

DELEGATED

**AGENDA NO
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

DATE 12th March 2008

**REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR,
DEVELOPMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD
SERVICES**

07/3519/FUL

**Within An Arable Field To The South Of The Seamer/Hilton Road. The Field Is Located
Approximately 1.7km To The North West Of Seamer
Erection of a 60m temporary guyed wind monitoring mast for a period of 24 months.**

Expiry Date 28 February 2008

SUMMARY

Planning permission is sought for a period of 2 years for the erection of a 60m high wind monitoring mast and associated equipment. The mast will allow the capture of wind data which can then be used to inform considerations relating to the wind resource as a renewable energy within this location.

A total of 133 letters of objection have been received in respect to the application although only 58 of these relate to the proposed development with others relating to the potential of a wind turbine scheme at the site. The main objections relate to the impact of the mast on the surrounding landscape, it being too close to surrounding properties, it being a risk to air traffic and it being a distraction to motorists. The proposal relates to a single wind monitoring mast as against a wind farm and as such objections received relating to the provision of a wind farm cannot be taken into account as material planning considerations in determining this application.

The proposed mast is considered to be slender in nature and of a scale and appearance which although not specifically relative to the surrounding landscape, would not unduly compromise the character and appearance of the area, taking into account its temporary nature and the potential wider environmental benefits which can occur from such schemes.

It is considered that the mast is located a sufficient distance away from residential properties to not have any significant detrimental impacts on amenity whilst requires only a minimal land take, thereby limiting any impact on wildlife.

It is considered that the proposed development generally accords with Policy GP1 of the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan and the guidance of PPS 22 (Renewable Energy) and is therefore recommended for temporary approval.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning application 07/3519/FUL be Approved with Conditions subject to

- 01 *The development hereby approved shall be in accordance with the following approved plan(s); unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.*

<i>Plan Reference Number</i>	<i>Date on Plan</i>
<i>5396B/04/N/009</i>	<i>21 December 2007</i>
<i>5396B/04/N/015</i>	<i>21 December 2007</i>
<i>5396B/04/N/016</i>	<i>21 December 2007</i>

Reason: To define the consent.

02. *This consent is granted for a temporary period of 2 years from the date hereof, when unless the renewal of consent is sought and granted, the use, mast, equipment and all associated infrastructure and ancillary works shall be removed from the site and the land shall be reinstated to its former condition.*

Reason: The mast is not considered suitable for permanent retention on this site.

03. *Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, the precise location of the mast shall be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.*

Reason - To determine the precise location of the mast in relation to ground features.

04. *Prior to the erection of the mast, the Ministry of Defence and Durham Tees Valley Airport shall be informed in writing of the following;*
Construction start date
Construction end date
The maximum height of equipment
Whether the mast will be lit with air navigation warning beacons, and
The precise grid reference of the turbine

Reason: In the interests of air traffic safety

The proposed development is for a temporary period of 2 years and designed to provide data to allow more detailed consideration for a potential renewable energy scheme at the site. In view of the purpose of the development, its scale, appearance and location, it is considered that there should be no significant direct detrimental impacts on the wider landscape, the surrounding residential properties or wildlife and as such it is considered that the proposal generally accords with the guidance of Policies GP1 and EN42 of the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan and the guidance contained within PPS 22 (Renewable Energy).

PROPOSAL

1. Temporary planning permission is sought for the erection of a 60m high wind monitoring mast for a period of 2 years. The mast would be approximately 150 - 300mm in diameter, supported by 6mm diameter guy wires which would in turn be fixed to ground anchor points. The mast would support meteorological equipment, a transmitter and a lighting rod.
2. The purpose of the mast is to gather meteorological information remotely or via a single vehicle accessing the site to download data. The information gained from the mast would

allow for collection of wind data allowing a detailed assessment of whether the site will harness wind power satisfactorily for a scheme of wind turbines.

3. It is indicated that installation would typically take 2 days and require a limited amount of equipment, as would de-commissioning.

CONSULTATIONS

The following Consultations were notified and comments received are set out below:-

Civil Aviation Authority

4. The proposal would not constitute an en route aviation obstruction and therefore have no observations. It is advised that consultation is undertaken with the MOD.

Ministry Of Defence

5. The MOD has no safeguarding objections in respect to the proposal. However, it is requested that it is conditioned that the developer must first notify the MOD of detailed information prior to commencing on site.

Natural England

6. No comment to make regarding this proposal at this stage. We would however note that we may wish to comment should a planning application be submitted for a wind energy development on site in the future.

Durham And Tees Valley Airport

7. No objection

Hilton Parish Council

8. The wind monitoring mast has generated a substantial amount of feeling against the proposal in the Hilton Parish. Residents are concerned about the visual impact of the mast and the proposed wind farm development to which this is a precursor to. Residents have concerns over traffic, environmental issues associated with any such development.

Urban Design Highways Comments

9. The applicant states that they intend to use an existing farm access and there will be very little traffic associated with this development, therefore we have no objections.

Urban Design Landscape & Visual Comments

10. Whilst the mast is proposed to be erected to a height of 60m, I feel that the adverse visual impact upon the surrounding area will not be significant. As a result, I have no objection on landscape or visual grounds.

Environmental Health Unit

11. No comments in regards to this planning application.

Comments have not been received from the following consultees;

12. Countryside And Green Space
Tees Valley Wildlife Trust
Councillors
Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
Ingleby Barwick Town Council
Hambleton District Council

PUBLICITY

13. Neighbours were notified. A total of 133 letters have been received in respect to the development. 3 letters of support for wind farm development, 72 letters of objection to a wind farm development and 58 letters of objection to the Wind Monitoring mast (although these generally include significant reference to a proposed future wind farm).
14. Comments were received from the following addresses;

4, 9, 14, 26, 28, 42, 46 St Helier, Greenacres, Churchside Cottage, Kingsbridge, Fairwinds, Greenhow, Hilton Road
1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14, 16, 31, 34, 38, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 57 Falcon Walk, Hilton
2, 5, 7, 10, 11, 15, 16, 20, 22, 24, 32, 34, 36 Fir Tree Close, Hilton
1, 2, 5, 6, 10, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19 Moorberries, Hilton
5, 28, 36 Manor Drive, Hilton
4, 7, Inglewood, Hazelwood, Pinewood House, Seamer Road, Hilton
3 Ivy Cottages' Hilton
Glebe Cottage' Seamer
1, 3, 5, 7, 11 Brackenhill Walk, Seamer
1, 3, 8, 12, 14, 22, 26, 29, Pounders Mill, The Green, Seamer
5, 5a, 7 Holme Lane, Seamer
2, 5, 8 Manor Garth, Seamer
4, 6 Stokesley Road, Seamer
2, 8 Leconfield, Seamer
Boyhill Farm, Seamer
4, 14 Tanton Close, Seamer
5, 7, Longridge, Garthside, Stonewold, Stainton Road, Seamer.
11 Atherton Way, Yarm
South Lodge, The Avenue
36 Hartburn Village, Stockton On Tees
Old Road, Chesterfield
Birch Croft, Rudby Bank Hutton Rudby
43 Barton Crescent, Billingham
1 Conifer Grove, Billingham
Springfield, Orchard House, Ievenholme, Church House, Middleton Lodge, Levengarth, Middleton on Leven
15. This application is considering the wind monitoring mast as proposed and not a wind farm. Although significant objection is raised in respect to a wind farm and its associated impacts and this application being a precursor to such an application, these objections cannot be considered in determining this application.
16. Objections relating to the development to which this application relates are summarised as follows;

Character and Appearance

17. Location is wrong for a high test mast development due to it being open countryside. The development is not in keeping with the area of open countryside, being an intrusion into the natural landscape.
The development will damage the rural environment.
The local nature trail would be reduced as a result of this development.

The development will impede and have a detrimental impact on the views of the Cleveland Hills by local population and visitors to the area.

Impact on Neighbours

18. Development is in too close proximity to several villages of residential dwellings. The development will lead to an increase in construction traffic through the area. The mast is supposed to be 1 mile away from residential dwellings. Noise impacts.

Highways/Transport

19. The test mast would be a distraction to motorists on a busy and dangerous road, which will increase the risk of accidents. The local rural roads are used frequently by walkers, cyclists and horse riders, which could be in danger from an increase in traffic. The height of the proposed mast would come to 460 metres above sea level and will be a danger to NATO aircraft flying in from the North Sea to the North Yorkshire Moors when they are having low flying exercises.

Other matters

20. The development will have detrimental effects on the environment and wildlife, in particular species of birds. The destruction of habitats and the ground vibrations created will also affect animals in the area. The devaluation of property values in the area. Future health risks to the community, which are unknown at present. This will set a precedent for other future developments, such as windmills, telephone masts and aerials to be erected in the area. Reduction in the number of tourists to the area as a result of loss of views. The Local Ramblers Association uses the area, which would be made less desirable with this development and for them to relocate. The development will not create any new jobs for the community as specialist knowledge is required. The development is too close to the National Grid 400 KV transmission line. An environmental and ecological impact assessment would be needed to assess the full affects of this proposal. An aviation risk assessment would be needed due to the area being on the flight path of Durham/Tees Valley airport and the safety implications caused by the development. The development will decrease local trade and the economy. The development is based only on cost. There may be interference to TV signals due to the development. This commercial development should not be permitted on green belt land.

PLANNING POLICY

21. The relevant development plan in this case is the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

Where an adopted or approved development plan contains relevant policies, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 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)*.

The following planning policies are considered to be relevant to the consideration of this application:-

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.

Policy EN 42

Single wind turbines and associated plant in the countryside will normally be permitted unless:

- (i.) It is detrimental to the character of a special landscape area; or
- (ii.) It causes unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbouring residents.

Planning Policy Statement 22 – Renewable Energy

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 21. The site is located approximately mid way between the villages of Hilton and Seamer, at a high point within the landscape. The site is within close proximity to a nearby highway and the area is characterised at this location by open fields, hedgerows and a rolling landscape contour.

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 22. The proposal relates to a wind monitoring mast which, depending on the data gained may indicate that the site is suitable to harness wind via a wind turbine development. However, this application has to be considered on its merits and not those of a potential future application for wind turbines.
- 23. There is limited planning policy relating specifically to this form of development, although, there is a general presumption in favour of the use and operation of renewable energy sources at both Local and National Planning Policy level. Policy EN42 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan indicates that Single wind turbines and associated plant in the countryside will normally be permitted unless it is detrimental to the character of a special landscape area or it causes unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbouring residents whilst guidance within National Planning Guidance document PPS22 (renewable energy) indicates a key principle for renewable energy as being

'renewable energy developments should be capable of being accommodated throughout England in locations where the technology is viable and environmental, economic and social impacts can be addressed satisfactorily'.

24. Policy EN41 of the Local Plan guided on development which is required to enable the release and transmission of energy from renewable sources, indicating that this will be permitted on land identified in Policy IN5. However, Policy EN41 is not a saved policy of the Local Plan and as such, is no longer a material planning consideration.
25. Since the production of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan, the Tees Valley Structure Plan was adopted in 2004, however, Policy EN2 of the Structure Plan relating to renewable energy projects has not been saved following the review of the Structure Plan and as such cannot be taken into account as a material planning consideration.
26. It is considered that the Wind Monitoring Mast is an essential requirement in order to inform future proposals for a renewable energy project which have a general presumption in favour through national guidance, subject to specific siting issues which are considered as follows;

Impact on landscape

27. The site is not specifically designated or protected through planning policy. Although at a high point within the landscape and being likely to be visible from the wider area, it is considered that the slender nature, height and finishing colour of the mast would prevent it from being significantly visually intrusive in the wider context. Furthermore, other similar structures such as electricity pylons exist within the wider area and although large structures, are not alien to the landscape. As such, it is considered that the proposal would not significantly impact on the overall appearance of the landscape of the southern area of the Borough.

Impact on amenity of surrounding residents

28. The site of the mast lies approximately 1.3km from the nearby villages of Seamer and Hilton, these being the two nearest settlements. The nearest residential property lies approximately 720m away from the site. The proposal is of limited scale and it is to be located sufficient distance away from residential properties to prevent undue loss of amenity to local residents.

Other matters

29. No objections have been received from either the MOD or Durham Tees Valley Airports and as such it is considered that the mast would not detrimentally impact air traffic.
30. Due to the small scale nature of the proposed wind monitoring mast, it is considered that there should be no significant adverse impacts on protected species whilst there is no clear indication that such species are located within the immediate surroundings of the site.
31. Objection has been raised in respect to highway safety in terms of construction traffic and the mast being a distraction to motorists. The mast is indicated as requiring limited construction works over a 2 day period whilst has no notable moving parts and as such, is not considered to raise specific highway safety issues in this respect. The Head of Technical Services has raised no objection to the proposal.

32. Objections raised in respect to reduction in property values and precedents are not material planning considerations whilst it is believed that objection based on health risks relates to a possible future wind turbine scheme as against this mast.

CONCLUSION

33. The proposed mast is considered to be slender in nature and of a scale and appearance which although not specifically relative to the surrounding landscape, would not unduly compromise the character and appearance of the area, taking into account its temporary nature and the potential wider environmental benefits which can occur from such schemes.
34. It is considered that the mast is located a sufficient distance away from residential properties to not have any significant detrimental impacts on amenity whilst requires only a minimal land take, thereby limiting any impact on wildlife.
35. It is considered that the proposed development generally accords with Policy GP1 of the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan and the guidance of PPS 22 (Renewable Energy).

Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer Mr Andrew Glossop
Telephone No 01642 527796
Email Address: Andrew.Glossop@stockton.gov.uk

Financial Implications

As report

Environmental Implications

As report

Legal Implications

As report

Community Safety Implications

As report

Background Papers

Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy
Stockton on Tees Local Plan (June 1997)
Planning Application Reference Number 07/3519/FUL

Human Rights Implications

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

WARD AND WARD COUNCILLORS

Ward	Ingleby Barwick East
Ward Councillor	Councillor K C Faulks
Ward Councillor	Councillor D C Harrington
Ward Councillor	Councillor A M Larkin