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Planning Department
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Fire Business Support Team
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Date: 04/01/2024

Dear Sirs

Land at Grove Farm and Land East of the Railway Line, Bentley
Planning Application No: DC/23/05656

Whilst Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) are not a statutory consultee in relation to this project we will work and engage with the developer as this project develops to ensure it complies with the statutory responsibilities that we enforce.

The developer should produce a risk reduction strategy as the Responsible Person for the scheme as stated in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended). We would also expect that safety measures and risk mitigation is developed in collaboration with the SFRS, to ensure emergency responders are not placed at risk and appropriate access and facilities are provided.

The strategy should cover the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the project.

During the construction phase the number of daily vehicle movements in the local area will significantly increase. SFRS will want to view the transport strategy to minimise this impact and prevent an increase in the number of road traffic incidents. Any development should not negatively impact on the Service's ability to respond to an incident in the local area.

The developer must ensure the risk of fire and other emergencies is minimised, this may be by way of any or all of the following measures:

Procuring components and using construction techniques which comply with all relevant legislation, supported with appropriate test evidence and certification. Designing the development to contain and restrict the spread of fire through the use of fire-resistant materials, and adequate separation between elements. The design should be undertaken in accordance with the IET PV Code of Practice and MCS requirements, or equivalent technical requirements, provided UK regulations are still met.

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Appropriate automatic fire detection should be installed in all areas inside buildings in which electrical control equipment (inverters, isolators, and distribution boards) is located. This should be monitored to give the earliest possible warning of fire.

Consideration should be given to the fire safety management implications of a PV system that will operate at a fully or partially unattended location.

The installation of appropriate automatic fire suppression systems is highly beneficial for the mitigation of risk in the event of fire and for protection of property and should be considered for areas inside buildings where equipment associated with PV systems is installed.

Appropriate water supplies for fire-fighting purposes

Developing an emergency response plan with SFRS to minimise the impact of an incident during construction, operation and decommissioning of the facility.

The emergency response plan should include:

- details of the hazards associated with PV panels and associated equipment
- isolation of electrical sources to enable firefighting activities
- minimise the environmental impact of an incident
- containment of fire water run-off
- The emergency response plan should be maintained and regularly reviewed by the occupier and any material changes notified to SFRS.

Environmental impact should include the prevention of ground contamination, water course pollution, and the release of toxic gases.

If the comments above are not considered or inappropriate access and facilities for the FRS provided, SFRS will ensure our SSRI record is amended accordingly, and operational crews will adopt an informed risk based defensive approach on arrival. Depending on the nature of the incident and the information ascertained, defensive tactics may be deployed for some time, to maximise our response while maintaining crew safety.

It is acknowledged the information provided does not indicate the presence of any battery energy storage systems (BESS) as part of the proposed development. If BESS are to be provided as part of this development or are provided in the future, then SFRS will need to be informed to allow us to make further comments and to amend our site-specific risk information (SSRI) record to ensure operational crews are aware of all risks prior to attendance.

Yours faithfully

Water Officer

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service

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