



MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 17TH
AUGUST 2021 HELD IN THE JOHN BANKS HALL, GOUDHURST ROAD
COMMENCING AT 7.30PM

077/21 PRESENT:

Cllrs Adam, Boswell, Gibson, Newton, Robertson, Stevens, Tippen and Turner (in the Chair).
 3 representatives of Statkraft/Quantro (Solar Farm), Cllr Barker, Beasant and Burton together
 with the Clerk were also in attendance.

078/21 APOLOGIES:

No apologies had been received.

079/21 APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd August 2021 were agreed and signed as a true record.

080/21 CLLR INFORMATION

Declarations of Interest

Cllr Tippen declared an interest in item 082/21 as a resident living opposite the site within
 Collier Street Parish.

Granting of Dispensation

There were no requests for dispensation on any item on this agenda

081/21 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS INVOLVING PUBLIC SPEAKING

Representatives of Statkraft wished to speak on item 082/21

082/21 PUBLIC FORUM

Solar Farm, Sheephurst Lane, Collier Street (Collier Street Parish)

See Appendix A for comments

8.20pm – 3 representatives of Statkraft/Quantro and Cllr Barker left the meeting

083/21 PLANNING APPLICATIONS WITHIN MARDEN PARISH

21/503415/FULL – Stilebridge Oast House, Maidstone Road, Marden

Change of use of garage to ancillary outbuilding and the erection of new boundary treatment.

No objection - the proposal does not significantly affect the undesignated heritage asset and
 its setting.

RESOLVED: No objection

21/503571/ADV – Kent Mart, Church Green, Marden

**Advertisement consent for 1 externally illuminated fascia sign and new window display
 sticker signs**

Insufficient and wrong information provided. No reference given to conforming to Marden
 Neighbourhood Plan particularly Policy E3. No details are provided on the illumination
 proposed and timing of operation. Cllrs also query the relevance of the Heritage Statement
 included with the application. Therefore, Cllrs recommend refusal and reserve the right to
 comment further if these issues are addressed.

RESOLVED: Refused. Does not conform to Marden Neighbourhood Plan Policy E3; no
 details are provided on the illumination proposed; no details of times of operation; insufficient
 and wrong information provided within the application.

Chairman's Initials

21/503821/FULL – Land Rear of The Taj of Kent, Church Green, Marden

Erection of 6 dwellings with associated access, parking and landscaping

Cllrs discussed this application in detail and raised the following concerns:

Limited width and height of the access to the site – would cause problems during construction; ongoing restrictions for emergency services, removal vehicles and refuse collection; Larger vehicles not being able to access the site directly will only exacerbate the existing parking problems in the Church Green area to an unacceptable extent and are likely to encourage double parking and/or pavement parking and thus worsening road safety problems for pedestrians and vehicles; Obstructing sight lines at the nearby Pattenden lane and Station Approach junctions; Likelihood of obstruction to the abattoir and South Lodge. The site remains immediately adjacent to the working abattoir with noise during slaughtering which people find unsettling, as well as noxious smells during the operations to empty the effluent tanks. This is likely to severely impact on the attractiveness of the proposed development to future residents. The abattoir is the only one operating in the whole area. Harmful to the character of Marden Conservation Area contrary to Maidstone Local Plan Policy SP18 and Marden Neighbourhood Plan Policy BE1.

There is no indication on the plans showing the undesignated heritage asset of the stone mounting block adjacent to the side of Kent Mart.

There is no indication of how surface water will be managed – contrary to Marden Neighbourhood Plan Policy NE1.

No ridge height is provided on any of the submitted plans.

Inadequate private amenity space especially for Plots 5 and 6. Contrary to Marden Neighbourhood Plan BE2.

Cllrs therefore recommend refusal. If Maidstone Borough Council are minded to approve Cllrs would want this application to go to MBC Planning Committee.

9.07 – Cllr Adam left the meeting

21/503829/FULL – Great Thorn Farm, Marden Thorn, Marden

Section 73 – Application for Minor Material Amendment to approved plans condition 11 (to improve the sense of spacing between dwellings, and to decrease overlooking and increase the sense of privacy experienced by future occupants) pursuant to 18/504236/FULL for demolition of 3 existing large pre-fabricated buildings, removal of extensive hardstanding, clearing of commercial open storage items and the removal of a building and mobile homes currently occupied as dwellings. Erection of eight replacement dwellings and replacement stabling building, together with the provision of a large area of planting to form a landscape buffer and ecological enhancements.

Noted

21/504348/PNEXT – 4 Campion Way, Marden

Prior notification for a proposed single storey rear extension with (a) extends by 5.00 metres beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling; (b) has a maximum height of 3.60 metres from the natural ground level and (c) has a height of 2.21 metres at the eaves from the natural ground level

Noted

084/21 PLANNING APPLICATIONS OUTSIDE MARDEN PARISH:

No applications listed relevant to Marden.

Chairman's Initials

085/21 MBC DECISIONS & APPEALS**Decisions**

Decisions received from MBC are as follows:

21/501878.NMAMD – Broad Forstal Farm, Tilden Lane, Marden

MBC: Satisfied / MPC: Commented as felt this should have been submitted as a full application

21/503077/FULL – 20 Sovereigns Way, Marden

MBC: Refused / MPC: Refused

21/503090/LBC – Mill Farm House, Hunton Road, Marden

MBC: Granted / MPC: Approved

21/503287.FULL – White Cottage, Battle Lane, Marden

MBC: Granted / MPC: No objection

Decisions outside Marden Parish

21/503343/PNQCLA – Overbridge Farm, Marden Road, Staplehurst

Application withdrawn

Appeals

There have been no appeals submitted

MBC Planning Committee

The next MBC Planning Committee meeting is scheduled for 26th August 2021.

086/21 OTHER PLANNING ISSUES:**Maidstone Borough Council Local Plan****MBC Strategic Planning and Infrastructure (SPI) Committee Meetings**

Meeting being held on 21st September 2021.

Marden Flooding

Item will be moved to Full Council agenda.

087/21 MARDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Cllrs will begin to review the Marden Neighbourhood Plan once information on the Local Plan Review has been released by MBC.

088/21 PARISH FINGERPOSTS

The Clerk had drafted a specification which Cllr Turner would review by the end of the week. Following any amendments this would be submitted, along with photographs, to companies to provide quotes for the work.

089/21 INVOICES FOR PAYMENT:

There were no invoices due for payment.

The Clerk had received information of training at Maidstone Borough Council for planning. Cllrs indicated which dates they wished to attend, and the Clerk would register them with MBC.

The Chairman then read out the following statement:

I PROPOSE THAT PURSUANT TO PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960, THE PUBLIC BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING BECAUSE OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED:

Any members of the public still in attendance left the meeting for the following item:

Chairman's Initials

090/21 ENFORCEMENT**New/Reported Alleged Enforcement**

One new item of alleged enforcement was reported. The Clerk would report to MBC Enforcement.

MBC Update on Enforcement

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.24pm

Date: 7th September 2021

Signed:

Chairman, Marden Planning Committee

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APPENDIX A

Planning Committee Meeting – 17th August 2021

082/21 PUBLIC FORUM**Solar Farm, Sheephurst Lane, Collier Street (Collier Street Parish)**

In attendance were: Gareth Hawkins (GH) (Business & Project Development, UK for Statkraft/Sheepwash Solar Farm), Donna Clarke (DC) (Planning Consultant for Statkraft/Sheepwash Solar Farm) and Richard Parry (RP) (Quatro - community engagement for Statkraft/Sheepwash Solar Farm)

RP had requested to attend Marden Parish Council as part of the pre-application public consultation. Although the site is at Little Cheveney, Sheephurst Lane and is within Collier Street Parish it borders Marden in the north east of the site.

Technical and illustrative plans were distributed amongst Cllrs for their information.

GH spoke to Cllrs and showed a presentation on the background of Statkraft. Employs over 4,000 in over 17 countries and has a portfolio of wind and solar farms across the UK. Vision is to put 2000mw of power into the UK by 2025.

He knows that it will cause some disturbance in the area but the company is keen to keep it to a minimum. Cllrs were invited to contact him if they wished to walk around the site.

Public Right OfWay KM244 will need to be moved although the entry and exit of the PROW will remain the same. A permissive footpath will be added to the north west of the site and this will link in with existing PROW.

One question people raise is “why aren’t brown field sites used?”. The main problem is that connecting to the grid is the most difficult thing and can result in costing £millions if the grid is not close by. Projects start by looking at the grid before looking at land/site and need the infrastructure to be capable of taking the power from the solar panels. Little Cheveney site has 3 pylons which can be linked into.

Little Cheveney site will be 86.7 ha in total with 63.4 ha being development and 23.3 ha biodiversity and habitat conservation. It is in a flood zone so the battery units will be positioned nearer to Sheephurst Lane. Indicative layout was shown with areas of solar panels and habitat laid out.

The solar panels are for a period of 35 years although the planning application will be for 37 years. Decommissioning takes approx. 2 years.

Following construction the land will become fallow – and sheep will be able to be put on the site during the course of the solar farm.

Key benefits of the site during and after construction are Employment (will aim to use local workforce where possible); Environment (site will be adapted for more biodiversity and habitat include reed beds etc); Business Rates (will generate more business rates into the area). A Community Fund will also be set up with a third part.

A travel management plan is still to be undertaken but it is thought that the initial roads used will be A21 and B2162.

Additional planting and screening will be undertaken and a landscape assessment will be undertaken. There will be no significant glare given out.

Chairman's Initials

Surface water will not be increased and JDA consulting will be undertaking the flood risk assessment.

An application had been submitted to Maidstone Borough Council regarding an Environmental Impact Assessment and this was not required.

The Pre-application consultation runs from July to 31st August and an application is hoped to be submitted late September with a decision early 2022. The scheme would not be built until 2023/24/

Q&As from Cllrs:

Q: Concern raised about unofficial footpaths currently on the Marden/Collier Street boundary.

A: Fencing is to be positioned back from the river so Statkraft could consider a further permissive footpath along the river with the permission of the landowner.

Q: Mention has been made about community engagement what has been undertaken?

A: 1000 flyers have gone out to Marden/Collier Street residents; a website has been set up (www.statkraft.co.uk/sheepwashsolar) where people can comment/email; Ward Cllrs have been consulted and two have visited the site.

Q: Currently the proposed permissive footpath is outside of the red line.

A: Landowner has given permission for the footpath but will consider moving the red line to incorporate this area.

Q: Although stated that sheep could be grazed on the site will this definitely happen?

A: Boundary fencing is sheep proofed so sheep can be placed on the site – will be decision by landowner.

Q: Mention has been made on community benefit. Does local community mean Marden as well?

A: Funding will given to a third party to distribute and is done on proximity of the site not per Parish.

Q: Will a boundary be left between the site and the railway where the PROW runs along the north east of the field?

A: A 10m strip will be left between the site fencing and railway embankment to allow tractor/hedge strimming.

Q: What is the construction phase?

A: It is hoped the planning decision will be received by Q1 2022. The current lead time on transformers is 10-15 months is also dependant on when it can be connected. It is envisaged that it will be constructed in the Summer 2023 and connection in the Autumn. Construction time frame is 6 months. Ecology also will be a contributing factor into timescale.

Q: What will be the traffic level during construction?

A: Estimated 4 to 5 HGVs per day at the peak of construction. Aggregate lorries will be the most used.

Q: Are the battery units noisy?

A: Background noise surveys are being undertaken and acoustic / landscaping screening will be undertaken.

Q: Concern on the visual impact from Marden (Bramley Court/Meades Close). Had walked KM244 in its entirety and during the summer the site will be screened by trees but not sure this will be the same during winter. Will planting of mature trees be undertaken in the landscaping scheme.

A: There will be plenty of screening particularly during the winter months.

Chairman's Initials

Q: What is the plans regarding the lease/planning application?

A: The planning application and lease will run concurrently for 37 years. The solar farm will be for 35 years with the additional 2 years for decommissioning. Planning application would need to be reapplied for in wish to continue after 37 years.

Q: What is the proposal for control of weeds?

A: We don't use pesticides. Sheep would keep weeds/grass down alternatively would use brush cutters/ trimmers

Q: Has Marden Wildlife Group been contacted and involved?

A: Has made contact but would appreciate email address being sent to RP

Q: What is the land currently used for:

A: Agricultural but being in the flood plain is not cost-effective.

Q: What will the times of working be?

A: This will form part of the conditions of the planning permission.

Q: Working on site:

A: During construction will be a number of contractors but after will be minimal – would just need to visit to undertake checks/repairs etc.

Chairman's Initials