

---

**MAIN CASE**

**Reference No:** 20/00761/CCA

**Proposal:** Erection of solar PV panels and associated infrastructure and landscaping

**Site Address:** North Angle Farm Angle Common Soham Ely  
Cambridgeshire CB7 5HX

**Applicant:** Cambridgeshire County Council

**Case Officer:** Catherine Looper, Senior Planning Officer

**Parish:** Soham

**Ward:** Soham South  
Ward Councillor/s: Ian Bovingdon  
Dan Schumann

**Date Received:** 4 August 2020      **Expiry Date:**

**[V82]**

---

1.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 Members are requested to endorse the consultation response proposed by Officers, set out below:

East Cambridgeshire District Council support projects for renewable energy development in accordance with policy ENV6 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015. East Cambridgeshire District Council therefore raise no objection to the proposals subject to the recommended conditions set out below:

- East Cambs District Council wish to see a condition appended to any grant of permission which requires a detailed scheme for the decommissioning of the site to be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Council prior to the expiration of the temporary period of consent.
- East Cambs District Council request that a condition is appended to any grant of permission which requires the submission of a report setting out the condition of the access roads to be submitted prior to commencement of any works, and a separate condition requiring the repair of these roads should damage be caused during construction works.
- The Environmental Health Team at East Cambs District Council request that any ground piling works are restricted to the hours of 09:00 – 17:00 each day Monday – Friday. None on Saturdays, Sundays or Bank Holidays.

- The Environmental Health Team at East Cambs District Council request that construction works (excluding ground piling works) are restricted to the hours of 07:30 – 18:00 each day Monday – Friday; 07:30 – 13:00 on Saturdays; and None on Sundays or Bank Holidays.
- East Cambs District Council wish to see conditions appended to any grant of permission which requires a detailed scheme for soft landscaping and its ongoing maintenance to be submitted and approved in writing. The schedule shall include, planting plans, a written specification; schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes, proposed numbers/densities; and a detailed implementation programme. It shall also indicate all existing trees and hedgerows on the land and details of any to be retained. The works shall be carried out prior to the end of the first planting season following completion of the development. The condition should also allow scope for replacement planting, if any tree or plant is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies. The maintenance scheme shall set out:
  - methods for the proposed maintenance regime;
  - detailed schedule;
  - details of who will be responsible for the continuing implementation
  - details of any phasing arrangements
- East Cambs District Council wish to see a condition appended to any grant of permission which secures a comprehensive scheme of biodiversity improvements as part of the development.

## 2.0 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION

2.1 This application is being determined by Cambridgeshire County Council. East Cambridgeshire District Council is a consultee and not the determining body.

2.2 The Council is requested to comment on the application which seeks consent for the erection of solar PV panels and associated infrastructure and landscaping. The solar farm is designed to export 29.4MW (AC) to the National Grid, generated by 39MW (DC) installed generating capacity. The application is for a temporary period of 35 years. The proposal would consist of up to 78,000 PV panels on mounting frames. The proposal would also include associated works such as inverter cabins, transformers, Designated Network Operator (DNO) building, communications building, security measures and landscaping. The DNO cable would connect to the Burwell substation some 4.5km to the south of the site.

2.3 The full planning application, plans and documents submitted by the Applicant can be viewed online via Cambridgeshire County Council's Public Access online service, via the following link <https://planning.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/online-applications/> and the County Council application reference: CCC/20/051/FUL

## 3.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

3.1 The application site itself is a total of 73.74ha (approximately 182 acres), made up of two parcels of land separated by a public bridleway known as Twelve Foot Drain. The eastern parcel of land is approximately 15.6ha (approximately 38.5 acres) and the western parcel is approximately 58.14ha (approximately 143.6 acres). The site was most recently used as tenanted agricultural land, although the tenancy has now ceased. The surrounding landscape is dominated by agricultural land, with the exception of Triangle Solar farm directly to the north.

## 5.0 RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES

5.1 Responses were received from the following consultees and these are summarised below. The full responses are available on the Council's web site.

### **Cadent Gas Ltd - 18 August 2020**

An assessment has been carried out with respect to Cadent Gas Limited, National Grid Electricity Transmission plc's and National Grid Gas Transmission plc's apparatus. Please note it does not cover the items listed in the section "Your Responsibilities and Obligations", including gas service pipes and related apparatus.

For details of Network areas please see the Cadent website (<http://cadentgas.com/Digging-safely/Dial-beforeyou-dig>) or the enclosed documentation.

#### **Are My Works Affected?**

Searches based on your enquiry have identified that there is apparatus in the vicinity of your enquiry which may be affected by the activities specified. Can you please inform Plant Protection, as soon as possible, the decision your authority is likely to make regarding this application.

If the application is refused for any other reason than the presence of apparatus, we will not take any further action.

Please let us know whether Plant Protection can provide you with technical or other information that may be of assistance to you in the determination of the application. As your proposed activity is in close proximity to National Grid's Transmission assets we have referred your enquiry/consultation to our Asset Protection team for further detailed assessment. We request that you do not commence work or take further action with regards to your proposal until you hear from us. We will endeavour to contact you within 21 days from the date of this response. Please contact us at [assetprotection@nationalgrid.com](mailto:assetprotection@nationalgrid.com) if you have not had a response within this time frame.

### **Environmental Health – 16 September 2020**

We have had issues recently with the construction of solar farms and the pile driven mounts for the solar arrays. I want to ensure that if this application is granted there is as much control over the development/construction phase as possible in order to mitigate noise from the pile driving. I would therefore request the following -

The standard hours below to control construction times and deliveries during the construction phase:

07:30 – 18:00 each day Monday – Friday  
07:30 – 13:00 on Saturdays and  
None on Sundays or Bank Holidays

And the times below specifically to control ground piling:

09:00 – 17:00 each day Monday – Friday  
None on Saturdays, Sundays or Bank Holiday

I have read the CEMP dated July 2020 which advises that construction is anticipated to be between the hours of 07:00 and 18:30 Mon – Fri and 07:00 and 12:30 on Saturdays but this is a long time to be exposed to the noise from pile driving so I would prefer a tighter restriction on this which is closer to what I propose above.

## 6.0 The Planning Policy Context

### 6.1 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015

GROWTH 2	Locational Strategy
GROWTH 3	Infrastructure requirements
GROWTH 5	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
ENV 1	Landscape and settlement character
ENV 2	Design
ENV 4	Energy efficiency and renewable energy in construction
ENV 6	Renewable energy development
ENV 7	Biodiversity and geology
ENV 8	Flood risk
ENV 9	Pollution
ENV 11	Conservation Areas
ENV 12	Listed Buildings
ENV 14	Sites of archaeological interest
COM 5	Strategic green infrastructure
COM 7	Transport impact
COM 8	Parking provision

### 6.2 Supplementary Planning Documents

Design Guide  
Contaminated Land  
Cambridgeshire Flood and Water  
Renewable Energy Development (Commercial Scale)

### 6.3 National Planning Policy Framework 2019

- 2 Achieving sustainable development
- 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities
- 9 Promoting sustainable transport
- 11 Making effective use of land

- 12 Achieving well-designed places
- 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 16 Conserving & enhancing the historic environment

## 7.0 PLANNING COMMENTS

- 7.1 The application has been accompanied by a number of reports including an Environmental Statement, various Ecology reports, flood risk assessments and surface water drainage strategies, glint and glare assessments, archaeological assessment and landscape plans.
- 7.2 On 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019 East Cambridgeshire District Council declared a 'Climate Emergency', acknowledging that East Cambridgeshire is a major contributor to Greenhouse gas emissions. The minutes from the Full Council meeting show that East Cambridgeshire "is at significant risk from climate change by both drought from reduced rainfall and flooding from rising sea levels, with the Environment Agency reporting that the river flow on the Ely Ouse is 'notably low', and reports suggesting that a 1.5 rise in temperature would see most of East Cambs under salt water with Ely becoming an island and the fen edge villages becoming coastal villages". At the meeting the Council committed to a number of aims including to "Consider other actions that could be implemented, including (but not restricted to): renewable energy generation and storage, providing electric vehicle infrastructure and encouraging alternatives to private car use, increasing the efficiency of buildings, in particular to address fuel poverty; proactively using local planning powers to accelerate the delivery of net zero-carbon new developments and communities, coordinating a series of information and training events to raise awareness and share good practice."
- 7.2 Policy ENV6 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 sets out that renewable energy schemes will be supported wherever possible and that the wider environmental, social and economic benefits will be given significant weight, unless these benefits are outweighed by significant adverse impacts that cannot be remediated and made acceptable in relation to:
- The local environment and visual landscape impact.*
  - Impact on the character and appearance of the streetscape/buildings.*
  - Key views, in particular those of Ely Cathedral.*
  - Protected species.*
  - Residential amenity.*
  - Safeguarding areas for nearby airfields; and*
  - Heritage assets.*
- 7.3 Policy ENV6 states that the visual and amenity impacts of proposals will be assessed on their merits, both individually and cumulatively. Provision should be made for the removal of facilities and reinstatement of the site, should they cease to operate.
- 7.4 The Council's Supplementary Planning Document 'Renewable Energy Development' sets out on page 8 that "In summary proposals for renewable energy generation will be considered on their merits, on a case by case basis. The Council

will take account of any environmental, economic or social benefits and will consider whether there are any adverse impacts, for example on landscape character, the natural and historic environment, public rights of way and highway network, residential amenity and the operation of aviation sites. The Council will refuse planning permission for commercial scale renewable energy schemes where it is considered that there are significant adverse impacts which outweigh the wider benefits of renewable energy development identified above. The Council will also consider to what extent any adverse impacts can be mitigated through the design and siting of proposals or by applying appropriate planning conditions. The views of local communities, residents, parish and town councils, community groups and all elected representatives relating to commercial scale renewable energy schemes will also be given significant weight in the determination of planning applications.”

7.5 Based on the information provided, East Cambridgeshire District Council has no objections to the proposed development as it is considered to meet the overarching aims of the Council’s Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents which relate to renewable energy. The Council does have the following comments to make in terms of residential amenity, highways and visual impact and would request that Cambridgeshire County Council take these into account in their determination of the application:

**7.6 Residential Amenity**

7.7 Policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 requires proposals to ensure that there are no significantly detrimental effects on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers. The Council is aware of other solar farm projects in the district where ground piling has created issues with residential amenity. The Council would request that appropriate conditions are appended to any grant of permission which restrict construction and ground piling times, to ensure that residential amenity is not impacted.

**7.8 Highways**

7.9 The Council is aware of a public bridleway which runs through the site and understands that this will not be blocked or diverted due to the application proposals. Policy COM7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 sets out that proposals should:

- a. Provide safe and convenient access to the highway network.
- b. Provide a comprehensive network of routes giving priority for walking and cycling.
- c. Protect existing rights of way or allow for agreed diversions in exceptional circumstances.
- d. Consider the travel and transport needs of people with disabilities.
- e. Accommodate the efficient delivery of goods, supplies and services.
- f. Be capable of accommodating the level/type of traffic generated without detriment to the local highway network and the amenity, character or appearance of the locality.
- g. Be accompanied by a Transport Statement where appropriate; or if the proposals are likely to result in significant transport implications, be accompanied

by a Transport Assessment. The coverage and detail of this should reflect the scale of development and the extent of the transport implications.

h. Be accompanied by a Travel Plan for residential and non-residential developments that are likely to generate significant amounts of traffic; and

i. Within (g) and (h) indicate any steps to mitigate impacts relating to noise, pollution, amenity, health, safety and traffic.

7.10 In relation to points a, b, c, f and j, the Council would request that prior to commencement of any works, a road condition report is submitted which sets out the standard of the public bridleway and any publicly accessible road to be used for construction traffic. The Council would also request that a separate condition is applied which requires these roads to be reinstated to their condition at the time of the report should any damage be caused to the surfaces. This is in order to ensure highway and pedestrian safety.

### **7.11 Visual Impact**

7.9 Policy ENV1 of the Local Plan 2015 requires proposals to protect, conserve and enhance traditional landscape features and the unspoilt nature and tranquillity of the area. Policy ENV2 of the Local Plan 2015 requires proposals to ensure that location, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and colour relate sympathetically to the surrounding area and each other. Paragraphs 127 and 130 of the NPPF seek to secure visually attractive development which improves the overall quality of an area and is sympathetic to local character and history.

7.10 The Council notes that landscaping is proposed to help to screen the site and reduce visibility. The Council would request that a condition is applied to any grant of permission which requires a comprehensive scheme of soft landscaping to be submitted. The scheme should include planting plans, a written specification; schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes, proposed numbers/densities, and a detailed implementation programme.

7.11 The Council would request a condition regarding ongoing landscape maintenance to ensure that the site continues to comply with policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the Local Plan 2015, and the NPPF. The Council also consider it appropriate to request that a condition requiring a comprehensive scheme of biodiversity enhancements is submitted to ensure that the proposed development delivers a net gain in biodiversity in accordance with policy ENV7 of the Local Plan 2015.

7.12 The Council is aware of other solar farms within the vicinity of the site (Triangle Solar Farm), as well as other proposals for solar farm development. The Council has reviewed the Environmental Statement submitted alongside the application which includes a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment. The cumulative impact of development has been considered and it is the Council's view that the remote location and limited public views of the site, combined with the opportunities for soft landscaping would prevent there from being any significant adverse impact on the character of the area.

7.13 The Council's Supplementary Planning Document "Renewable Energy Development" sets out on page 24 that applications for solar farms should set out details of what will be decommissioned and removed from the site at the end of the

project timescale. The Council considers it appropriate to request that a scheme for the decommissioning of the site is conditioned to ensure that the site is returned to its original condition, in accordance with policies ENV1, ENV2, ENV6 and ENV9 of the Local Plan 2015.

**7.14 Summary**

7.15 This application is a being determined by Cambridgeshire County Council and Officers have recommended a consultation response for Members of the Planning Committee to endorse.

7.16 No objection is raised, but conditions are requested as set out in the recommendation section of this report.

---

<b><u>Background Documents</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>Contact Officer(s)</u></b>
20/00761/CCA	Catherine Looper Room No. 011 The Grange Ely	Catherine Looper Senior Planning Officer 01353 665555 catherine.looper@eastcambs.gov.uk

National Planning Policy Framework -

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 -

<http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Local%20Plan%20April%202015%20-%20front%20cover%20and%20inside%20front%20cover.pdf>