

Statement of Common Ground

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Localism Act 2011

Appeal Against Refusal of Planning Application 22/01108/FULL at Land at Whites Farm, Barleylands Road, Basildon, SS15 4BG

Full planning application for a proposed battery energy storage site, substation compound, with associated infrastructure, fencing, access road, drainage and landscaping

On Behalf Of:

Anglo ES Whites Farm Ltd

Prepared By:

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STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

Land at White's Farm, Barleylands Road, Basildon, SS15 4BG

PLANNING APPEAL REFERENCE: APP/V1505/W/23/3332888

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY REFERENCE NUMBER: 22/01108/FULL

SIGNED BY


Paul Barton BSc (Hons) MRTPI on behalf of The Appellant



Date.....7th March 2024.....

SIGNED BY

Christine Lyons on behalf of Basildon Borough Council



Date 7th March 2024

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (**'SoCG'**) has been prepared by Harris Lamb Planning Consultancy ("HLPC") on behalf of Anglo ES Whites Farm Ltd ("the Appellant") in respect of an appeal against the decision of Basildon Borough Council to refuse planning permission for planning application 22/01108/FULL. It has been prepared in accordance with the guidance set out in the Procedural Guidance: Planning Appeals England (April 2022) Annex R – Statement of Common Ground.

1.2 The SoCG records the position between the Appellant and Basildon Borough Council (BBC) in respect of the appeal site, the surrounding area and material planning considerations. It identifies areas of agreement between the two parties and matters disputed. It is signed by Harris Lamb Planning Consultancy (**'HLPC'**) on behalf of the Appellant and Christine Lyons on behalf of BBC.

1.3 The appeal has been submitted following BBC's refusal of planning application 22/01108/FULL (**'the Application'**). The planning application proposes:

"Proposed battery energy storage site, substation compound, with associated infrastructure, fencing, access road, drainage and landscaping ("the Appeal Scheme")"

1.4 The planning application was refused at Committee. The Committee Report can be found at CD2. The Decision Notice (CD1) contains a single reason for refusal, set out below:

"1. The proposal represents inappropriate development within the Green Belt which is by definition harmful and prejudicial to the openness of the Green Belt. The proposed development is in conflict with Green Belt purpose (c) of paragraph 138 of the NPPF. The very special circumstances that have been evidenced do not provide sufficient reason to justify a departure from the National

Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The proposed development would cause significant harm to the openness of the Green Belt by reason of the proposal's location and siting. For these reasons, the proposed development is contrary to paragraphs 147, 148 and 149 of the NPPF, 2021."

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE APPEAL SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The Appeal Site is part of a much wider complex of commercial and leisure uses, which comprise of farm buildings, large stables building, indoor arena, ancillary buildings, outdoor manege, associated parking and grazing, and 9 container units used for a variety of industrial and storage purposes. There is a pylon which is located close to the proposed site with overhead powerline, which is visible from the PROW to the north of the proposed site. The pylon infrastructure is the connection point for the project.
- 2.2 The site is approximately 1.61 hectares in size and is located to the east of Barleylands Road, adjacent to the Barleylands equestrian centre. The adjacent area is characterised by fields used for equestrian purposes; the land on the opposite side of Barleylands Road is used to provide football pitches.
- 2.3 Whites Farm is located approximately 2 miles north of the centre of Basildon, 2.5 miles south of the town of Billericay and 4 miles west of the town of Wickford.
- 2.4 The wider area to the east and west of Barleylands Road is occupied by a variety of uses including recycling centre, equestrian uses, football pitches and tourist camping area.
- 2.5 The fields are bordered in part by mature hedges and trees. The extensive subdivision of the fields by fences associated with equine use (that includes field shelters for horses), and football pitches.
- 2.6 The BESS will be sited to the south beyond the existing farm and equestrian buildings. There are a number of bunds in this area, which are located close to the Appeal Site.
- 2.7 The battery storage site adjoins the farm, commercial and equestrian buildings and facilities.

- 2.8 The Appeal Scheme is approximately 250m away from the nearest residential properties on Wash Road.
- 2.9 There is no ecology designation on site or nearby. The EA flood map shows that the site is within Flood Zone 1. The site is Grade 3 agricultural land. There are no landscape, historic or environmental designations on site or nearby.

3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The proposed development is a Battery Energy Storage Facility (“BESS”). The facility is temporary and will be removed after 40 years. The facility will use battery technology to offer network balancing and stabilisation services. This is achieved by importing electricity from the UK Power Networks (UKPN) network at times of low demand and high production, converting the electricity from AC to DC through an inverter and charging the battery cells to store the energy, and, exporting this stored electricity back to the network via inverting the electricity back to AC and then on to the network at times of high demand. The BESS will be connected to the UK Power network via a connection to the 132kV network which crosses close to the Appeal Site.

3.2 Access to the proposed BESS site is via the existing access to Whites Farm and the Equestrian Centre from a point off Barleylands Road. The access runs from the road in an easterly direction. The existing track is made of hard surfacing.

3.3 The BESS will consist of:

An existing hard surfaced access from Barleylands Road, off Barleylands Road connected to the existing highway.

132kV Substation and transformer, consisting of:

132/33kV transformer

Distribution Network Operator (“DNO”) & Customer switch yards

Battery switch room

Battery control room

Palisade fencing

Battery compound, comprising of

24 banks Battery storage units

Battery Management / Power Control System (transformer / inverters / monitoring system)

Palisade fencing/Wooden fencing

Parking facilities for maintenance vehicles

CCTV monitoring system.

The land within the substation and battery compound will be laid to gravel.

Drainage system made up of swales and filter drains.

Landscaping

4.0 PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

4.1 A number of planning policy documents are relevant to the consideration of the appeal. These include National Planning Policy, Development Plan Policy and Supplementary Planning Documents/Guides. A list of relevant policies set out below.

Development Plan

4.2 The development plan relevant to the appeal scheme consists of:

-Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies 2007 (“BDCLP”).

The only relevant policy of the BDCLP is Policy BAS GB1 (The definition of the Green Belt)

Other Relevant Policy and Guidance

Climate Change Act 2008

Planning Practice Guidance -Planning for renewable and low carbon energy:

National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2023)

National Policy Statement for Energy EN-1 (Nov 2023)

National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure EN-3 (Nov 2023)

National Policy Statement for electricity networks infrastructure EN-5 (Nov 2023)

Clean Growth Strategy (October 2017) Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener

Powering our Net Zero Future – the Energy White Paper (December 2020)

*Transitioning to a net zero energy system Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan
(2021)*

Climate Change 2022 Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability - (February 2022)

British Energy Security Strategy (April 2022)

Powering Up Britain Energy Security Plan (March 2023)

Powering Up Britain: The Net Zero Growth Plan (March 2023)

National Grid Future Energy Scenarios (July 2023)

5.0 MATTERS OF AGREEMENT

- 5.1 The following matters are agreed:
- 5.2 The proposed development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 5.3 The proposal will contribute towards balancing the local electricity network, providing a flexible supply that complements fluctuations in energy supply; and will increase security of supply to the surrounding area.
- 5.4 The provision of storage is considered a Critical National Priority (CNP) as set out Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1). The appeal schemes should be considered CNP.

6.0 MATTERS OF DISPUTE

- 6.1 The following matters are disputed:
- 6.2 The contribution the appeal site makes to Green Belt Purpose C: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
- 6.3 The degree of harm to the purposes of the Green Belt arising from the appeal proposals.
- 6.4 The degree of harm to the openness of the Green Belt arising from the appeal proposals.
- 6.5 The proposed location of the battery facility at the site selected.

