

Registration Date:	24-Apr-2015	Applic. No:	P/00348/008
Officer:	Neetal Rajput	Ward:	Chalvey
		Applic type:	Major
		13 week date:	24 <sup>th</sup> July 2015

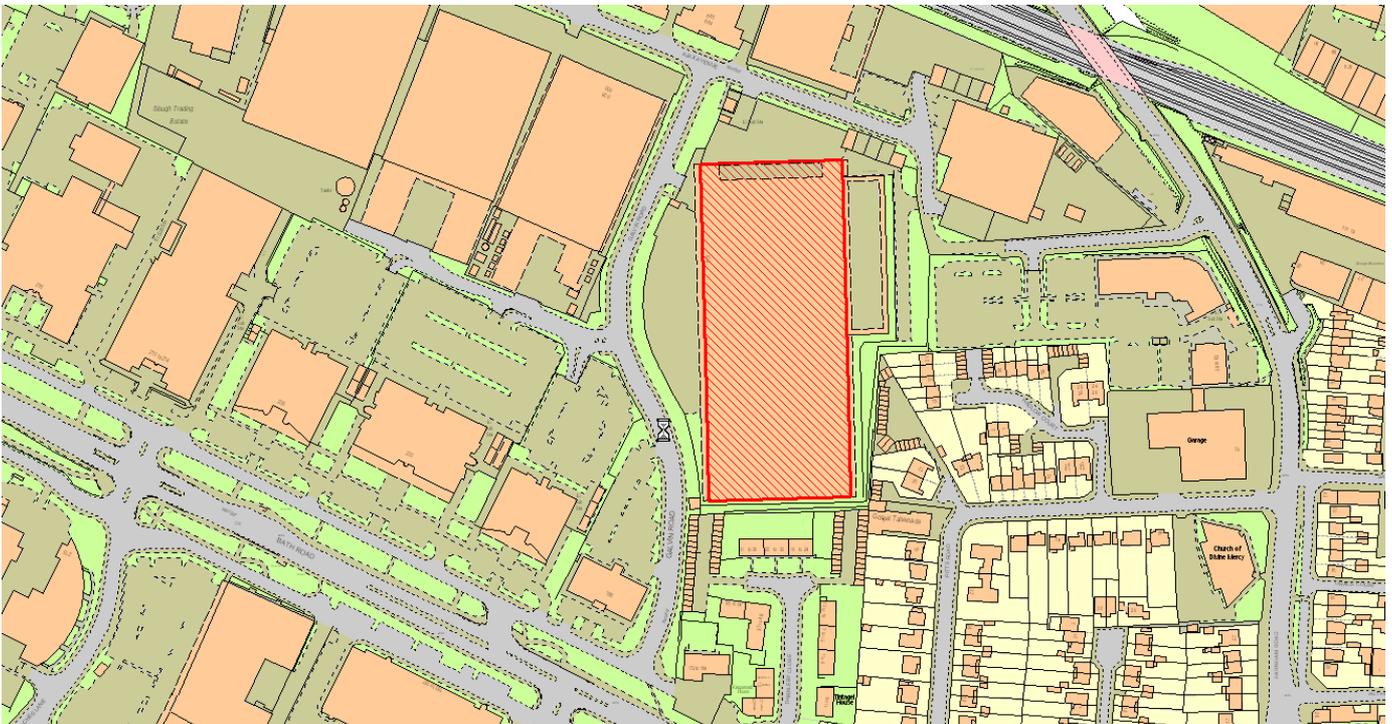
Applicant: Emma Page, Barclays Bank Plc

Agent: Mr. Wai-Kit Cheung, Belectric Solar Ltd Thorney Weir House, Thorney Mill Road, Iver, SL0 9AQ

Location: 672, Galvin Road, Slough, SL1 4AN

Proposal: Proposed installation of solar photovoltaic panels with a generating capacity of 1.6 megawatt peak on existing roof slope of a data centre.

**Recommendation:** Approve, subject to conditions



## 1.0 **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 This application has been referred to the Planning Committee for consideration as the application is for a major development.
- 1.2 Having considered the relevant policies set out below, the representations received from consultees and all other relevant material considerations, it is recommended to:

Approve, subject to conditions.

## **PART A: BACKGROUND**

### 2.0 **Proposal**

- 2.1 This is a full planning application for the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels with a generating capacity of 1.6 megawatt peak on existing roof slope of the data centre.
- 2.2 There will be a total of 14,040 no. of thin-film and frameless solar PV modules, with a surface area of 12,500m<sup>2</sup>. Each panel will dimension 0.6m wide x 1.2m long and will be fixed to support bracket. The PV panels will cover as much as the roof space to allow for maximum coverage, although there will be a set back of 2.5m from the eaves.
- 2.3 The thin-film solar modules will only protrude approximately 0.15m above the existing roof slope. The solar cells will be dark blue, frameless (i.e. no silver edges) and have anti-reflective surfacing, thereby designed to absorb light. As such, the solar cells will generate only minimal glint or glare.

### 3.0 **Application Site**

- 3.1 The site is occupied by Barclays Bank as a data centre (use class of sui generis) and has a site area of 1.25 hectares. The main entrance to the premises is from Galvin Road.
- 3.2 The application site is located with Slough Trading Estate Existing Business Area and within the area covered by the Slough Trading Estate Simplified Planning Zone Scheme. The development however falls outside the scope of this Scheme and requires planning permission.
- 3.3 The building is constructed of metal cladding and has a curved roof with a maximum height of 17.5m, which slopes down to approximately 13.5m to the eaves.
- 3.4 The application site is surrounded by industrial and warehouse developments (to the north and west) and residential dwellings (to the east and south). The closest residential development is to the south of the site at an approximate distance of 21m.
- 3.5 The site is not located within a Conservation Area. The nearest heritage asset is the grade II listed building, namely The Three Tuns Inn which is approximately 280m to the southeast to the application site.

#### 4.0 **Site History**

4.1 There are no relevant planning applications relating to this site.

#### 5.0 **Neighbour Notification**

5.1 29, Thirkleby Close, Slough, SL1 3XF, 26, Thirkleby Close, Slough, SL1 3XF, 27, Thirkleby Close, Slough, SL1 3XF, 28, Thirkleby Close, Slough, SL1 3XF, 25, Thirkleby Close, Slough, SL1 3XF, 30, Thirkleby Close, Slough, SL1 3XF, 23, Thirkleby Close, Slough, SL1 3XF, 20, Thirkleby Close, Slough, SL1 3XF, 21, Thirkleby Close, Slough, SL1 3XF, 22, Thirkleby Close, Slough, SL1 3XF, 19, Thirkleby Close, Slough, SL1 3XF, 24, Thirkleby Close, Slough, SL1 3XF, 21, Hadlow Court, Slough, SL1 3XQ, 17, Hadlow Court, Slough, SL1 3XQ, 19, Hadlow Court, Slough, SL1 3XQ, 34, Thirkleby Close, Slough, SL1 3XF, 35, Thirkleby Close, Slough, SL1 3XF, 36, Thirkleby Close, Slough, SL1 3XF, 31, Thirkleby Close, Slough, SL1 3XF, 32, Thirkleby Close, Slough, SL1 3XF, 33, Thirkleby Close, Slough, SL1 3XF, 13, Hadlow Court, Slough, SL1 3XQ, Autoworks, 663, Ajax Avenue, Slough, SL1 4BG, 15, Hadlow Court, Slough, SL1 3XQ, 23, Pitts Road, Slough, SL1 3XG, Savvis Ltd, 630, Ajax Avenue, Slough, SL1 4DG, Mansour House, 188, Bath Road, Slough, SL1 3XE, Unatrac Ltd, 188, Bath Road, Slough, SL1 3GA, 17, Pitts Road, Slough, SL1 3XG, 19a, Pitts Road, Slough, SL1 3XG, 21, Pitts Road, Slough, SL1 3XG, 21a, Pitts Road, Slough, SL1 3XG, Ipsen Ltd, 190, Bath Road, Slough, SL1 3XE, Burnham Garage, 664, Ajax Avenue, Slough, SL1 4BG, 665, Ajax Avenue, Slough, SL1 4BG, 670, Ajax Avenue, Slough, SL1 4BG, 19, Pitts Road, Slough, SL1 3XG, Gospel Tebernacle, Pitts Road, Slough, SL1 3XF

In accordance with Article 15 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, a site notice was displayed at the site on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015 and the application has been advertised in The Slough Express on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

5.2 No representations received.

#### 6.0 **Consultation**

##### 6.1 **Environmental Quality**

No comments received.

### **PART B: PLANNING APPRAISAL**

#### 7.0 **Policy Background**

7.1 The following policies are considered most relevant to the assessment of this application:

National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance

The Slough Local Development Framework, Core Strategy 2006 – 2026, Development Plan Document

Core Policy 1 – Spatial Strategy

## Core Policy 8 – Sustainability and the Environment

The Local Plan for Slough, Adopted March 2004

Policy EN1 – Standard of Design

Policy EMP2 – Criteria for Business Developments

Policy EMP7 – Slough Trading Estate

Policy EMP12 – Remaining Existing Business Areas

Composite Local Plan – Slough Local Development Plan and the NPPF - PAS Self Assessment Checklist

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Annex 1 to the National Planning Policy Framework advises that due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

The Local Planning Authority has published a self assessment of the Consistency of the Slough Local Development Plan with the National Planning Policy Framework using the PAS NPPF Checklist.

The detailed Self Assessment undertaken identifies that the above policies are generally in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework. The policies that form the Slough Local Development Plan are to be applied in conjunction with a statement of intent with regard to the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

It was agreed at Planning Committee in October 2012 that it was not necessary to carry out a full scale review of Slough's Development Plan at present, and that instead the parts of the current adopted Development Plan or Slough should all be republished in a single 'Composite Development Plan' for Slough. The Planning Committee endorsed the use of this Composite Local Plan for Slough in July 2013.

### Other relevant documents

Slough Local Development Framework Proposals Map

Slough Borough Council Developer's Guide Parts 1-4

7.2 The main planning issues relevant to the assessment of this application are considered to be as follows:

- 1) Principle of development;
- 2) Design and Impact on the street scene;
- 3) Relationship with and potential impact on neighbouring properties;

## 8.0 **Principle of Development**

8.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning

policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking, this means that proposals for development that accords with the development plan shall be approved without delay.

- 8.2 The requirement to move to a low carbon economy is highlighted in the NPPF, first as a dimension of sustainable development; second as a core planning principle in supporting the transition to a low carbon future; third in the building of a strong competitive low carbon economy in which planning should encourage sustainable economic growth; fourth in the advice that when determining applications, LPAs should not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and also recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions.
- 8.3 The Planning Practice Guidance, paragraph 001 (Ref. ID: 5-001-20140306) states planning has an important role in the delivery of new renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure in locations where the local environmental impact is acceptable. Furthermore, paragraph 012 (Ref. ID 5-012-20140306) provides guidance on the particular planning considerations related to PV system, these include the following:
- the importance of siting systems in situations where they can collect the most energy from the sun;
  - need for sufficient area of solar modules to produce the required energy output from the system;
  - the effect on a protected area such as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or other designated areas;
  - the colour and appearance of the modules, particularly if not a standard design.
- 8.4 The proposed PV system will be south facing, as such it will maximise the collection of energy from the sun. The proposed panels will cover sufficient area of the roof space to produce and deliver the required energy output from the system. There are no protected areas such as AONBs or other designated areas within close vicinity of the site as the surrounding area is industrial in nature. In terms of the colour and appearance of the modules, these will be anti-reflective and hence minimise glint and glare. Given the latter, it is considered that the proposal will accord with the guidance set out within the Planning Practice Guidance.
- 8.5 Core Policy 1 of the Core Strategy sets out the overarching spatial strategy for development within the Borough. This policy requires that the scale and density of development will be related to the site's current or proposed accessibility, character and surroundings.
- 8.6 Core Policy 8 of the Slough Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document December 2008, states that: "All development in the Borough shall be sustainable, of a high quality design, improve the quality of the environment and address the impact of climate: All development should, where feasible, include measures to:
- a) Generate energy from renewable resources"
- 8.7 This application needs to be weighed up having regard to the importance of utilising renewable energy in response to climate change on the one hand and any potential detrimental harm resulting from the visual impact of the solar panels on the character and

appearance of the building and general street scene along with neighbour impact on the other.

- 8.8 The proposed development will save approximately 651 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions per annum. Therefore, it is considered that proposed development will make a valuable contribution towards national targets for reducing carbon dioxide emissions and increasing the amount of energy that is generated from renewable sources.
- 8.9 Furthermore, the proposed solar PV system would generate a total of 1.43 gigawatt hour of electricity per annum. The building has a base energy consumption totalling 15 gigawatt hour per annum, this means that the energy generated by the proposed solar PVs will contribute approximately 10% of the building's total energy needs. The cumulative impact of small schemes such as this, can make a significant contribution to the effects of climate change and is aligned with Core Policy 8 from the Core Strategy. As such, the principle of the proposal is considered to be acceptable.

#### 9.0 **Design and Impact on the Street Scene**

- 9.1 Policy EN1 of the Adopted Local Plan states: "Development proposals are required to reflect a high standard of design and must be compatible with and/or improve their surroundings ....."
- 9.2 Core Policy 8 goes on further to say: "All development will:  
a) Be of a high quality design  
b) Respect its location and surroundings"
- 9.3 There are no sensitive landscape designations within close proximity of the site as the surrounding area is industrial in nature. Therefore, impacts regarding landscape and visual are considered to be minimal.
- 9.4 With regard to the heritage assets, in particular The Three Tuns which is a grade II listed building, there is not considered to be a detrimental impact to the setting of the listed building given the distance to the application site of approximately 280m.
- 9.5 The proposed solar modules will protrude approximately 0.15m above the existing roof slope, as such they will not add a significant height to the building. Given the projection, it is not considered that there will be detrimental impact to the street scene or visual amenity of those within the vicinity of the site.
- 9.6 The proposal is considered to be acceptable in design and street scene terms, this is in accordance with the NPPF, in particular paragraph 14, whereby the impact upon the street scene and heritage asset has been assessed and would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal in terms of delivering a reduction in climate change targets.

#### 10.0 **Relationship With and Potential Impact on Neighbouring Properties**

- 10.1 It is considered that the main area for consideration in relation to the potential impact on neighbouring occupiers would be the visual impact as a result of the proposed development.

- 10.2 The proposed PV panels will be on an existing commercial building and mostly surrounded by industrial related uses. The height of the existing data centre (17.5m maximum roof height and slopes down to 13.5m to the eaves) means that residents situated within close proximity of the development will not be able to visually see the PV panels due to the existing scale and massing of the building and the shallowness of the roof slope.
- 10.3 Moreover, the solar cells will cause minimal glint and glare issues, as they are thin-film, frameless and designed to absorb energy of the sun and not to reflect it. In terms of acoustic impacts, the solar modules do not generate any noise disturbance.
- 10.4 On balance it is considered that the longer term benefits of installing renewable energy outweigh the potential concerns about visual impact in this instance.

#### 11.0 **Process**

- 11.1 In dealing with the application, the Local Planning Authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner. Pre-application advice has been provided and amendments have been undertaken to the proposed development. The development is considered to be sustainable and in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### 12.0 **Summary**

- 12.1 The proposal has been considered against relevant development plan policies and all other relevant material considerations.

### **PART C: RECOMMENDATION**

#### 13.0 **Recommendation**

- 13.1 Approve, subject to conditions.

### **PART D: CONDITIONS**

- 14.1 The following conditions and informative are proposed:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced within three years from the date of this permission.

REASON To prevent the accumulation of planning permissions, and to enable the Council to review the suitability of the development in the light of altered circumstances and to comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby approved shall be implemented only in accordance with the following drawings and information hereby approved by the Local Planning Authority:

- (a) Drawing No. LP\_01, Dated 15/02/2015, Recd On 17/04/2015
- (b) Drawing No. PE\_01, Dated 19/02/2015, Recd On 17/04/2015
- (c) Drawing No. PRP\_01, Dated 19/02/2015, Recd On 17/04/2015
- (d) Drawing No. CS\_01, Dated 15/02/2015, Recd On 17/04/2015

REASON To ensure that the site is developed in accordance with the submitted application and to ensure that the proposed development does not prejudice the amenity of the area and to comply with the Policies in the Development Plan.

3. The materials and colour of the solar photovoltaic panels shall be in accordance with the details set out within Covering Letter issued by Belectric Solar Ltd, Dated & Recd On 17/04/2015 and shall only protrude approximately 0.15m above the existing roof slope unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON To ensure a satisfactory appearance of the development so as not to prejudice the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy EN1 of The Adopted Local Plan for Slough 2004.

INFORMATIVE(S):

1. It is the view of the Local Planning Authority that the proposed development does improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area for the reasons given in this notice and it is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.