

Minutes

Meeting name	Planning Committee
Date	Thursday, 21 November 2024
Start time	6.00 pm
Venue	Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, LE13 1GH

Present:

Chair Councillor A. Thwaites (Chair)

Councillors

J. Mason (Vice-Chair)	P. Allnatt
I. Atherton	S. Atherton
R. Browne	P. Cumbers
M. Glancy	M. Gordon
D. Pritchett	R. Sharp (Substitute)

Officers

Assistant Director for Planning
 Planning Development Manager
 Legal Services Manager
 Planning Development Team Leader (CP)
 Planning Development Team Leader (RR)
 Planning Officer (AS)
 Democratic Services Officer (SE)
 Democratic Services Officer (BG)

Minute No.	Minute
PL45	<p>Apologies for Absence An apology for absence was received from Councillor Higgins and Councillor Sharp attended the meeting as his substitute.</p>
PL46	<p>Minutes The minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2024 were confirmed as a true record.</p>
PL47	<p>Declarations of Interest Minue PL49 – Application 23/00870/FUL Land OS 471599 310649, Leicester Road, Twyford and Thorpe</p> <p>Councillor Glancy declared that there could be a public perception of bias due to her family connections in the area therefore she would take no part in the determination of the application, leave the committee and move into the public gallery.</p> <p>Councillor Glancy here moved into the public gallery.</p>
PL48	<p>Schedule of Applications</p>
PL49	<p>Application 23/00870/FUL Location : Land OS 471599 310649, Leicester Road, Twyford and Thorpe Proposal : Installation of a ground mounted solar farm and associated ancillary works</p> <p>The Planning Officer (AS) addressed the committee and provided a summary of the application. She reported that an objection had been received from Gaddesby Parish Council that was not included in the report. The objection related to the potential increased risk of flooding in Gaddesby parish and the impact of construction traffic in the villages. These matters were considered in the report. An update to the noise impact assessment had also been received which clarified an error of the number of inverters and substations proposed within the survey and the site layout plan. The noise assessment was now in accordance with the proposed 4 inverters and 1 substation as shown on the site layout. The proposed noise levels of the updated assessment were still under the background noise levels recorded at the sensitive receptors in close proximity to the site and therefore the assessment at paragraph 8.5.6 of the report was still relevant.</p> <p>Members asked questions for clarification.</p>

Pursuant to Chapter 2, Part 9, Paragraphs 2.8-2.28 of the Council's Constitution in relation to public speaking at Planning Committee, the Chair allowed the following to give a three minute presentation:

Chris Atkinson, Applicant, made the following points:

- In 2019, Melton Borough Council declared a climate emergency and set an aim to being a carbon neutral Borough by 2030
- This solar farm application would go some way to achieving those goals in providing enough solar energy to power 4,000 homes with green energy
- They had been working to resolve all issues raised by consultees on the application since September 2023 which had now culminated in no objections and a recommendation for approval
- For reference he requested that the Twyford and Thorpe Satchville Parish Council's assertion that the scheme had significantly increased in scale during the course of the application was incorrect and should be disregarded
- Solar farms created minimal impermeable areas and the drainage scheme put forward was designed to manage surface water on site and discharge off-site at existing rates and in this instance the proposal offered significant betterment in future-proofing and over-sizing that had been designed into the scheme
- No objections had been raised by the technical consultees

Councillor Higgins, Ward Councillor, made the following points:

- The Government and the Council needed to develop a solar farms policy as he considered such applications would become prolific and flood planning authorities all over the country
- The Parish Council Chair had previously attended Planning Committees to talk about the impact of applications on flooding in Twyford and thanked him for his commitment in raising these concerns
- The Lead Flood Authority had refused to meet with him and the Environment Agency had raised no objection but he understood they did not look at the application if it was in flood zone one. He felt the statutory bodies did not understand the issues faced in Twyford and the parishioners were being let down
- Twyford had been the subject of projects by the Environment Agency which had alleviated flood risk but something had happened to change that position in that a planning application had been approved where the design and access statement and the flood risk assessment did not meet the built form which had resulted in the displacement of half a million litres of water and no responsibility had been taken to resolve this
- He would like to see flood risk assessments before permission was passed rather than set by condition and to be able to engage properly with the LLFA to ensure that Twyford was not at any more future risk of flooding that would affect local people and their properties

Councillor Mason requested that it be recorded that the application could be 'called in' should the drainage scheme not meet the required standard.

Councillor Ian Atherton proposed the recommendation in the report with an additional condition that no construction shall commence until the electricity grid connection had been approved. Councillor Sharp seconded the motion.

RESOLVED

That the application be APPROVED subject to the conditions as listed in detail at section 10 of the report and an additional condition that no construction shall commence until the electricity grid connection had been approved.

(5 for, 3 against, 2 abstentions)

REASONS

The reasons for approval were as outlined in the report.

PL50

Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at: 7.30 pm