

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: PN/24/97952

Site Address: CooperVision Speedwell & Warrior Buildings, Erith House & Unit 1, Warrior Close & Speedwell Close, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, SO53 4TE

Case Officer: Rebecca Altman

Description: Application for prior approval for installation of Solar PV system comprising 1,101 solar panels across two CooperVision buildings: Warrior Close (606 solar panels) and Speedwell Close (495 solar panels).

Particular Site Constraints?	Yes ☒	No ☐
- Airport safeguarding - Some surface water flood risk on site - Existing employment site (DM15) - Urban Edge		

Planning History?	Yes ☒	No ☐
None directly relevant. Various past applications for alterations and new plant and equipment.		

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☒	Newspaper ☐
Representations:	None received.		
Parish Council:	No comments received.		
Ecologist:	No objection. Informative recommended.		
Environmental Health:	Air quality – No concerns. The solar panels would not involve any activity that would generate air pollution. Recommend adopting best practice measures during construction to safeguard air quality. Noise – No concerns. The works are likely to have minimal noise impact. It is noted that the mounting of panels flush with the pitched roof and the use of internal plant rooms for the system components would reduce potential noise. Any noise generated during installation would be temporary and expected to be within acceptable limits. Contaminated land – No concerns. No ground disturbance is required. Visual and glare impact – The use of monocrystalline panels with a silver frame, installed flush with the roof slope, is unlikely to cause significant glare or reflective nuisance to surrounding areas. The 1m perimeter gap from the roof edge and the minimal protrusion beyond the roof plane further mitigates visual impact. The external cabling installed within cable trays and the system components housed in internal plant rooms minimises the potential for environmental contamination or aesthetic impact.		
Southampton Airport:	Further comments following receipt of Glint and Glare Study: No objection. The proposed development does not conflict with safeguarding criteria. Original comments: A glint and glare assessment is required to show the impact or not of the panels in position against the flight paths of aircraft using the airport. Condition required.		

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Site Visit:	Yes ☒	No ☐
Details: 11 September 2024 – photographs on file.		

Policy: Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (GPDO) The application seeks prior approval for the installation of solar panels in accordance with Schedule 2, Part 14, Class J of the GPDO. National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance Development Plan: The <u>Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036</u> The most relevant policies are S1, DM1, DM4, and DM8.
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Assessment: The GPDO, Schedule 2, Part 14, Class J (c) allows for the installation of solar PV equipment on the roof of a building (other than a dwellinghouse or block of flats), subject to certain criteria being met. If the criteria are met, development is not allowed to commence until an application is submitted to the Local Planning Authority for a determination as to whether Prior Approval is required in relation to design and external appearance, including the impact of glare.

Criteria	Assessment
Development is not permitted by Class J if:	
(a) the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a pitched roof and would protrude more than 0.2 metres beyond the plane of the roof slope when measured from the perpendicular with the external surface of the roof slope.	The two buildings on which the solar panels are proposed have shallow pitched roofs and the panels are proposed to be installed flush with the roof, not protruding any more than 0.2m beyond the plane of the roof (as confirmed in the application form).
(b) the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a flat roof, where the highest part of the solar PV equipment would be higher than 1 metre above the highest part of the roof (excluding any chimney);	The solar panels are to be installed on shallow pitched roofs, therefore this criteria does not apply.
(c) the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a roof and within 1 metre of the external edge of that roof;	There is proposed to be at least a 1m gap between the panels and the edge of the roof, as indicated on the plans and confirmed in the application form.
(d) criteria omitted 2023	
(e) the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a site designated as a scheduled monument;	The site is not a scheduled monument.
(f) the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be	The buildings are not listed or in the curtilage of a listed building.

installed on a listed building or on a building within the curtilage of a listed building.	

Design and external appearance

The solar panels would be installed flush with the shallow pitched roofs of the buildings. Due to the scale of the buildings, the roofs are not highly visible from ground level and it is not considered that the panels would have any adverse visual impact on the appearance of the building or wider area.

Impact of glare

The Council's Environmental Health Officer has raised no concerns regarding visual glare, and Southampton Airport has raised no objection following review of the submitted Glint and Glare Study. It is therefore concluded that the solar panels would not have any adverse impacts in relation to visual glare.

Conditions - J.4:

(a) the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment must, so far as practicable, be sited so as to minimise its effect on the external appearance of the building and the amenity of the area;

The impact on the appearance of the buildings and surrounding area has been assessed as acceptable.

(b) the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment is removed as soon as reasonably practicable when no longer needed.

A condition can be imposed requiring its removal within 3 months should it become redundant.

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.

The NPPF, Policies S1, DM2, DM3 and DM4 of the Local Plan require development to be sustainable in terms of resource use, climate change and energy use. The application relates to the installation of solar panels which provide a form of renewable energy, therefore contributing to reducing the impacts of climate change.

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: The proposal complies with the relevant criteria set out in the GPDO and is acceptable in terms of visual impact and glare. Prior approval can be given.

Recommendation:

PERMIT ☒

REFUSE ☐

Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be implemented in accordance with the following plans numbered: CV-SPE-PV-001.1 (Location Plan); and CV-SPE-PV-002.1 (Proposed Block Plan).

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

2. In the event that the development hereby permitted becomes redundant or not required for the purpose permitted, then the development and all the associated equipment shall be removed from site within three months.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

Note to applicant: In the unlikely event of any bats being found during demolition or construction, all work must stop immediately, and Natural England must be called. Additional information is available on the Bat Conservation Trust website at [I've found a bat during works - I'm working on a building with bats - Bat Conservation Trust](#). If any active bird nests are found, all work must stop and a 5m buffer be created around the nest to protect it from disturbance until after the chicks have fledged and left the nest.