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PLANNING AND DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Dear Sir

Change of use of land for the installation of ground mounted solar PV arrays, at Bentham Golf Club, Robin Lane, High Bentham, Lancaster, North Yorkshire, LA2 7AG

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This application seeks consent for the change of use of land for the installation of ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) arrays and associated works at Bentham Golf Club, Robin Lane, High Bentham.
- 1.2 Our client, the owner and operator of Bentham Golf Club wishes to explore the potential to generate energy using green, renewable sources.
- 1.3 International, national and local agreements and planning policies offer clear support to renewable energy proposals, including PV arrays. The application proposals are therefore considered to be policy compliant in principle and will not exert any harmful effects on interests of acknowledged importance.

2.0 Application Particulars

- 2.1 The following plans and documents form this planning application submission: -
- Drawing 001 – Location Plan.
 - Drawing 002 – Site Plan as Existing.
 - Drawing 101 – Site Plan as Proposed.
 - Drawing 102 – PV Array – Plan, Elevations as Proposed

 - Planning and Design & Access Statement (this document)

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3.0 Site Location / Description

3.1 The application site is situated in the open countryside on the north eastern edge of High Bentham. The site comprises a small parcel of flat land falling within the existing golf course, defined as a Policy INF3 area for sport and recreation on Inset Map No.5 of the adopted Craven Local Plan, 2019. There is a bridleway located to the south of the application site. The site is located in Flood Zone 1 (Low Risk). The site comprises ancillary landscaping land within the golf course. There will be no loss of fairways, greens or tees.

4.0 The Proposals (The Design & Access Statement)

Use

4.1 The proposed use is the installation of a ground mounted solar array for the generation of renewable energy to be used by Bentham Golf Course. There will also be an underground electric cable run leading to a small proposed electrical kiosk. Please refer to Drawing 101 for details of the route of this cable run the location of the proposed electrical kiosk.

Amount

4.2 The application site area is 0.16 hectares. The application proposes 6no. tables of PV arrays, configured as follows: -

- 3 tables consisting of 2 rows of 21 panels; and
- 3 tables consisting of 2 rows of 30 panels.

4.3 A total of 306 solar panels are proposed creating a total energy output of 120 kWp of renewable energy, to be used by Bentham Golf Course.

4.4 Each individual solar panel will have dimensions of 1.13 metres x 2.09 metres, to be mounted in portrait.

Scale

4.5 This is a relatively small scale proposal in terms of site area and energy output.

Layout

4.6 Please refer to Drawing 101 for the location and layout of the solar PV array and Drawing 102 for details of the plans and elevations of the solar panels. Six linear rows of ground mounted arrays are proposed. The panels will be mounted in portrait and angled south.

Appearance

4.7 Please refer to Drawing 102 for details of the appearance of the panels. At their highest point they will sit 3.0 metres above ground level on a pressed steel framework.

Landscaping

4.8 There is no specific new landscaping proposed by this application. Mature trees and hedgerows already form the well-established boundaries of the application site, and these are to be retained

and will be unaffected. This existing landscaping will provide effective screening of the proposed solar arrays.

Access

- 4.9 Access to the golf course is taken from the west off Robin Lane. There are developed roads within the golf course which provide access to the area of ground where the solar arrays are proposed. There are no new roads required or planned. Construction vehicles can use the existing roads, likewise any operational / maintenance traffic.

5.0 Planning Statement

- 5.1 Applications are to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The following policies and guidance are of most relevance to the consideration of this application: -

Climate Change Legislation

- 5.2 Section 19 (1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to include in their Local Plans policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the local planning authority's area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.
- 5.3 The Climate Change Act 2008 established a legally binding target to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% in 2050 from 1990 levels.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.4 Section 14 of the updated Framework deals with meeting the challenge of climate change. Paragraph 152 of the Framework states: -

"The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure".

- 5.5 Paragraph 155 of the Framework states that: -

"To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximizes the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts), and should identify opportunities for development to draw its energy supply form decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems".

- 5.6 Paragraph 158 of the Framework states that: -

"When determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse emissions, and approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable".

- 5.7 It is clear from the Framework that the Government emphasises a clear positive presumption in favour of renewable energy schemes of all scales, including for local businesses.
- 5.8 There should be no doubting that the principle of renewable energy proposals is acceptable in planning policy terms.

Planning Practice Guidance – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

- 5.9 The Government’s planning practice guidance reinforces the NPPF’s support for renewable energy. Planning practice guidance sets out the following key statement: -

“Increasing the amount of energy from renewable and low carbon technologies will help to make sure the UK has a secure energy supply, reduce greenhouse gas emissions to slow down climate change and stimulate investment in new jobs and businesses. 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”. (Paragraph 001 Reference ID:5-001-20140306).

Craven Local Plan, 2019

- SD1 The Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- SD2 Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change
- ENV1 Countryside and Landscape
- ENV3 Good Design
- ENV9 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
- ENV12 Footpaths, Bridleways, Byways and Cycle Routes
- INF3 Open Space, Civic Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities

6.0 Assessment Against Policy

Planning Policy and Principle

- 6.1 The application proposals find clear support in international and national agreements to address climate change, as well as national and local planning policies. The principle of the proposals, which will provide renewable energy to be used by Bentham Golf course is therefore acceptable. In particular, Policy SD1 of the adopted Local Plan supports sustainable development, Policy SD2 supports development that meets the challenge of climate change and a move to a low carbon future (specifically Criteria 4 – support for renewable and low carbon technologies), and Policy ENV9 offers explicit support to proposals for renewable and low carbon energy.
- 6.2 Policy INF3 of the adopted Local Plan seeks to safeguard existing community facilities and social spaces that are used and valued by local communities. The application site falls within the boundaries of the existing golf course which is highlighted in yellow on the adopted proposals map as land to be protected. The solar panels will not encroach onto any part of the golf course to be used by players, such as the fairways, tees or greens. The site comprises an area of ancillary landscaping. As such, there will be no loss of actual playing area, and no conflict with Policy INF3.

Landscape Character and Visual Amenity

- 6.3 The proposed solar arrays cover a small area and are to be located in a relatively discreet location. There are mature trees and hedgerows to the south and east of the site. These should ensure that the proposed panels are not highly visible or harmful to landscape character. The golf players and

users of the public rights of way which cut through the golf course will be the closest affected receptors. Any visual amenity effects should be minor and short lived.

Public Rights of Way

6.4 As stated, there is a bridleway located to the south of the site, but there will be no physical obstruction or loss of use or enjoyment.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 The application proposes the installation of an array of ground mounted solar panels to create 120 kWp of renewable energy to be used by Bentham Golf Club. The proposals will help the business to be more energy secure and resilient and will help to address climate change by enabling a greater amount of the business' energy needs to be secured from renewable sources. It is considered that the proposed array can be accommodated on the site without causing any unacceptable harms to interests of acknowledged importance.

7.2 It is considered that the application proposals accord with both National and adopted Local Plan policies. It is hoped that officers will support this proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any additional information or clarification on any matters.

Yours sincerely

Edwardson Associates

