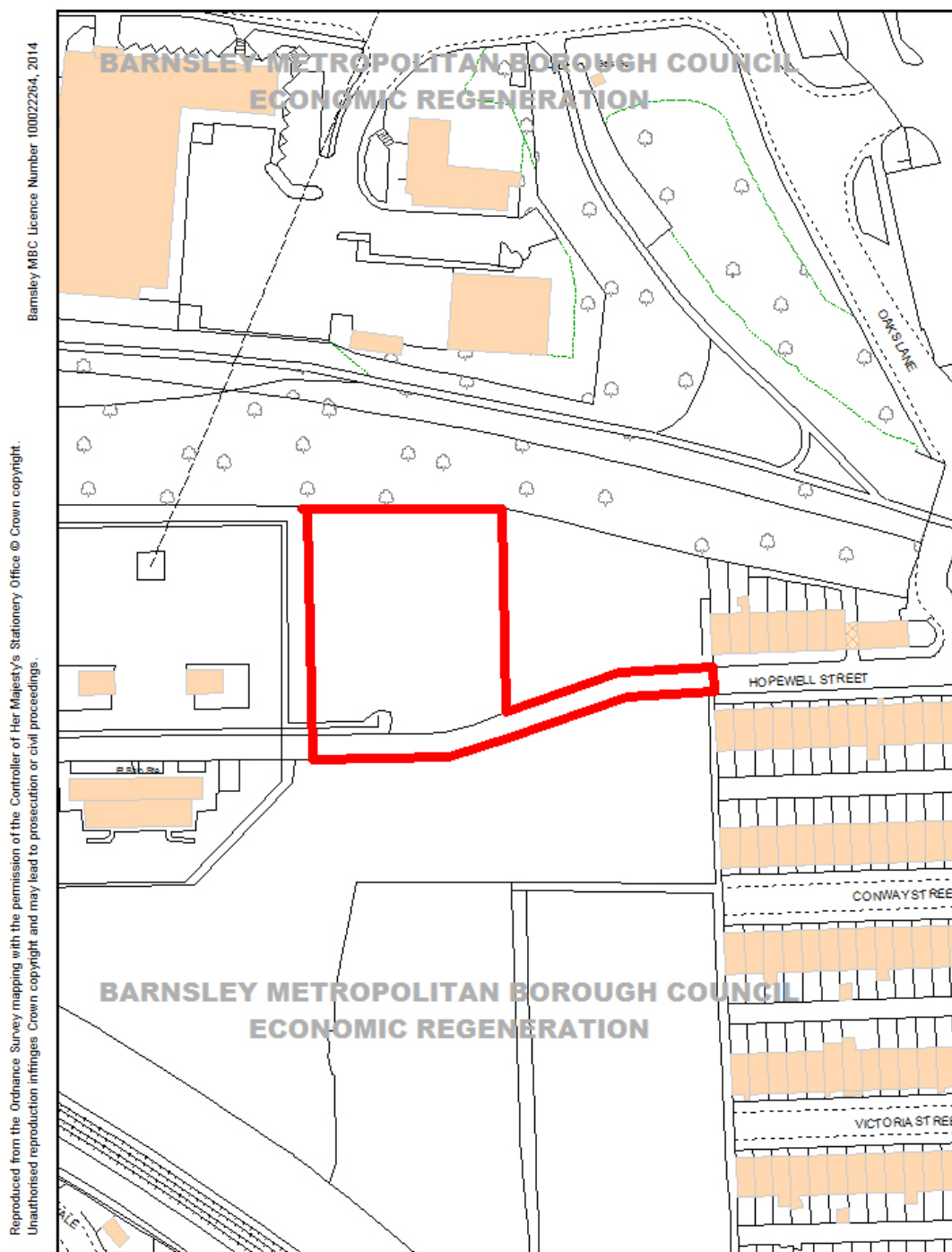
Reason: In the interests of biodiversity in accordance with CS policy CSP36.

9. No development shall commence until the colour of the proposed battery containers and the palisade fence have been submitted to, and agreed in writing by, the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with CS policy CSP29 and the relevant planning policy statements in the NPPF relating to requiring good design.

PA reference :-

2017/0117



BARNESLEY MBC - Economic Regeneration

Service Director: David Shepherd
Westgate Plaza One, Westgate,
Barnsley S70 9FD
Tel: 01226 772621



Scale 1:1250