

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: F/23/95405

Site Address: THE WIDE LANE PAVILION, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON
SPORTS GROUND, WIDE LANE, EASTLEIGH, SO50 5PE

Case Officer: Rachael Morris

Description: Three-year temporary siting of a container hosting a battery energy storage system with associated solar panels and micro wind turbine on roof.

Particular Site Constraints?	Yes ☒	No ☐
- SGN Medium Pressure Pipeline - Air Quality Management Area - Proposed New Road – Long-term Safeguarded Route - Open Space - Countryside - Settlement Gap - Great Crested Newt Amber Zone		

Planning History?	Yes ☒	No ☐
- Z/18829/000/00 - Change of use of land from agricultural purposes to sports field – Permit – Mar 1979 - Z/04511/003/00 - New access road to sports ground - replacement of existing access – Permit – Jul 1980 - Z/18829/001/00 - Erection of a sports pavilion and changing rooms – Permit – Jan 1982 - Z/08767/016/00 - Retention of Changing Rooms, Toilets and Groundsman Store – Temporarily Approve – Aug 1986 - Z/29361/000/00 - Outline: Retail and Leisure Developments (23,225 sq. m) – Refuse – Jul 1987 - Z/29362/000/00 - Outline: Retail and Leisure Developments (37,160 sq. m.) – Refuse – Jul 1987 - Z/08767/018/00 - Retention of Changing Rooms, Toilets and Groundsman's Store – Temporarily Approve – Sept 1988 - Z/07535/012/00 - Outline: Business, Industrial and Warehouse Development (Use Classes B1, B2 And B8), Associated Shops, New Distributor Road, Junctions and Access to Airport and Development Areas – Grant outline – Dec 1992 - Z/07535/039/00 - Relief from Condition 31 Of Planning Permission Reference No 7535/12 Dated 18Dec1992 to Allow Future Building on the Site Prior to the Improvement of Junction 5 of the M27 Motorway – Permit – Dec 1998 - A/14/75683 - Display of 1no. Non illuminated dual aspect 'V' free standing sign following removal of existing – Consent – Feb 2015 - T/21/92004 – Various tree works – Consent – Feb 2022 - T/22/92345 – Various tree works – Consent – Mar 2022 - F/23/95045 - Installation of 2no. synthetic sports pitches, erection of fencing including new pedestrian access route, associated engineering operations and landscaping – Not Yet Determined		

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☐	Newspaper ☐
Representations:	None		
Parish Council:	No Comment		
Hampshire Highways:	No objection to the proposals from a highway's perspective. The proposed location of the container and associated equipment is in the far end of what is believed to be an occasionally used overspill car park. The container itself will only reduce this provision by a couple of spaces and doesn't affect surrounding movement or visibility.		

Southampton Airport:	No Objection.
Tree Officer:	No Arboricultural Objection.
Ecology:	<u>19/9/23</u> I have reviewed the amended proposed roof plan and elevations (rev P2) The location of the wind turbine further away from the hedgerow is acceptable. I have no further concerns. <u>2/8/23</u> The proposed position of this turbine would be near a hedgerow which is a linear feature bats might use for foraging and commuting. A different location away from these features could be proposed. A bat box or bird box mounted on a tree within the University of Southampton ownership would be an appropriate enhancement. I am satisfied that the container would not affect the drainage of the car park. The planning statement states that it would be set away from the vegetated boundaries, but it must be far enough away, so it does not affect the root protection zone of the hedgerow. <u>17/7/23</u> There are records of common reptiles, bats, hedgehogs and stag beetles near this site. The Planning Statement by Vail Williams LLP (May 2023) states that the proposal is to put the container on concrete slabs on part of an existing gravel overflow car park. The electrolyte in the battery will be stored in an intermediate bulk container on a bund, so any spills would not escape. The proposal is for only 3 years because this is a research project. In the proposed roof plan and elevations document by ACG Architects (rev P1, May 2023) the site plan shows trees in the NE corner of the car park, but in the proposed roof plan no trees are shown. There are also hedgerows along the east, north and west site boundaries. Bats use hedgerows as linear features for commuting and foraging. They also forage and can roost in trees if there are suitable features (such as holes, cracks, loose bark or ivy cover available. Nesting birds may also use the hedgerows and trees.
Environmental Health:	No comment.
Planning Policy:	No comment.
SGN:	No comment.

Site Visit:	Yes ☒	No ☐
Details: 06/03/2023		

Policy:
National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance Development Plan: The <u>Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036</u> The most relevant policies are Strategic policies S1, S2, S5 and S6; and Development Management policies DM1, DM2, DM3, DM4, DM11, DM14, DM18, and DM32. Supplementary Planning Documents: Quality Places; Residential Parking Standards; Character Area Appraisals.

Assessment:

The development is considered acceptable and complies with policies DM1, DM2, DM3, DM4, DM11, DM14, DM18, and DM32 from the 2016-2036 local plan, in that:

Principle

- Strategic Policy S6 states that development within a Settlement Gap will be permitted, provided that it would not undermine the physical extent and/or visual separation of settlements; and it would not have an urbanising effect detrimental to the character of the countryside or the separate identity of the adjoining settlements.
- Policy DM4 states that the Borough Council will permit the development of infrastructure to generate zero or low carbon energy... Subject to general development criteria and provided that the development has no significant adverse impact on the landscape or landscape features, biodiversity or the significance of heritage assets; does not involve the loss of land in public recreational use (see policy DM32); and ...
- Policy DM18 states that the extension or replacement of non-residential buildings in the countryside will be permitted provided that... the extension or replacement building would not have an urbanising effect on the countryside in terms of its density, scale, massing, layout and height; access, car parking, landscaping and services can be provided without having a detrimental impact on the character of the countryside; so far as possible the property is sustainably located in terms of accessibility by means of transport other than the private car...
- Policy DM32 states that the loss of existing or allocated recreation and open space facilities are only likely to be permitted in exceptional circumstances, where the Council's Sports Facility Needs Assessment and Playing Pitch Strategy Update and/or Open Space Needs Assessment clearly identifies the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or any loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or the development is for alternative recreation or open space facilities, the need for which clearly outweighs the loss. Any replacement provision should be made available for use prior to commencement of development.

Design and layout

- The proposal represents forms of renewable energy as part of a research project. This is supported under policy DM4 which supports low-carbon energy.
- The proposed development is situated to the side of the main Wide Lane Pavilion site, on an existing area of gravelled surfacing, which would result in a minimal impact to the existing recreational use. It is not considered the sporting use would be detrimentally impacted by this temporary siting.
- The proposed container would be coloured green which would help to aid its positioning within a countryside setting. In addition, the proposed container with associated micro-turbine and solar PV (Photovoltaics) is a minor development which would not dominate the site.
- The development accords with guidance set out in the 'Quality Places' SPD in that there will be no unacceptable impact on the amenity of the neighbouring properties in terms of loss of privacy, light or outlook.
- There is a no objection from highways as this is set far enough away from the highway with a suitable vegetation barrier to not pose a risk to highway users.

Impact on the Countryside, Settlement Gap and Open Space

- The application only seeks a temporary permission for a period of 3 years and as such the potential impact to the countryside and settlement gap is reduced. Policy DM18 covers extensions and replacement buildings within the countryside and although this is neither, the temporary nature of the structure could closely relate to the objectives of this policy. The proposed structure, despite including a micro-turbine, is ultimately small in scale, mass and height with the tallest part of the

turbine (excluding propellers) only reaching 6m. There is also existing car parking on site and multiple other ways to access the site including a bus station and train station within a 5-minute walk. Moreover, there is a strong vegetation boundary between the site and the main road (A335) which will also help to reduce its perceived impact to the countryside and settlement gap. Overall, it is not considered this would have a detrimental physical or visual impact to the settlement gap nor the character of the countryside.

- While the temporary structure is located within open space used for recreation, this is within an existing area of gravelled surfacing which together with its minor scale would result in no notable loss of recreational open space. Therefore, it is considered this could accord to policy DM32 which only allows the loss of recreational space in exceptional circumstances. This also accords to policy DM4 which only allows low-carbon energy within locations that does not involve the loss of land in public recreational use.

Other material considerations

- There will be no adverse impact upon trees or other natural features worthy of retention.
- The turbine was moved through the duration of the application to reduce potential harm to bats and birds who may be within the hedgerow.
- There are no likely significant impacts on the SPA.
- The proposed temporary structure is closely designed in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) Schedule 2 Part 7 Class M (The erection, extension or alteration of a school, college, university, prison or hospital building). As this is within University of Southampton grounds, this could apply. Nonetheless, the applicant has chosen to submit a full application.

Climate Change:

In July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency. In doing so it agreed, among other things, to: (a) put in place measures to ensure the Council's own operations and functions achieve carbon neutrality by 2025; (b) work with partners to aim for all projects and services delivered in the Borough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030; (c) ensure that the Council's procurement policy recognises carbon neutrality as one of its primary considerations; and (d) recognise the urgency of action to mitigate and adapt to climate change in every decision taken by the Council. This is underpinned by the Climate and Environment Emergency Strategy 2020–2030 and the supporting Climate and Environmental Emergency Action Plan – Update June 2020.

The declaration of the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency demonstrates a strong commitment from the Council to achieve net zero. The NPPF, development plan and adopted local plan policy do not set this as a specific target, but it is a material consideration to be considered alongside all other material considerations. In any case addressing climate change is a core part of the NPPF and local plan policy. The need to support the economy is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the adopted local plan, as is an assessment of climate impacts.

Equalities Implications:

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:

- A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

When making policy decisions, the Council must take account of the equality duty and in particular any potential impact on protected groups. It is considered that this application does not raise any equality implications

Conclusion:

Recommendation:	PERMIT ☒	REFUSE ☐
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Comments ...
