

# North Yorkshire Council

## Strategic Planning Committee

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Tuesday, 8 July 2025 commencing at 10.00 am.

Councillor Andy Paraskos in the Chair and Councillors Bob Packham, Andy Brown, John Cattanach, Hannah Gostlow, David Hugill, Tom Jones, Andrew Lee, John Mann, John McCartney, Yvonne Peacock, Neil Swannick, Roberta Swiers, Andrew Timothy and Robert Windass.

In attendance: Councillor Arnold Warnekan.

Officers present: Catriona Gatrell, Head of Legal (Property, Planning and Environment), Fiona Hunter and Stephen Loach (Democratic Services).

There were 9 members of the public.

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**Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book**

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### **114 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Richard Foster (substitute Councillor Robert Windass).

### **115 Minutes of the meetings held on 10 June 2025**

That the minutes of the meeting of Strategic Planning Committee, held on 10 June 2025, be confirmed by Members and signed by the Chair as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

Reference to the acronym WRAP within the minutes is incorrect – this should be replaced with the acronym RAP.

### **116 Declarations of interest**

Councillor Andy Brown declared a non-prejudicial interest in relation to him being a member of Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) and that organisation's objection to the proposals.

### **117 ZD25/00038/FULL - Full planning permission for a solar farm including associated infrastructure, underground cabling, landscaping and access on behalf of Brompton Solar Limited on land North of Brompton On Swale North Yorkshire**

Considered

The report of the Assistant Director of Planning – Community Development Services requesting Members to determine a planning application for the erection of a solar farm including associated infrastructure, underground cabling, landscaping and access on behalf of Brompton Solar Limited on land North of Brompton On Swale North Yorkshire

The application was brought to the Strategic Planning Committee due to the scale of the development in relation to visual and landscape impact, together with loss of agricultural land.

The Planning Officer presented the Committee report highlighting the proposal; context to the application; site location, outline and description; details regarding the changes to the conditions; and the planning policy considerations. The Officer recommendation was highlighted.

The Planning Officer highlighted a number of updates to the report, detailing the following:

- The number of houses that would be powered by the energy from the proposed plant should have read 17884
- Clarification of the details in paragraphs 10.35 and 10.42
- Three further letters of representation. Details were outlined including clarification of the issues raised by Brompton Parish Council.

Councillor Arnold Warneken spoke during the public speaking section requesting clarification of the biodiversity net gain details. Different aspects of biodiversity net gain were set out in paragraph 10.8 of the report, however, a single figure for the overall net gain was not available.

Frances Nicholson, the agent for the applicant, addressed the Committee highlighting the following:

- The applicant had worked closely with the Case Officer on the application and it was ensured that it accorded with the appropriate guidance and policies.
- The proposal would provide sufficient energy for 17884 houses.
- This would provide clean energy and would assist in addressing the climate emergency
- Details of the output from the plant were provided.
- The reduction in CO2 would be the equivalent of taking 11000 cars off the road.
- There had been no statutory objections.
- There had been no objection from Natural England in respect of the loss of the grade 3 land on the site.
- The applicant had worked closely with local residents and the Parish Council to address issues of concern.

Members had an in-depth discussion in respect of the application and the issues raised by the public speakers. The following issues were highlighted:

- It was noted that a community commitment of £20k from the applicant was purely voluntary and could not be secured by planning permission. However there was confidence that this would take place as agreed.
- The solar panel site would not be sprayed with pesticides and natural resources, such as sheep grazing, would be utilised to maintain the land. It was suggested that a maintenance management plan was required to ensure this was adhered to.
- In response to whether food bearing trees could be stipulated in terms of the planting on the site it was stated that there was just a reference to trees, not a particular type of tree, and this could not be conditioned, however, this matter could be discussed further with the applicant.
- It was clarified that there would be no battery storage on the site.
- It was noted that applications were determined on their own merit, therefore, the nearby solar farm was not considered within this application process. Cumulative

impact was taken account of but as the connection to the grid would now be at full capacity it was not expected that any further developments of this nature would now take place at that location.

- A Member queried the maintenance of the site and how access roads to the site were to be maintained as this was explained within the report. In response it was stated that access to the site was via the A1(M) slip-road and Gatherley Road, which were both maintained by highways.
- Clarification was provided as to the details of the planting scheme on the site.
- In terms of the use of best and most versatile land it was explained that this was weighed up to determine the balance of the application and it had been considered, as this was a temporary loss of land to provide a sustainable energy source, that the balance was in favour of granting the application, in planning terms.
- It was clarified that the community benefit grant had not been included in the application, nor the S106 agreement, as from a legal perspective an appeal could be lodged against this inclusion, therefore, it was appropriate for this to be voluntary.
- A discussion on the location of the grid connection was undertaken and it was noted that this would be at a sub-station adjacent to the plant. It was appreciated that this would require very little additional work for the connection to take place which was important in terms of potential disruption to local residents. It was reiterated that the sub-station would be at maximum capacity when connected to the proposed site.
- It was noted that one of the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) in the site area crossed the proposed site but currently there were no plans to re-route the PRoW or prevent access, however, the Council's PRoW Team would be giving further consideration to this matter.
- A Member noted that in the update to the report it had been stated that the local Parish Council had raised concerns that the report misrepresented public opinion, and it was asked what that related to. In response it was stated that it was unclear what this related to but could relate to the reported levels of support for the scheme being lower than indicated.
- The access track details mentioned in the report related to the tracks in-between the solar panels, providing access for maintenance. These were not subject to highway maintenance.
- It was asked how the scale of such a project was determined noting that the report indicated that this was not considered to be large scale. In response the size and output of what was considered to be a large scale solar farm were outlined, and although this was near to those criteria, it fell below them. It was also noted that the proximity of another site did not relate to this then being considered as 'large scale' as each application was determined on its own merits.

Members debated the application and the following issues were raised:

- There were factors both for and against the application and the matter was finely balanced.
- Whilst not a material factor in the application process no-one from the local community had registered to speak against the application.
- Access to the site and the maintenance of the site remained concerns.
- The location of the proposal to the connection to the grid was a factor in favour of the application.
- Proliferation should be taken account of for any further applications of this nature at that location.
- The application accords with the appropriate national and local policies.
- The need to protect best and most versatile land was important but on this

application the production of clean, sustainable energy on the scale outlined outweighed that factor.

- Members suggested that an additional condition be added to the permission in terms that prior to the commencement of development, a maintenance plan shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. This maintenance plan should include but is not restricted to
  - a highway condition survey of the access roads to the site and details of the maintenance of these areas during the period of construction and operation;
  - details of the maintenance arrangements for all fences and boundary treatments and the areas of grass around the panels for the period of construction and operation.

### **Resolved**

That subject to the provision of a suitable maintenance plan, to be agreed by the Planning Authority in consultation with the applicant prior to the commencement of the proposal, planning permission be **GRANTED**, in line with the conditions listed in the report, and the completion of a S106 agreement, as detailed in the report.

Voting record

The resolution was agreed unanimously.

### **118 Business that, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered as a matter of urgency.**

There were none.

### **119 Date of next meeting**

Tuesday, 12 August 2025 at 10.00am at a venue to be confirmed.

The meeting concluded at 11.00 am.