

**STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

**25<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

Application No:	SMD/2023/0641	
Location	Biddulph Valley Leisure Centre Thames Drive, Staffordshire, Biddulph, ST8 7HL	
Proposal	123kW Solar PV system installed on existing roof of Biddulph LC sports hall	
Applicant	Mr Gareth Knapper – SMDC and HPBC	
Agent	Mr Ashley Davison – Leisure Energy	
Parish/ward	Biddulph	Date registered: 14.12.2023
If you have a question about this report please contact: Rachel Robinson <a href="mailto:rachel.robinson@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk">rachel.robinson@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk</a>		

## **REFERRAL**

The application is before the committee because the application site is owned and managed by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

### **1. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION**

**APPROVE with conditions**

### **2. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS**

2.1 The site lies within the development boundary of Biddulph to the north of the Biddulph Town Centre. The Leisure Centre itself is located within a residential area along Thames Drive. The application site comprises of land which slopes away from Thames Drive, and overall sits on a lower ground level. Open green space is located to the north-west, south-west and south-east of the site.

2.2 There are no other constraints on the site.

### **3. THE APPLICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL**

3.1 This is a full planning application for the installation of solar PV panels on the existing roof. The proposed solar panels will be arranged in 9 solar arrays on the south-western roof slope.

3.2 This application does not propose any further alterations to the existing roof. Nor are further alterations proposed to the remained of the application site.

3.3 The application, the details attached to it, including the plans, any comments made by residents and the responses of consultees can be found on the Council's website at:-

<http://publicaccess.staffs Moorlands.gov.uk/portal/servlets/ApplicationSearchServlet?PKID=176724>

#### **4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 SMD/2010/0957 - Replacement of the leisure centre's existing "wet side" boilers and flue dilution system with external roof cowl. Cowl to be replaced with two new conventional, room sealed flues. APPLICATION RETURNED

4.2 SMD/2019/0188 - Proposed 1x metal secure container 8 feet x 10 at the rear of leisure centre APPROVED 29/07/2019

4.3 SMD/2023/0461 - Lawful development certificate for proposed construction of a packaged plant room and compound inc concrete bases, to provide a renewable heating source for the Leisure centre. APPROVED 06/12/2023

4.4 SMD/2023/0513 - Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for Installation of 50 KWp Solar PV System on the existing roof of Biddulph Leisure Centre. APPROVED 15/12/2023

4.5 SMD/2023/0512 - Addition of roof-mounted handrail to provide safe access and maintenance in preparation for solar panel installation. APPROVED 15/12/2023

#### **5. PLANNING POLICIES RELEVANT TO THE DECISION**

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (adopted September 2020)

- SS1 Development Principles
- SS10 Rural area strategy
- SD2 Renewable/low carbon energy
- SD3 Carbon-saving Measures in Development
- SD4 Pollution
- DC1 Design Considerations
- DC 4 Local Green Space

National Planning Policy NPPF

National Planning Policy Guidance

Biddulph Neighbourhood Plan

#### **6. CONSULTATIONS**

6.1 The material planning matters from all consultation responses received are summarised in this section of the report. Full consultation responses can be viewed on the publicly available planning file.

**Neighbour Representations** – None Received

**Environmental Health** – None Received

**Biddulph Town Council** – None Received

## **7. OFFICER COMMENT AND PLANNING BALANCE**

7.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) which is considered to be up-to-date.

### Principle of Development

7.2 The application site is located within the development boundary of Biddulph. Biddulph is one of the towns recognised in LP Policy SS 2, as areas where future development should be focused. Therefore the principle of development is acceptable.

7.3 The Biddulph Neighbourhood Plan policy CF 2 supports development proposals which will enhance existing community facilities, including the Biddulph Valley Leisure Centre. As the application being assessed is proposed to enhance the running of the facility it is supported in principle by the Biddulph Neighbourhood Plan.

7.4 However, Biddulph Valley Leisure Centre is also located within an area of Local Green Space as recognised by LP Policy DC 4. This policy aims to protect Local Green Spaces from inappropriate development, by assessing any proposed development against national Green Belt Policy.

### Local Green Space

7.5 NPPF para 154 of the NPPF lays out what constitutes as appropriate development within the Green Belt, with anything else falling within the realm of inappropriate development. These criteria must be applied to the application site in line with LP Policy DC 4. the proposed development falls within point C:

*c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;*

7.6 The proposed development will not increase the size of the existing building, or increase the roof height. the proposal will install the solar equipment to the existing roof structure without any additional structural changes. As such this complies with NPPF para 154.

### Impact on the character and appearance of the area

7.7 The proposed solar equipment will be located on the existing roof slope and will accompany a number of solar panels previously installed under permitted

development. The proposed solar equipment will cover the entire roof slope, creating a preferred visual finish the partial covering of the permitted development proposal. Furthermore the proposal has a negligible visual impact in contrast to the existing industrial style, corrugated roof.

#### The impact on residential amenity

7.8 The proposed solar panels will be visible from Moorlands Road to the south west of the application site. However, a distance of c.73m will be maintained to the nearest neighbouring property and at this distance no adverse effects on amenity are anticipated, including as a result of glare, particularly given the relatively shallow angle of the roof.

### **8. CONCLUSION AND PLANNING BALANCE**

8.1 The proposed scheme will not lead to any harm to the visual or residential amenity of the area. The scheme is also considered acceptable when assessed against the requirement of Local Green Space and therefore of Green Belt land. The proposal would therefore comply with the Council's Local Plan, Biddulph's Neighbourhood Plan and the governments planning guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and therefore the application is recommended for approval.

### **9. RECOMMENDATION**

**A. That the application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions:**

**1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.**

**Reason:-**

**To comply with the provisions of Section 51 of the Town and Country Planning, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004.**

**2. The development hereby approved, including the building materials specified, shall be carried out in complete accordance with the submitted amended plans and specifications as follows:-**

**P008-8000-01 Location Plan**

**P008-8000-12 Existing Proposed North West Elevations P008-8000-21 Existing Proposed North East Elevations**

**P008-8000-13 Existing Proposed South East Elevations**

**P008-8000-14 Existing Proposed South West Elevations**

**Site Plan - 1.500**

**Site Plan - 1.1250 - Proposed PV**

**Reason:-**

**To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, for clarity and the avoidance of doubt.**

# Location Plan

