

DELEGATED

AGENDA NO .

PLANNING COMMITTEE
2nd August 2006

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR
OF DEVELOPMENT AND
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES.

06/1276/FUL
1 VALLEY DRIVE, YARM
INSTALLATION OF 1KW ROOF MOUNTED WIND TURBINE ON THE
PROPERTY.
EXPIRY DATE: 11th JULY 2006

Summary:

The application site is situated on Valley Drive, Yarm. The property is a large detached dwelling with residential properties and an area of open space situated adjacent to the dwelling.

Planning consent is sought for the erection of a 1KW roof mounted wind turbine of No. 1 Valley Drive. The proposed turbine is to be situated on the northern side of the existing dwelling above the attached garage.

18 letters of objection have been received in relation to the proposed development; primarily concerns are raised in relation to visual amenity, noise and highway safety. These concerns have been addressed in the material planning considerations of this report.

It is considered that the proposed development will not be overly prominent within the street scene and should not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of the neighbouring properties.

Recommendations:

RECOMMENDED that application 06/1276/FUL be approved subject to the following condition: -

01. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan(s); unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Drawing Number(s):- SBC001 and SBC002

Reason: To define the consent.

Policy GP1 of the adopted Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan is considered relevant to this decision.

The Proposal

1. The application site is situated on Valley Drive, Yarm. The property is a large detached dwelling. No. 2 Friarwood Close lies to the west, whilst the properties of Valley Drive are situated to the north. The properties of Levendale Close are situated to the east of the site with an area of public open space and footpath to the south.
2. Planning consent is sought for the erection of a 1KW roof mounted wind turbine of No. 1 Valley Drive. The proposed turbine is to be situated on the northern side of the existing dwelling above the attached garage. The proposed diameter of the blades would be approximately 1.8 metres and be situated a maximum of 3.3 metres above the ridge height to the tip of the blade. The applicant has also submitted a statement indicating that it is his intention to sell and install similar products across Stockton on Tees and the surrounding area.

Consultations

3. The following responses have been received from departments and bodies consulted by the Local Planning Authority

The **Environmental Health Unit** has no objections to the proposed development.

The Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy

I have no adverse comment to make regarding this application

Yarm Town Council

Although members would generally support initiatives which benefit the environment, to allow this installation could set a precedent for other rooftops to be fitted with similar or larger capacity devices and thus negatively impact on the visual amenity of the area.

Environment Project Manager - Mike Chicken

Provided a short note on domestic wind turbines, which sets out both the support and the opposition issues. The application is probably a “test case” by which we will be judged, as the only opposition is that of noise, which the Environmental Health Unit will no doubt be commenting on.

The short note on domestic wind turbines outlines the following issues

Support:

The Government published its energy review report “The Energy Challenge” on 11th July 2006 which sets out to meet two key objectives:

- To tackle climate change by reducing carbon dioxide emissions; and
- To deliver secure, clean energy at affordable prices, as we move to increasing dependence on imported energy

One of the thrusts of this review paper is the promotion of distributed energy i.e. generating energy near where we use it. This reduces the inefficiency associated with transmission of energy through the grid network and can result in the use of waste heat. The Government sets out clearly its intention

to remove barriers to the further development of distributed energy and even states that they will “expect planning authorities to include policies in their development plans that require a percentage of energy in new developments to come from on-site renewables, where viable.”

The report goes on to say “we will set out proposals that provide a framework to encourage all planning authorities to take action on climate change in the Local Government White paper later this year.”

There is very clear Government support for locally generated energy solutions where practical.

Stockton Council signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change in November 2002 and as such publicly stated that we would “work with our partners and the community to address the causes and impacts of climate change”

Stockton Council is part of a consortium with other Tees Valley Authorities as well as the Environment Agency and Renew Tees Valley in working up a Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy that is in draft form now and will be published by October 2006.

Stockton Council is developing an action plan to contribute to the delivery of the targets set within the Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy and this will go to Cabinet in November 2006. One of those targets relates to reducing the Carbon Dioxide Emissions from domestic sector. To do this will require a series of actions around energy efficiency but will also include the support of small-scale renewable energy generation such as domestic wind turbines.

Opposition:

Noise from the blades moving through the air and from the generator within the hub. Modern turbines have very low levels of noise emissions and any noise generated must be taken into context with local background emissions and the fact that when windy there are other noises generated which may outweigh the wind turbine emissions.

Visual impact – the impact is dependent on the size of the turbine and other local factors such as the proximity of other structures. In domestic wind turbines they are by design small enough to be attached to a house without any major structural works that would outweigh any benefit derived from the electricity generated.

Other issues may arise from opponents to domestic wind turbines such as “they are not going to generate the amount of electricity claimed”, this is not a matter for consideration by planning and is an issue that the individual householder needs to make a decision upon and should be encourage to seek independent impartial advice from the energy savings trust. Other claims involve unproven issues such as ice falling from the blades in winter and the impact on birds.

Conclusion:

There is a weight of support for wind turbines as part of the answer to tackling climate change and developing a secure energy supply. Opposition to them needs to be carefully assessed and given weighting that they merit after taking advice from other professionals such as Environmental Health on the issue of noise.

4. The Local residents and occupiers have been individually notified of the application. The neighbour consultation period expired on the 12th June 2006, 18 letters of objection has been received in relation to the application as detailed below (in summary).

Alan Louis Spence - 4 Glaisdale Road, Yarm

Objects as the development would not be to any advantage aesthetically to the surrounding properties or indeed the area as a whole.

Mrs J A Powell - Julie.anya@btopenworld.com

Considers that the wind turbine would be an eyesore and would give precedences for other applications.

The development would be better suited at offices and businesses away from private dwellings

Mrs A Callister - 56 Valley Drive, Yarm

Concerned over the impact the development would have on the character of the area, the impact on property prices, noise and distract drivers becoming a safety hazard.

Don and Jenny Prior - 9 Goose Pasture, Yarm

The development will impact on the aesthetic quality of the immediate locality and set a precedent.

Concerns are also raised over the impacts on property prices, highway safety, public safety and wildlife.

Mr N A Henshaw - 1 Levendale Close, Yarm

Objects to the proposed development as it will set a precedent for others to do the same and eventually will lead to larger turbines affecting the character of the estate.

Hilary Brown - 13 Levendale Close, Yarm

Objects to the development on the visual impacts, property values, noise and safety of general public should the mast be incorrectly installed.

Concerns are also raised that the spinning of the blades may trigger migraine attacks

G T and J A Gibb - 3 Valley Drive, Yarm

Object to the proposed development as it would be highly visible and unsightly, cause issues of noise disturbance, set a precedent, impact on property values and distract motorists.

Steven Robinson - 7 Valley Drive, Yarm

Consider that the development would be a ridiculous eyesore out of keeping with the location and devalue nearby properties and provide a distraction for motorists

W M Lee - 12 Earle Close, Yarm

Objects to the proposed development as it will be an eyesore and could affect the value of the surrounding properties

Sarah Cowley - 7 Eskdale Close, Yarm

Comments that the development would set a precedent and further similar developments would be seen in the area

Commends idea to save energy but does not feel individual wind turbines are the way forward

Susan Whitehead - 9 Hawthorn Grove, Yarm

Objects as the development will spoil the look of the area and set a precedent for others to erect unsightly equipment.

Mr G A and Mrs D Hill - 22 Levendale Close, Yarm

Consider that such an installation would be completely inappropriate in a residential area standing so high above the roofline and distract passing motorists.

Mrs J Day - 9 Stonehouse Close, Yarm

Believes that such an installation will be a blot on the landscape and not in keeping with a residential area.

M R Woods - 53 Valley Drive, Yarm

The erection of wind turbines will look ugly and only 1-2 of these machines will spoil the local amenity.

Anderson and Ann Baines - 8 Stonehouse Close, Yarm

Feel the development would be an unnecessary eyesore within the area and do not feel that a precedent should be set by allowing this turbine.

Development would cause other issue such as noise and environmental issues.

Mr G Wardale - 14 Levendale Close, Yarm

Objects to the development as it would be an eyesore, be of dubious benefit and cause traffic distraction.

Concerns are also raised over the impacts of bird life and nearby trees.

WG and PM Jones - 2 Bankside, Yarm

Consider the proposal to be unsuitable on a domestic property, would have noise implications, be unsightly, pose a danger to wildlife and set a precedent.

Consider that solar panels would be more beneficial

Mrs S Jeffries - 73 The Larun Beat, Yarm

Objects to planning application

Planning Policy Considerations

5. Where an adopted or approved development plan contains relevant policies, Section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) requires that an application for planning permissions shall be determined in accordance with the Development Plan(s) for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the relevant Development

Plans are the Tees Valley Structure Plan (TVSP) and the Stockton on Tees Local Plan (STLP).

6. The following policies of the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan are considered to be relevant to this decision;

Policy GP1

Proposals for development will be assessed in relation to the policies of the Cleveland Structure Plan and the following criteria as appropriate:

- (i) The external appearance of the development and its relationship with the surrounding area;
- (ii) The effect on the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties;
- (iii) The provision of satisfactory access and parking arrangements;
- (iv) The contribution of existing trees and landscape features;
- (v) The need for a high standard of landscaping;
- (vi) The desire to reduce opportunities for crime;
- (vii) The intention to make development as accessible as possible to everyone;
- (viii) The quality, character and sensitivity of existing landscapes and buildings;
- (ix) The effect upon wildlife habitats;
- (x) The effect upon the public rights of way network.

Tees Valley Structure plan:

Policy EN2

Renewable energy projects will generally be supported provided the implications of the following criteria are taken fully into account:

- i) impact on the landscape, visual amenity and areas of ecological or historic importance;
- ii) impact on local communities and existing and proposed developments;
- iii) traffic implications, and proximity to roads, railways and airports;
- iv) noise implications
- v) effect on the best and most versatile agricultural land;
- vi) the extent to which the proposal helps to achieve wider environmental benefits such as reducing harmful emissions in the atmosphere
- vii) the way in which the proposal assists in achieving national targets of new electricity generating capacity from renewable energy sources; and
- viii) the environmental impact of any additional transmission requirements.

Policy EN2A

Borough Councils will take a proactive approach to encouraging small scale renewable energy generation and domestic energy saving through their local plans, supplementary planning guidance and other activities.

Planning Policy Statement 22 (PPS22): Renewable Energy is also considered to be relevant to this decision.

Material Planning Considerations

7. The main planning considerations of this application are the impacts on the character of the area, access and highway safety and the amenity of the neighbouring properties.

Principle of development:

8. Planning Policy Statement 22 (PPS22): Renewable Energy outlines the government's stance and aims in reducing carbon emissions, sustainable development and protection of the environment through renewable forms of energy, specific references are made to encouraging smaller-scale projects. Paragraphs 19 and 22 outline that renewable energy technologies may have visual impacts and cause issues of noise and disturbance and that these must be judged on a case by case basis and mitigation measures incorporated where necessary.
9. The Planning and Housing minister Yvette Cooper has recently commented that "it is absurd that you should be able to put a satellite dish up on your house but have to wrestle with the planning process for small-scale microgeneration, which is no more obtrusive and can have a real impact on climate change." The Minister is looking to make microgeneration permitted development at some point in the near future as part of the Government's review of householder development consents.
10. Policies EN2 and EN2A of the adopted Tees Valley Structure plan relate specifically to renewable energy projects. Policy EN2 details criteria that should be taken into account, whilst policy EN2A states that Local Authorities should take a pro-active approach to encourage small-scale renewable energy projects.
11. As the Local Planning Authority has no specific policies regarding small-scale renewable energy projects the proposal must be assessed in line with the above policies and in relation to policy GP1 in terms of visual impact, highway safety and amenity.

Impact on the character of the area

12. The proposed wind turbine would be situated on the side of the existing dwelling above the existing garage. The proposed blades would be at a maximum of over a little over 3 metres above the ridge height of the dwelling. It is considered that although the proposed development would be a higher than the ridge height of the dwelling it is considered that due to the relatively small nature of the turbine it would not be a prominent feature within the street scene and it is considered that it would be unlikely to be any worse than the erection of satellite dish on the side of properties. The proposal is therefore judge not to be detrimental to the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with policy GP1 of the Local Plan.

Impact on residential amenity.

13. The applicant has included some technical information to support the proposed development. Typical noise profiles indicate that the development could possibly cause noise levels of between 33dB (decibels) and 52 dB.
14. Given that the neighbouring property would be approximately 10 metres from the turbine and the Environmental Health Unit have raised no objections to the wind turbine it is considered that the proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on existing levels of residential amenity.

Impact of Traffic and Highway safety:

15. The Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy has commented that they have no objections to the proposed development and therefore it is considered that there are no significant impacts in terms of highway safety.

Other issues:

16. Concerns have been raised in relation to setting a precedent for this type of development. Similar schemes have been approved throughout the country and therefore there is a national acceptance for this type of development. The setting of a precedent is not sufficient enough justification on its own to warrant a refusal of the application as each application must be judged on its own merits.
17. As highlighted by the Council's Environment Project Manager domestic wind turbines could help to achieve both the government's and the Council's aims and commitments in reducing the amount of carbon dioxide emissions from the domestic sector, promoting clean energy production and helping to address climate change.
18. Many objector have also raised the issue of the impact of the turbine on property values in the locality, this is however not a material planning consideration.
19. Objections have been received in relation to wildlife, this is however, not considered significant enough to warrant a refusal of the application.

Conclusion.

20. In conclusion the Local Planning Authority are keen to support renewable forms of energy and are satisfied that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on the visual amenities of the locality or residential amenity as a whole. For the reasons specified above the proposed development is judged to be in accordance with National government policy, policy GP1 of the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan and policy EN2 of the Tees Valley Structure Plan and is consequently recommended for approval.

Corporate Director of Development & Neighbourhood Services

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Financial Implications

As report.

Environmental Implications

As Report

Community Safety Implications

N/A

Human Rights Implications

The provisions of the European Convention of Human Rights 1950 have been taken into account in the preparation of this report.

Background Papers

Stockton-on-Tees Adopted Local Plan (1997)

Tees Valley Structure Plan

Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy

Ward and Ward Councillors

Ward Yarm
Ward Councillors B Jones, Mrs J. Beaumont and A Sherris