

**Planning (Regulatory) Committee  
Minutes of the Meeting Held on Friday 25 March 2022  
at 11am in the Council Chamber, County Hall**

**Present:**

Cllr Brian Long (Chair)  
Cllr Eric Vardy (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Rob Colwell	Cllr Matt Reilly
Cllr Chris Dawson	Cllr William Richmond
Cllr Barry Duffin	Cllr Mike Sands
Cllr Paul Neale	

**Substitute Members Present**

Cllr Lesley Bambridge for Cllr Tony White  
Cllr David Bills for Cllr Martin Storey

**Also Present**

Hollie Adams	Committee Officer
Ralph Cox	Principal Planner
Jodie Cunningham-Brock	Solicitor
John Hanner	Principal Engineer (Developer Services)
Rachel Jacobson	Public Speaker
Nick Johnson	Head of Planning
Liz Russell	Public Speaker
Cllr Timothy Wright	Public Speaker

**1 Apologies and Substitutions**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Martin Storey (Cllr David Bills substituting) and Cllr Tony White (Cllr Lesley Bambridge substituting). Cllr Stephen Askew was also absent.

**2 Minutes**

- 2.1 The minutes from the Planning (Regulatory) Committee meeting held on 5 November 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair with the addition of the following amendment:
- Cllr Paul Neale asked for his comment to be added, where he stated that the the owner of the land of Seething Lagoons, the Leader of South Norfolk District Council, was not included in the application. The Committee agreed

that this could be included in the minutes of the meeting.

### **3 Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1 No interests were declared.

### **4 Urgent Business**

- 4.1 Application “FUL/2021/0061 Land A47 Bypass Site, C489 Main Road, North Tuddenham, Dereham, Norfolk, NR20 3DE” had been withdrawn by the applicant and would therefore not be considered at the meeting.

### **Applications referred to the Committee for determination.**

### **6. FUL/2021/0015: Aldeby Landfill Site, Common Road, Aldeby**

- 6.1.1 The Committee received the application for a for a PV (Photo Voltaic) array on part of the closed landfill site at Aldeby. It would provide an annual energy production of approximately 4900 MWhrs over its 35-year life span after which it would be decommissioned.

6.1.2

The Principal Planner gave a presentation to the Committee:

- Overall, the application was considered to accord with the development plan
- The 8000 panels would be enclosed by a wood post and galvanised wire fence and there would be no permanent lighting beyond the construction phase.
- Soft landscaping would be used to mitigate the visual impact of the scheme.
- The proposal had been scaled back by 25% from the original one submitted due to objections received from the Broads Authority.
- The operator of the landfill site, FCC, had not fully fulfilled their landscaping and planting obligations on the land. They had been asked to fulfil the planting requirements by the end of the current planting season, March 2022.
- The scheme had been amended to keep in place as much of the planting and screening required to be delivered by FCC as part of the landfill restoration, as possible.
- Existing access to the site would be used.
- Longer distance views of the array would affect the setting of the Broads.
- Members would need to decide whether they gave greater weight to the provision of renewable energy over the impact on the broads.

- 6.1.3 Committee Members asked questions about the presentation:

- A Committee member asked if the planting obligations of FCC could be met by the end of March; the Principal Planner replied that if these planning obligations were not met that appropriate enforcement action would be taken.

- The Principal Planner confirmed that the workings shown on the site related to extraction of the wider site which had taken place since the 1950s over a series of planning applications.
- The Principal Planner confirmed that the proposed landscaping scheme asked for mature species to be planted before the PV panels were put in place to help reduce with the impact of glare.

## 6.2 The Committee heard from Registered Speakers

### 6.2.1 Cllr Timothy Wright, Chairman of Aldeby Parish Council spoke to the Committee:

- Aldeby parish council objected to the plans because of the traffic management scheme which they felt was ill thought out. Landowners had not been approached but were amenable to be to help mitigate the risks to road users.
- There were also concerns about the fact that the site had not been restored, and the siting of the panels near to farmhouses on East End Road who would be affected from their location.
- The Parish Council believed that the Boons Heath area would be a more appropriate area for the PVs. This was an area which had been restored for many years.
- Local residents were concerned about the noise at night from cooling equipment as surplus power would be stored in batteries. This was a very quiet area and sound travelled far here.
- If the Haul Road was be used this could save a traffic light system and save any problem to vehicles from businesses in Common Road. There were no footpaths on the Haul Road, meaning that people from a business in the area looking after people with disabilities had to push wheelchairs along the road and this could be a risk.
- The parish council opposed the application due to the height of the panels, and the use of Common Road with traffic lights; the parish council were not averse to the suggestion of the PVs however not in the application as set out.

### 6.2.2 Rachel Jacobson from Infinis spoke on behalf of the applicant:

- Infinis were the leading generator of energy from captured methane; this application was part of their strategy to provide co-located solar energy.
- It was intended make best use of land with limited alternative uses due to gas infrastructure and below ground waste
- Use of the landfill would ensure there was no loss of green fill and would not interfere with gas or waste beneath the cap
- The restoration soft landscaping would still be delivered in full so the site could provide multifunctional benefits for clean energy and biodiversity
- The applicant had undertaken detailed surveys and preapplication engagement and had worked with the council and consultees to address issues to ensure the development could be implemented sensitively
- Local concerns about construction impacts and preference for the haul road although had been noted; it was pointed out that Highways supported the proposed route

- If it was not possible to use the Haul Road, Infinis would implement measures to reduce impacts such as restricting traffic during peak times and during school bus drop off times
- This application would provide enough power to meet the needs of 1300 local homes. The scheme was supported by the energy policy as part of the transition to energy independence for supply security and affordability
- Infinis would continue to engage with the community in preparation for the pre-commencement submission.

6.2.3 Liz Russell, the principal planning consultant for Arcus, spoke on behalf of the applicant:

- Considerable care had been taken in the design to avoid unacceptable environmental and amenity effects
- The location of the application did not fall in the broads however the applicant was aware that there would be views of it from some locations within the Broads. The application had been redesigned to minimise the visual impact as far as possible based on comments, resulting in a more compact development, removal of panels from the west and north, and reduction in the height of panels
- Changes to the application had allowed the landscaping set out in the approved restoration plan to be accommodated and further trees were proposed on the southern side of the site
- The scale of ancillary equipment had been reduced and the DNO switch room had been relocated to reduce their impacts.
- Developing on a former landfill site would ensure no loss of agricultural land. All environmental considerations had been assessed in the environmental impact assessments and all technical reports provided with the application
- With the current energy crisis and global situation impacting energy security, projects such as this would be important to provide clean green, clean UK energy
- Liz Russell urged Committee Members to consider the balance of the benefits of the development against its impacts

6.2.4 The Chair read out the Local Member, Cllr Barry Stone's, who could not be present due to Covid-19 isolation; see appendix A.

6.2.5 A Committee Member asked the applicant how much energy would go to the local grid. Rachel Jacobson confirmed that the energy generated by the site would go to the local DNO for the district level grid; it would be transferred to the national grid if not used by local users.

6.3 The Committee moved on to debate about the application:

- A Committee Member noted that the reduction in size of the proposal by 25% showed people's concerns had been listened to.
- Ways of improving local traffic concerns were queried; the Principal Planner replied there were two conditions included in the application, if approved, which would put in place a requirement to submit a construction management plan and for development to be carried out in accordance with this plan. A

“wear and tear” joint inspection would be carried out before and after the works to identify any remedial action required by the applicant.

- It was noted that this application would support with the County’s emerging energy needs moving forwards.
- The Chair noted that there was the opportunity for landscaping on the site around the arrays and underneath them.

6.4 The Committee unanimously **AGREED** that the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services be authorized to:

- I. Grant planning permission subject to the conditions outlined in section 11.
- II. Discharge conditions where those detailed below require the submission and implementation of a scheme, or further details, either before development commences, or within a specified date of planning permission being granted.
- III. Delegate powers to officers to deal with any non-material amendments to the application that may be submitted.

The meeting ended at 11:41

**Chair**



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**Submitted statement from Cllr Barry Stone**

**FUL/2021/0015: Aldeby Landfill Site, Common Road, Aldeby**

My original comments relating to the above Planning Application indicated my general approval of the project given that the need for renewable energy is more applicable than ever in view of the present increasing cost of energy. Generating renewable energy also must be a more environmentally acceptable method than the continued use of fossil fuels.

Given that the site is a disused landfill facility currently generating energy from burning methane it makes even more sense to combine the two functions and use some of the same infrastructure.

I went on to comment that the developers should take into consideration the concerns of residents in mitigating the impact of the solar panel installation. The PV array has consequently been reduced in size by around 25% and the height reduced by 0.5m. Concessions have been made to reduce the impact of the development and I am pleased that the scheme is now more acceptable.

Another major concern was the Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) and Access route and Highways have raised no objections to the proposed submission, subject to conditions.

On the subject of noise the assessment concluded that noise emissions from the proposal would not exceed 5dB(A) above background level and the development would be acceptable.

The majority of the consultee organisations have no objections and although I am aware that some residents, the Parish Council and the Broads Authority still have concerns I have to conclude that the benefits of the project outweigh the short-term inconvenience and longer term visual impact. We have to learn to live with a changing environment and mitigate those changes as best we can if we are to have a sustainable future and this development goes a small way to help this longer term goal.

Given the recommendation at 11.1 and the condition laid out in 12.1 I am happy to concur with the officer recommendations to approve the development.