

Consultations

Boxley Parish Council has made the following further comments:-

'Members considered the information and the concerns voiced by residents. After lengthy discussion it was agreed not to attend the Planning Committee meeting on the 4th February but to request additional conditions if the committee members were minded to agree the application. Additional conditions requested were;

- Independent noise measurements, including night measurements, to be undertaken prior to any development to establish the current impact.
- After development another set of independent noise measurements to be undertaken to see if the development had reduced the noise impact as stated in the application.
- If the development does not meet the standards required by the planning condition then Enforcement must be undertaken as a priority to ensure changes are undertaken to ensure compliance.

The Parish Council would be grateful if this response could be included on the urgent update for the Planning Committee meeting on 4th February.'

Representations

SIX further representations have been received from local residents. These reiterate previously made points summarised in the report regarding the continuing breaches of existing conditions by the company, the noise levels that are adversely affecting the residents of Bargrove Road and the fact that it is not considered that these proposals will make the situation better. In fact it is argued that the situation will be worsened. There is also a call for generator testing to be undertaken in the week and not at weekends.

The applicants have submitted further information in support of their application and in response to further questions raised by a number of local residents which is appended to this report along with two further plans showing the cable routing through the plant building and also an area where additional landscaping is proposed west of the proposed plant building.

The applicants are not proposing as requested to sink the energy compound into the ground, neither have they agreed to move the transformers to the eastern side of the plant building (the site adjacent the existing office building).

However, they have agreed that the proposed transformers can be totally enclosed in an acoustically treated enclosure and are willing for this to be secured by means of an appropriate condition. Forced cooling would as a result be introduced producing an extra noise source but it is stated that this would be within the noise levels allowed for.

In addition an indicative landscaping scheme proposing additional planting on existing bunding to the west of the proposed plant building has also been

indicated. The plan indicates an area of some 32m in length would be densely planted to supplement existing planting within the site.

Officer Comment

I remain satisfied with the applicant's explanations regarding the location and design of the energy compound and also why the proposed transformers are relocated where they are.

I consider that the proposal to acoustically enclose the transformer area to the western side of the plant building is appropriate and that a specific condition can be added to achieve this.

Whilst no details of the proposed species in the indicated landscaping have been shown on the plan this can be secured by means of the condition already set out in the papers.

Amendments to recommendation

Add further condition

- 9: The development shall not commence until details of the location, design and specification of the acoustic enclosure and cooling equipment to the transformer units have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The subsequently approved enclosure and cooling equipment shall be erected prior to the first use and occupation of the plant building and maintained thereafter.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of the surrounding area and the occupiers of nearby neighbouring dwellings, in accordance with policy NRM10 of the South East Plan 2009.