

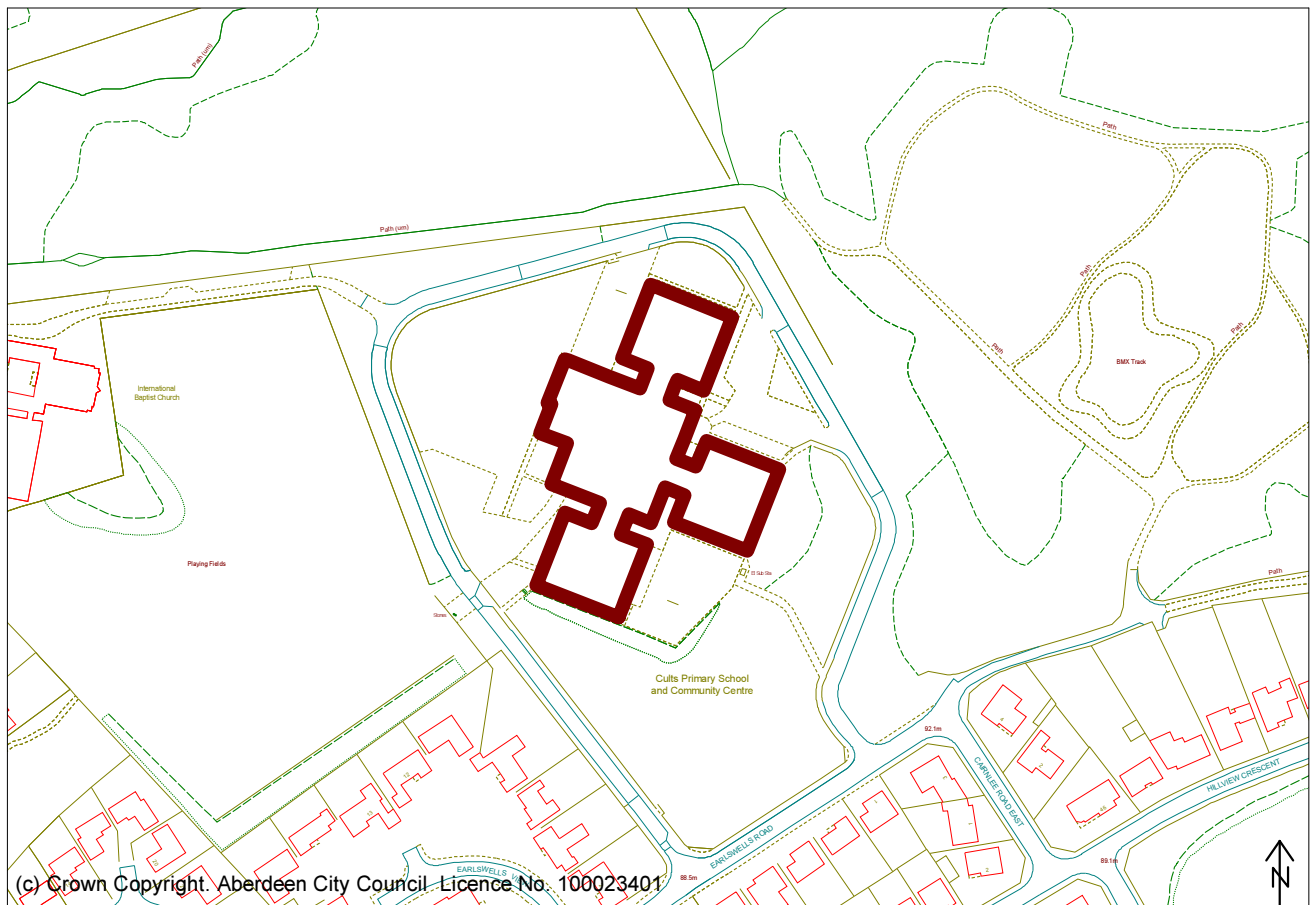
CULTS PRIMARY SCHOOL, EARLSWELLS
ROAD, CULTS

INSTALL SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV)
PANELS ON 3 ROOFS AT THE SCHOOL.

For: Aberdeen City Council

Application Ref. : P120529
Application Date : 19/04/2012
Officer : Frances Swanston
Ward: Lower Deeside (M Boulton/A
Malone/M Malik)

Advert : Full Notify not poss.
(neighbours)
Advertised on : 02/05/2012
Committee Date : 14 June 2012
Community Council : No response received



RECOMMENDATION: Approve Unconditionally

DESCRIPTION

Cults Primary School is located to the north of Earlswells Road and comprises four main blocks; three 'wings' to the north, east and south respectively individually connected to a central block. The roof of the school building is predominantly flat. The school is bounded to the north and east by woodland and to the west by playing fields and the houses along Earlswells View and to the south by the Earlswells Road. There is a gradual slope upwards from south to north across the site with the school occupying the slightly higher part of the site. The closest residential properties are the houses on Earlswells View, a distance of approximately 60 metres away.

HISTORY

Aberdeen City Council is the first local authority in Scotland to apply for the 'Rent a Roof' scheme and is in the process of installing solar panels on 90 public buildings around the City, which include sheltered housing developments, schools, offices and Council depots. The scheme involves the Council buying the electricity generated by the panels to power Council buildings. 12 of the buildings require planning permission to install the solar panels primarily due to the size/number of the panels involved.

PROPOSAL

Detailed planning permission is sought for the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels on the roof of Cults Primary school in three principal locations: to the north, east and south blocks of the school. There would be a total of 458 individual panels installed, evenly distributed between the three locations. The solar panels would be joined together in lines and would be fixed to a frame mounting system and would be positioned south-west facing at a tilt of 30 degrees to maximise solar gain. The highest part of the panels would sit approximately 1 metre above the roof.

Each solar panel would measure 1650mm by 941mm with a thickness of 46mm and would appear dark blue in colour.

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO SUB-COMMITTEE

The application site is owned by Aberdeen City Council and therefore the application does not fall within the Council's agreed Scheme of Delegation and requires to be determined by the Development Management Sub-Committee.

CONSULTATIONS

ROADS SECTION – No comments.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH – No comments received.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL – No comments received.

REPRESENTATIONS

None.

PLANNING POLICY

Aberdeen Local Development Plan

Policy R8 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments – the development of renewable and low carbon energy schemes is supported and applications will be supported in principle if proposals:

- Do not cause significant harm to the local environment, including landscape character and the character and appearance of listed buildings and conservation areas.
- Do not negatively impact on air quality.
- Do not negatively impact on tourism.
- Do not have a significant adverse impact on the amenity of dwelling houses.

Policy D 1 Architecture and Placemaking - To ensure high standards of design, new development must be designed with due consideration for its context and make a positive contribution to its setting. Factors such as siting, scale, massing, colour, materials, orientation, details, the proportions of building elements, together with the spaces around buildings, including streets, squares, open space, landscaping and boundary treatments, will be considered in assessing that contribution.

EVALUATION

Sections 25 and 37(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Policy R8 states that the development of renewable and low carbon energy schemes is supported and applications will be supported in principle subject to a number of criteria. The proposed solar panels would have some visual impact upon the school building and would be visible from points along Earlswells View and Earlswells Road due to the slope of the site and the number of panels installed on three main sections of roof. However, the closest residential properties are almost 60 metres away and as such the visual impact of the panels would be minimal as would be their impact upon the amenity of the wider site. The orientation of the panels reflects the optimum solar gain. Having the panels tilted would increase the visual impact of the panels, but this impact would not be an adverse one.

The agent in supporting information states that the installation of the solar panels would have a positive contribution in raising awareness to the needs of renewable energy. The solar panels would not negatively impact on air quality or on tourism, given their proposed location in accordance with Policy R8.

Therefore in conclusion, the solar panels would have some visual impact upon the school building and wider area, but this would not be detrimental to either visual or residential amenity in accordance with Policy R8. The panels have been sited with due consideration for their context and would make an overall positive contribution to their setting, in accordance with Policy D1 of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve Unconditionally

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

that the visual impact of the proposed solar (PV) panels would be acceptable upon the appearance of the building and would not detract from the overall visual amenity of the area in accordance with Policy R8, and as such have been designed with due consideration for their context, in accordance with Policy D1 of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

Dr Margaret Bochel

Head of Planning and Sustainable Development.