
2024/0329

Mr Eric Lidster

Erection of electricity substation for purposes ancillary to existing waste recycling facility (Retrospective)

West Green Recycling, West Green Way, Monk Bretton, Barnsley, S71 5SN

Site Location and Description

The application site is limited to an area only slightly bigger than the siting of the substation, which is in place. The substation sits on the west boundary of the wider waste recycling facility which is accessed off West Green Way. The wider site is roughly surfaced, and the new substation is adjacent to a recently erected/placed range of plant and machinery, subject to a current application. The siting of the substation is adjacent to a form of concrete block boundary treatment in excess of 2m high which screens the substation from wider views to a great extent, although it is not clear how long the boundary treatment has been there, and therefore whether or not it is authorised. The application site and its high mounds of material and the ongoing development of plant and machinery is otherwise very visible from West Green Way.

Planning History

- 2023/0859 – retention of electricity substation for purposes ancillary to existing waste recycling facility – withdrawn
- B/01/0635 – Use of land for siting of mobile soil screener and crusher/ancillary processing of imported inert waste and storage of recycled products (Retrospective)
The permission is subject to several conditions including that all material shall be stored in the approved bunkers; and shall not exceed 2.5 metres in height.

There is also an as yet undetermined application to retain

Proposal

The application proposes to retain the recently constructed electricity substation which the application form indicates is 'for purposed ancillary to existing waste recycling facility'. The substation is clad in metal of a muted blue/grey colour and is approximately 3.8m x 3.8m by 2.5m high.

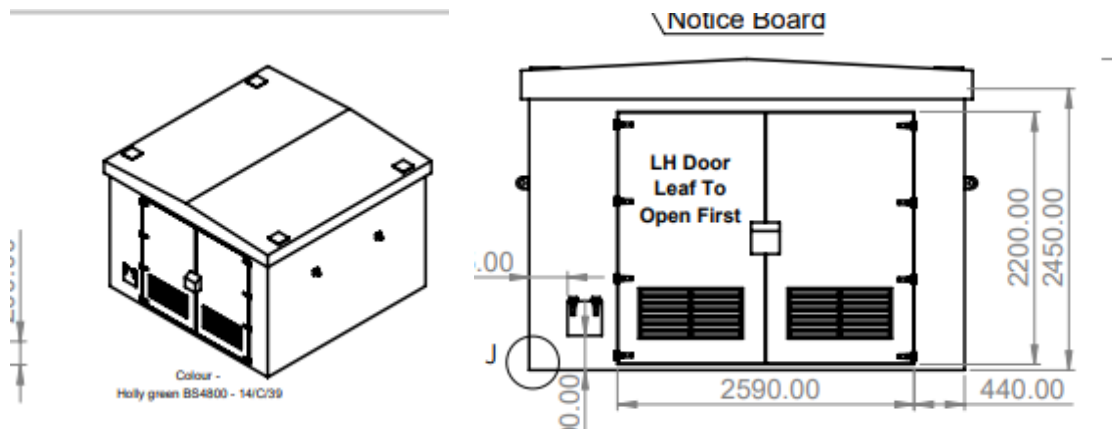
The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (which is dealt with in the Ecologists comments and the analysis)

The applicant's agent submitted letters in support of the application clarifying a number of issues including that:

- The site does benefit from an existing electrical supply, but it is limited and only serving the on-site cabin. It is not sufficient to support electric vehicle charging or to power more modern equipment/machinery within the site.
- There is an active planning application seeking retrospective planning permission for additional infrastructure on the wider site. The substation is required to support the existing waste recycling operations, and examples of vehicles and machinery which need the improved electricity supply are provided – electric transit vans and chassis cab pickups; electric telehandlers; electric excavators.

- The provision of the substation will greatly reduce reliance upon diesel, including diesel generators and increase their sustainability credentials.

Extracts from proposed plans:



Policy Context

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making.

Local Plan

The Local Plan was adopted by the Council in January 2019 and the Council has also adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents which are other material considerations.

The Local Plan review was approved at the full Council meeting held on 24th November 2022. The review determined that the Local Plan remains fit for purpose and is adequately delivering its objectives. This means no updates to the Local Plan, in whole or in part, are to be carried out ahead of a further review. The next review is due to take place in 2027 or earlier if circumstances require it.

The site is within an area allocated for as a mixed use site where site specific policy MU3 states:

Site MU3 Land off Shaw Lane Carlton

This site is proposed for mixed use for housing and green space. The indicative number of dwellings proposed for this site is 1683. These are included in the Housing figures for Urban Barnsley in the Housing chapter.

The development will be subject to the production of a phased Masterplan Framework covering the entire site to ensure that development is brought forward in a comprehensive manner.

The development will be expected to:

Retain areas of woodland, not affected by the road. Should any part of the existing Wharncliffe Woodmoor green space be developed, an area of compensatory biodiversity-value green space of equivalent size should be created on the land

within site MU3 to the east of the existing Wharnccliffe Woodmoor green space. Compensatory areas will need to be linked to Wharnccliffe Woodmoor by wildlife corridors;

Provide access from Far Field Lane roundabout;

Provide off site highway works;

Retain the higher ecological value habitats in the southern part of Wharnccliffe Woodmoor green space, together with the water courses in the centre of the site with a buffer;

Provide robust measures to mitigate ecological impact where the construction of the access road impacts upon the southern part of the site which has high ecological value and in particular woodland blocks;

Provide robust mitigation measures to mitigate against noise, odour and other potential impacts arising from the existing industrial operations at Manor Bakeries and Boulder Bridge;

Provide small scale convenience retail and community facilities in compliance with Local Plan policy TC5 Small Local Shops; and

Avoid locating built development in parts of the site within flood zone 2 and 3.

Policy SD1 Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development – indicates that we will take a positive approach reflecting the presumption in favour of sustainable development in the National Planning Policy Framework and that we will work proactively with applicants to find solutions to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area

Policy GD1 General Development - sets a range of criteria to be applied to all proposals for development.

Policy GD2 Temporary Buildings and Uses - temporary buildings will normally be allowed where it can be demonstrated that a permanent building is not suitable. On sites visible from highways and public areas, temporary building permissions will normally be limited to 5 years. Where vacant sites and buildings are not to be immediately developed, appropriate temporary uses may be permitted subject to other policies in the Plan.

Policy H3 Uses on allocated housing sites – indicates that the sites shown as housing sites on the Policies Map will be developed for residential purposes and other uses on these sites will only be allowed where: they are small scale and ancillary to the housing elements; and they provide a service or other facility for local residents.

Policy T3 New development and Sustainable Travel – expects new development to be located and designed to reduce the need to travel, be accessible to public transport and meet the needs of pedestrians and cycles. Also sets criteria in relation to minimum levels of parking, provision of transport statements and of travel plans.

Policy T4 New development and Transport Safety – expects new development to be designed and built to provide safe secure and convenient access and to not cause or add to problems of highway safety or efficiency.

Policy T5 Reducing the Impact of Road Travel – we will reduce the impact of road travel by developing and implementing air quality action plans; working to improve the efficiency of vehicles and goods delivery and implementing measures to ensure the current road system is used efficiently.

Policy D1 High Quality Design and Place Making – indicates that development is expected to be of high quality design and to reflect the distinctive, local character and features of Barnsley.

Policy HE1 The Historic Environment – indicates that we will positively encourage developments which will help in the management, conservation, understanding and enjoyment of Barnsley's historic environment and will support proposals which conserve and enhance the significance and setting of the borough's heritage assets.

Policy BIO1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity - Indicates that development will be expected to conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity features of the borough and that harmful development will not be permitted unless effective mitigation and/or compensatory measures can be ensured.

Policy CC3 – Flood Risk – the extent and impact of flooding will be reduced by not permitting new development where it would be at unacceptable risk of flooding or would give rise to flooding elsewhere; ensure that only water compatible or essential infrastructure is allowed in functional floodplain (subject to the flood risk exception test) and provided that here is no harmful effect on the ability of the land to store floodwater; (etc etc) -sets a range of criteria in relation to development and flood risk, including expecting all development proposals on brownfield sites to reduce surface water run off by at least 30%; development on greenfield sites to maintain or reduce existing run off rates; and development proposals to use SuDS in accordance with policy CC4.

CL1 Contaminated and Unstable Land – requires the submission of a report where future users or occupiers of development would be affected by contamination or stability issues, to establish the extent of the issues and set out measures to remove, treat or protect from contamination, or address land stability issues.

Policy Poll1 Pollution Control and Protection – sets criteria to ensure that new development does not unacceptably affect or cause nuisance to the natural and built environment or to people; or suffer from unacceptable levels of pollution.

SPDs

Biodiversity and Geodiversity SPD - Sets out how Local Plan policy BIO1 and GI1 on green infrastructure will be applied. It also provides further specific detail about the Dearne Valley Nature Improvement Area.

Other

Carlton MPF covers the land allocated as MU2 and MU3, for mixed use development including housing, green space and a primary school. The MPF indicates amongst other things that the application site (and the wider waste recycling facility) is within phase 5, an area of 7.2 ha which is expected to deliver in the region of 288 homes

NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole; or where specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted or unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Para 81. Planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth taking into account local business needs.

Para 111. Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Para 130 – planning decisions should ensure that developments function well, add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive, sympathetic to local character, establish a strong sense of place, optimise the potential of the site and create safe, inclusive and accessible places that promote health and well-being.

Para 174 – planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting sites of biodiversity value and minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity

Para 185 – Planning decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment.

Consultations

Highways DC – no comments received (confirmed no objections on previous application).

Conservation Officer – no objections.

Planning Ecologist – no comments. The development is exempt from mandatory BNG.

Pollution Control – recommends approval

Contaminated Land Officer – no comments received

Environment Agency – no comments received

Forestry – no comments received

Highways Drainage – confirmed happy for the details to be checked by building control

Ward Councillors – No comments received

Representations

The application has been advertised via a site notice displayed for the period 8 to 30 May 2024.

Comments from South Yorkshire Police have been received, providing advice about site security.

Principle of development

The principle of the proposed development is complicated because this is an existing and longstanding waste recycling facility on a site which was in 2019 removed from the Green Belt and allocated for residential development in the Local Plan. There is no objection to the continued operation of the business. It also appears that development associated with ongoing operation of the business may not be contrary to Local Plan policies which identify the site for housing development and seek to protect the site from other uses.

The applicant has indicated his intention to invest in electric vehicles and equipment which cannot be operated on the current electricity supply and require the proposed electricity substation. The substation is needed to support the existing authorised waste recycling operations and will reduce reliance upon diesel, including diesel generators.

It is concluded that the principle of development is acceptable as it is required in connection with the existing authorised waste recycling operations (and not as previously indicated, solely a requirement for the proposals which are subject of an outstanding planning application which would secure a significant expansion of the business throughput).

Residential and Visual Amenity

The application proposal does not of itself frustrate the future development of the wider residential phase of the mixed use allocation. It will enable the operation of the existing authorised business with new electric vehicles and machinery which in toto will have a neutral affect on the visual appearance of the wider area, the development of the wider residential phase and the living conditions of future residents.

The proposed development would not have a significantly adverse effect on and unacceptably affect the living conditions and residential amenity of future residents and is therefore not contrary to local plan policies GD1, D1 and Poll1.

Highway Safety

Reflecting the advice of the Highway Engineer, it is considered that the proposal will not result in any highway safety concerns and is in accordance with Local Plan policies T3 and T4.

Ecology

Reflecting the advice of the Planning Ecologist it is considered that the proposal will not result in any adverse impacts on biodiversity and is in accordance with Local Plan policy BIO1.

Heritage

The Council's Conservation Officer advises that the proposal is unlikely to be harmful to the setting of the nearby listed chimney at Bleachcroft Farm, as the sites are separated by the disused railway and a distance of some 200m. Given the general encroachment of the site at Bleachcroft, including the Cudworth Parkway, this development of a very minor nature is unlikely to cause any cumulative harm.

Other

There is an area of flood risk 3 within the wider waste recycling site, but at some distance from this application site and it is of no consequence for this proposal. The substation as constructed will not have any significant adverse impact on ground contamination or drainage conditions on the site.

Conclusion

The proposed substation is required in connection with the existing authorised use of the site for waste recycling and is therefore not considered to be in conflict with the development plan allocation. Together with the benefits to the operator of reducing dependence on diesel and the neutral impact on issues including residential and visual amenity, highway safety, ecology and heritage, it is concluded that the proposal is acceptable. The only condition recommended is the approved plans condition since the development has already been concluded and therefore the standard time limit condition is not relevant, and no other conditions are considered to be necessary.

Recommendation

Grant