

Application No: 12/00012/F	Ward: Bicester West	Date Valid: 25/01/2012
Applicant:	Applied Sustainable Energy Ltd Mr Hugh Taylor Langford Locks, Kidlington, Oxford	
Site Address:	Bicester & Ploughley Sports Centre Queens Avenue, Bicester	

Proposal: Installation of roof mounted solar panels

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 Bicester and Ploughley Sports Centre is centrally sited adjacent to Bicester Community College, St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, Brookside Primary School and associated playing fields. The Sports Centre is accessed off a road some 200m from the main entrance off Queens Avenue on its north east side. This vehicular access road is also a public footpath.
- 1.2 The leisure centre building is quite extensive and the solar panels are proposed to be located on a flat roofed part central to the complex and overlooking the tennis courts and all weather pitches to the north west. Being a flat roof, the solar panels will need to be supported on mounting frames at an angle of 13 degrees. The top edge of the panel will be 480mm from the roof surface, the lower part being raised by 270mm.
- 1.3 The layout of the panels on the flat roof comprises 2 No groups of panels arranged in 14 rows of 3 panels and 3 rows of 6 panels respectively. The panels have a dark glass finish with a non-reflective coating to increase light absorption and minimise glare.

2. Application Publicity

- 2.1 The application has been advertised by site notice and press notice. The final date for comment is 23 February 2012. At the time of writing, no consultation responses had been received representing third party interests.

3. Consultations

- 3.1 Bicester Town Council – Comments awaited.

4. Policy Considerations

National Policy Guidance	PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development Supplement to PPS1 – Planning & Climate Change PPS22: Renewable Energy
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South East Plan 2009 Policies	Cross Cutting – CC2 – Climate Change Management of the Built Environment - BE1 - Management for an urban renaissance Natural Resource Management – NRM16 – Renewable Energy Development Criteria
Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 saved policies	C28 – Design, layout etc standards
Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011	Conserving & Enhancing the Environment Policy EN21 - Energy
Cherwell Local Development Framework (LDF) Draft Core Strategy 2010	Policies seek to mitigate and adapt to climate change and ensure sustainable construction methods. SD3 – Assessing Renewable Energy Proposals

5. Appraisal

- 5.1 It is considered that the issues to address relate to:
- Principle of the development
 - Impact upon the visual amenities of the area
 - Impact upon the residential amenity of neighbouring properties
- 5.2 Principle of the development
Government guidance seeks to reduce carbon emissions and suggests that renewable energy projects can make an important contribution. 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. Given that this solar array will contribute to renewable energy targets by reducing carbon emissions the proposal is acceptable in principle.
- 5.3 Impact upon the visual amenities of the area
The proposed solar panels will have little visual impact given the context in which they are located which is not a sensitive location constrained by historic interests. Public views will be limited given the height of the building and the low lying nature of the panels which will blend in with the existing paraphernalia on the roof. The application is considered acceptable on grounds of visual impact.
- 5.4 Impact upon the residential amenities of neighbouring properties
Being some 125m away from the nearest properties on the corner of Hudson Street (No.8) it is considered that there will be no material harm caused to the amenities currently enjoyed by neighbouring properties.

6. Recommendation

Approval, subject to:

- (a) the expiration of the consultation period (end of today - 23 February)
- (b) the following conditions:

1. SC1.4 (RC2)
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: dwg nos. 561-31-L301(P3), 34-D301(P2), 34-D303(P2) and site location plan submitted with the application
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 Government Guidance contained in PPS1.

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 it makes an important contribution to the use of renewable energy sources without having a harmful effect on the visual amenity of the area or residential amenity. The proposal, therefore, complies with government guidance contained in PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development and the Climate Change Supplement, PPS22: Renewable Energy, Policies CC2, BE1 and NRM16 of the South East Plan 2009 and Policy C28 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, the Council considers that the application should be approved and planning permission granted subject to appropriate conditions, as set out above.

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