

AGENDA ITEM

PLANNING COMMITTEE
16th December 2015

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND REGENERATION

PERMITTED SOLAR FARM SCHEMES – APPLICATIONS THAT REQUEST TO VARY TIMESCALES FOR LIFE TIME OF DEVELOPMENT.

Reason for Report:

To consider the process for determining applications for existing Solar Farm (PV arrays) schemes where a request to extend the duration of the consent is applied for. Currently Planning Committee has indicated that all ground mounted solar PV schemes recommended for approval should be determined by Planning Committee rather than by the Head of Planning and Regeneration under delegated powers.

Planning applications are now being received to extend the life of the permission beyond that originally granted. All other aspects of the application remain the same as previously granted.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That where an application is made to extend the lifetime of a permitted ground mounted solar PV development and that this is the only change to the originally consented scheme, determination may be made under powers delegated to the Head of Planning and Regeneration unless specifically called in for consideration by the Planning Committee.

Relationship to Corporate Plan:

None

Financial Implications:

None

Legal Implications:

So that authority for the determination for such applications is clearly set out.

Risk Assessment:

None

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Applications have been submitted under LPA ref: 15/01612/FULL at Ellicombe farm in Morchard Bishop, and under LPA ref: 15/01613/FULL at Palfreys Barton at Cove

and related to solar PV schemes. Both schemes have been built and when planning permission was granted (LPA ref: 12/01306/MFUL and 12/01376/MFUL) each was granted for 25 years as specifically set at condition 1 of both permissions.

- 1.2 The current applications seek to extend the life time of each development by a further 5 years.
- 1.3 15/01612/FULL at Ellicombe Farm: A Variation of condition 1 of planning permission 12/01306/MFUL is requested so that the solar PV facility shall cease to generate electricity on or before 28th March 2043
- 1.4 15/01613/FULL at Palfreys Barton: A variation of Condition 1 of Planning Permission 12/01376/MFUL is requested so that the solar PV facility shall cease to generate electricity in or before 30th June 2043.

2.0 ASSESSMENT ISSUES

- 2.1 Both schemes have already been assessed and approved by the Local Planning Authority under the original planning applications. No changes to the layout are proposed. The only change is to the duration of the lifetime of the development. The issues to be assessed in the consideration of these extension of time applications are therefore very limited.
- 2.2 Both applications have been advertised and consulted on in accordance with the LPA's statutory procedures. No response to either application have been received which raise any further, new planning issues for consideration.
- 2.3 Although there are only two applications at present it is likely that similar applications will be received in the future for the other schemes that have been built out.

3.0 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Where applications are submitted that seek to extend the life time of authorised solar farms by a further 5-10 year period over and above the permitted timeframe, that the decision for these types of applications should be delegated to the Head of Planning and Regeneration rather than automatically being considered by Planning Committee as is currently the case. This would not preclude a Ward Members, the Chair or Vice Chair of Committee requesting that the application be considered by Committee having given planning reasons for doing so.

Contact for any more information

Simon Trafford (Area Planning Officer)
01823 234369

Background Papers

Planning Committee 20th February 2013 and
21st October 2015

File Reference

Circulation of the Report

Cllr Richard Chesterton