

**PLANNING AND REGULATION
COMMITTEE
3 SEPTEMBER 2018**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR I G FLEETWOOD (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors T R Ashton (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A M Austin, D Brailsford, L A Cawrey, Mrs P Cooper, Mrs J E Killey, D McNally, Mrs M J Overton MBE, N H Pepper, P A Skinner and H Spratt

Officers in attendance:-

Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), Neil McBride (Planning Manager), Marc Willis (Applications Team Leader) and Mandy Withington (Solicitor)

34 APOLOGIES/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R P H Reid and S P Roe.

The Chief Executive reported that under the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, he had appointed Councillor Mrs A Austin to the Committee, place of Councillor Mrs A M Newton, for this meeting only.

35 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were made at this stage of the meeting.

36 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND REGULATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 30 JULY 2018

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 July 2018, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

37 COUNTY MATTER APPLICATION

38 PLANNING APPLICATION FOR PROPOSED BIOMASS CHP (COMBINED HEAT AND POWER) PLANT, WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT AND VERTICAL FOOD GROWING FACILITY AT DECOY FARM, SPALDING ROAD, CROWLAND BY SYCAMORE PLANNING LTD - H02-0640-18

Lewis Smith, representing the applicant, commented as follows:-

- Open window composting had been carried out at Decoy Farm for many years.

- Recycling to produce green sustainable products was at the centre of operations.
- Recently a 3MW Anaerobic Digester plant had been constructed to provide green electricity and a yet to be constructed glasshouse facility would take advantage of cheap heat and power.
- A 5MW solar farm also exported green electricity to the National Grid.
- The latest proposal expanded on the operating ethos of the site by treating waste water generated in landfill sites.
- The evaporation of the water using waste wood as a biomass fuel would create green electricity and heat that would be used in a vertical food growing facility that was also part of the applicant's proposal.
- This production method would see, for example, herbs and salad leaves grown vertically in the absence of soil solely within a building.
- Energy created for light and heat would see perfect growing conditions 24/7 enabling crops to be grown that traditionally would have been imported from warmer climates.
- Increased production compared to the traditional method of growing and a reduction in the use of water.
- Waste water was brought to the site in sealed tankers and transferred through sealed pipes avoiding any odour from exposure to the atmosphere. Waste wood was fed into the biomass boiler and the resultant steam was used to evaporate the waste water leaving a small quantity of residue which was taken away for disposal.
- Surplus electricity was exported to the National Grid.
- The application had been accompanied by technical reports which gave a comprehensive explanation of the impact of the proposals.
- There had not been any objections to the application from statutory consultees.
- The applicant noted that Cowbit Parish Council and two local residents had made comments about highways matters which were addressed in the report.
- Decoy Farm had the benefit of being located away from sensitive receptors and the suggested conditions would ensure that the site would operate satisfactorily.
- Consent was required from the Environment Agency to the environmental permitting regulations.
- The application was recognised by the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership as the way forward for the food sector in Lincolnshire.

In response to questions from the Committee, Lewis Smith responded as follows:-

- It was noted that there had been a reduction in complaints about traffic issues but the comments made by Cowbit Parish Council about traffic were supported. Lewis Smith stated that this was a police enforcement matter. Lewis Smith stated that the Council's highways' officers had examined the traffic issues as detailed in the report and were satisfied with the arrangements.
- Access and mud on the road near the applicant's site were the main issues. Lewis Smith stated that the access to the applicant's site would be made up to highway standards.
- Lewis Smith stated that there was a sufficient wood and leachate supply to ensure that the plant operated satisfactorily.

Comments made by the Committee and the responses of officers, where appropriate, included:-

- A 7.5 tonne weight limit was already in place in Cowbit and Cowbit Parish Council should be informed that traffic passing through their village was a police enforcement matter.
- Was the colour code for the proposed buildings on the site in the plans? Officers stated that the colour code of the buildings was detailed in the report.
- Care was needed in the transport of leachate and residents should be encouraged to report any offending vehicle to the responsible company.
- Had the Fire and Rescue service responded to the application? Officers stated that the Fire and Rescue service had not responded to the application.
- Disappointment was expressed at the lack of a response from the Fire and Rescue service. Officers confirmed that a water tank formed part of the proposal and water was available in the event of a fire.

On a motion by Councillor N H Pepper, seconded by Councillor D Brailsford, it was –
RESOLVED (unanimous)

That the application be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the report.

The meeting closed at 11.08 am