

Application 11/01809/CDC	No:	Ward: Gosford Eaton	Yarnton, and Water	Date 01/12/2011	Valid:
Applicant:	Cherwell District Council				
Site Address:	Kidlington and Gosford Sports Centre, Oxford Road, Kidlington, Oxfordshire, OX5 2NU				

Proposal: Installation of 415 PV panels on roof

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 Kidlington and Gosford Sports Centre is situated to the east of the Oxford Road to the rear of houses fronting the Oxford Road and is accessed via the service road, which runs along side the main Oxford Road in Kidlington. The site shares an access with Gosford Hill School, which is just to the north of the sports centre. To the south is the Thames Valley Police Headquarters. The site is outside a designated conservation area and there are no listed buildings within proximity. The site is within 2km of the Rushey Meadows SSSI and may have some archaeological interest; however there are no other site constraints.
- 1.2 This application seeks planning permission to install 415 PV panels (240w each) onto the roof of the sports centre, which would be positioned on the west elevation of the sports centre. The panels would be arranged in three separate blocks. The estimated annual energy generation would be 81MWh and the estimated annual carbon saving would be 43 tonnes. Each panel measures 1640mm X 992mm and would have a minimal projection from the roof slope of the sports centre. The proposed panels are dark grey on a dark grey mounting, which is the most appropriate colour as it allows the optimum amount of energy to be produced.
- 1.3 Planning history
07/01456/F (Permitted) Demolition of sports hall and use of site for car parking. Refurbishment of sports centre including new pool hall roof and construction of new sports hall

2. Application Publicity

- 2.1 The application has been advertised by way of a site notice. The final date for comment is the 19 January 2012.
- 2.2 No third party comments have been received to date.

3. Consultations

- 3.1 No comments received from Gosford and Water Eaton Parish Council to date
- 3.2 No comments received from Kidlington Parish Council to date

- 3.3 CDC Ecology – The roof where the solar panels are to be located are not suitable for use by bats and therefore no comments to make
- 3.4 OCC Archaeology – Unlikely to be any impact, however the possibility should be borne in mind

4. Relevant Planning Policies

- 4.1 **National Planning Guidance**
PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development and Climate Change Supplement
PPS22: Renewable Energy

Draft National Planning Policy Framework – July 2011
- 4.2 **The South East Plan 2009**
Policies: BE1, CC2, NRM16
- 4.3 **Adopted Cherwell Local Plan**
Policies: C28, C30

5. Appraisal

- 5.1 The key issues for consideration are:
Principle of the development
Impact upon visual amenity
Impact upon the residential amenity of neighbouring properties
- 5.2 Principle of the development
With regard to the principle of the development, PPS22: Renewable Energy states the Government's intentions to reduce carbon emissions and suggests that renewable energy projects can make an important contribution to reducing carbon emissions and increase reliance on renewable energy sources. PPS22 advises that small scale projects can provide a limited but valuable contribution to overall outputs of renewable energy and to meet energy needs both locally and nationally. The Climate Change supplement to PPS1 similarly contains the Government's intentions to reduce climate change and carbon emissions and gives some guidance on how the planning system can contribute to these targets. As such, and given that this solar array will contribute to renewable energy targets and therefore to reducing carbon emissions helping the Council to reduce their carbon footprint, I consider that the proposal is acceptable in principle.
The optimum orientation for solar panels is south and shadowing needs to be avoided as this reduces the performance of the PV systems. On the Kidlington and Gosford Sports Centre there are few roof slopes facing directly south that would provide enough space for the amount of solar panels proposed and so the west elevation has been chosen, which should still allow the panels to work efficiently.
- 5.3 Visual amenity
The sports centre is situated to the rear of the properties which front onto the Oxford Road and so it is not a prominent feature in the street scene. It is therefore considered that the proposed solar panels would not be prominent in the street scene as only glimpses would be possible from the Oxford Road. Views would be

gained from within the site itself, however the sports centre has a modern appearance and the proposed solar panels also represent a modern feature. As such, it is considered that the proposed panels would sit comfortably on the building and are unlikely to cause significant harm to the visual amenity of the area. The proposal is considered to comply with policy C28 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan.

5.4 Neighbour amenity

The proposed solar panels, due to their positioning would cause no harm to the residential amenity of neighbouring properties by loss of light, over dominance or loss of privacy. The panels would be clearly visible from the neighbouring properties and so their outlook would change to some degree, however as described above given the modern appearance of the building, it is not considered that the positioning of the panels would cause harm in this regard. The proposed solar panels should not cause harm by reason of noise or disturbance or by any reflection or glare due to their low reflective properties. As such, the proposal is considered to comply with policy C30 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan.

5.5 Other matters

The proposal raises no highway safety implications. The comments of the Council's Ecologist are noted. The comments of the County Archaeologist are noted, however due to the fact that there would be no ground disturbance; it is not considered necessary to include a planning note in relation to this matter.

5.6 Conclusion

Given the above assessment, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in principle and would cause no serious harm to the visual amenity of the area or the residential amenity of neighbouring properties. As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable and to comply with the above mentioned policies.

6. Recommendation

Approval; subject to the following conditions:

1. 1.4A (RC2) [Full permission: Duration limit (3 years)]
2. Except where otherwise stipulated by conditions attached to this permission, the development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the following plans and documents: application forms, design and access and planning statement for the installation of roof mounted PV system, solar panel technical information, site location plan and drawing number NA/101 Rev R01
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt, to ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority and to comply with PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development.

Planning notes

S1 – Post permission changes

T1 – Third party interests

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION AND RELEVANT DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

The Council, as local planning authority, has determined this application in accordance with

the development plan unless material considerations indicated otherwise. The development is considered to be acceptable on its planning merits as the proposal makes an important contribution to the use of renewable energy sources without having a significant adverse impact on the visual amenity of the area. Additionally it has no undue adverse impact upon the residential amenities of neighbouring properties or highway safety. As such the proposal is in accordance with PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development, PPS1: Climate Change Supplement, PPS22: Renewable Energy, Policies BE1, CC2 and NRM16 of The South East Plan and Policies C28 and C30 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan. For the reasons given above and having proper regard to all other matters raised the Council considered that the application should be approved and planning permission granted subject to appropriate conditions as set out above.

CONTACT OFFICER: Caroline Ford

TELEPHONE NO: 01295 221823