

**DELEGATED**

**AGENDA NO 3  
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**DATE 24th October 2008**

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

**08/2372/EIS**

**Land North And South Of Hilton Seamer Road  
East Of Hilton**

**Erection of 3 no. wind turbines together with associated crane pads, access tracks,  
site compound, ancillary works and meteorological mast and control building**

**Expiry Date: 29<sup>th</sup> October 2008**

### **UPDATE REPORT**

Since the publication of the main report, additional comments have been received and are summarised below;

#### Environment Agency

We have received the foul drainage information and have no concerns in this respect. Our position as per our letter of 22<sup>nd</sup> September remains unchanged.

#### Durham Tees Valley Wildlife Trust

We don't think the wind farm proposal would have a significant adverse effect on the Brewsdale SNCI / Nature Reserve.

#### Urban Design

The Urban Design Team has updated their comments. The updated comments are summarised as follows;

Wind speed data is essential for the design and final layout of the turbines. Given this fact we reiterate that should the final layout vary from that set out within the application there may be a need to review the relevance of aspects of the environmental impact assessment.

It is noted that the topple distance is in line with our policy regarding toppling.

#### *Strategic Road Network*

We are particularly concerned that the abnormal load may not be capable of travelling around the recently completed improvements at the A19(T) Portrack Interchange. No swept path analysis has been submitted for Portrack Interchange and A1032 Newport Bridge Approach Road in order to see if the largest vehicle can manoeuvre through this section of highway. Should the abnormal load not be able to travel along the strategic road network it brings into doubt the conclusions of the TA.

Without the final routes of the abnormal loads and HGV's being finalised the impact on traffic on the highway and amenity of the Boroughs residents, in particular those in living in Hilton cannot be fully assessed.

### *Impacts on residents from traffic*

Within the environmental Statement there is no consideration of 'fear and intimidation' for residents due to the routing of the HGV's is considered, therefore additional work is necessary and possible mitigation measures need to be considered.

### *Landscape & Visual Comments*

A Landscape and Visual Impact Area study (LVIA) area which encompassed an area within a 20km radius of the proposed wind farm was proposed as part of the scoping study which was reduced to a 16km radius in agreement with Stockton Borough Council (SBC), Hambleton District Council (HDC) and North York Moors National Park Authority.

A request by HDC for SBC Landscape Architects to undertake their visual assessment of the proposed wind farm was considered by SBC. However, it was considered that a better option would be for SBC to appoint independent consultants, Arup to undertake the LVIA for both borough councils as this would ensure consideration of impacts would be without reference to any administrative boundary.

The assessment identifies that the following Landscape and Visual Impact at Date of Opening;

- 6 properties within 1km radius of the nearest turbine would be likely to experience significant impacts.
- 7 properties within 2.5km would experience significant impacts.
- The turbines would be visible at a greater distance from the occupants of properties in Ingleby Barwick (nearest properties located approximately 1.6km from nearest turbine), but generally only from upstairs windows
- The Turbines would be visible to travellers in vehicles using the local and strategic highway (A19T) network and from cyclist and walkers using near by cycleways and public rights of way.

### *Landscape Designations*

There are also no landscape designations which cover the site however the tip of the River Leven Special Landscape Area abuts the red line boundary of the application site. As none of the turbines encroach into the designated area the development proposals should not detract from the character of the area

Our assessment of cumulative impact is based on perceptual distances for wind farms outlined in PAN 45:Renewable Energy Technologies, which suggests the perceptual distances for a wind farm in an open landscape (based on 110m to tip turbine), as follows:

*0-2km Turbines Likely to be a prominent feature in the landscape;*

*2-5km Turbines Relatively prominent in the landscape;*

*5-15km Turbines only prominent in clear visibility - seen as part of a wider landscape;*

*15-30km Turbines Only seen in very clear visibility - a minor element in the landscape*

Further landscape impacts were identified as the wind farm would be widely visible from a greater distance, in particular from the higher ridgeline of the Hambleton Hills. However, the impact on the key characteristics of the Tees Lowland would be locally adverse and not cause significant effect on the broader landscape or any local or national landscape designations. Views from properties and highway network in a broader area within the 16km study area would be possible but again these would not be significant.

As previously noted the wind farm would be visible from views afforded to travellers using the A19(T) located approximately 3km (at its nearest clear view point towards the turbines)

to the west of the proposed site. Whilst at this distance the wind farm could be considered prominent in the landscape its actual impact would be slight to moderately adverse due to the benefit of distance and intervening vegetation of hedgerows and trees and the topography of the road corridor with parts of the route in cuttings. The view and hence impact being reduced in time with the benefit of tree growth, in particular the recently planted Tees Forest plantations that abut this section of the A19(T).

The degree of cumulative impact of these wind farms when viewed from higher ground of the Hambleton Hills and within the North Yorkshire National Park are considered to be insignificant due to the benefit of distance approximately 10km (the nearest part of the National Park lying 6-7km from the proposed wind farm location) and angle of view i.e. looking down onto the turbines set within the generally flat topography of the wider landscape character of the Tees Lowlands.

#### *Access Tracks*

An access track to the North of the Hilton Seamer road would be acceptable in Landscape and Visual terms providing the existing hedgerows are not removed for the creation of increased sightlines. However, given that increased sightlines which are likely to be required, the submitted location of the access route would not be acceptable in L&V terms as the revised line of hedgerow which would be required to be replanted as part of the mitigation proposals would be out of character with the existing landscape. The existing hedgerows grow in close proximity to the road, following the gentle undulation and sweep of the road and surrounding topography.

These final access tracks should run where possible parallel to existing/proposed hedgerows to prevent the tracks becoming incongruous features in the landscape.

#### *Turbine cumulative effect - Mitigation*

The proposed location of the turbines so they are viewed as a cohesive group with no outliers from the most sensitive viewpoints is considered to be good practice. This would be reassessed as part of the discharge of condition for the micro siting of the tower positions.

The LVIA states that turbines should be located so they are viewed as a cohesive group with no outliers and avoiding views of overlapping (“clashing”) blades from the most sensitive viewpoints. Whilst the compact nature of the proposed development footprint has reduced the potential for any turbines to be viewed as outliers, views of overlapping blades would occur from several of the viewpoints selected for the production of photomontages, including from the road on western boundary (Viewpoint A), the footpath north of the site at reservoir (Viewpoint E) and Fox Covert Public House, High Leven (Viewpoint I). Whilst the likelihood of overlapping of turbines blades is contrary to the ES the visual impact can not increase in terms of L&V methodology and the proposed turbines on this site would remain a local but significant adverse impact.

#### *Summary of Landscape and Visual Impact Due to Construction*

Notwithstanding the submitted details and our Highway response the location of the access route would not be acceptable in Landscape and Visual Terms.

A revised traffic management plan to include details of the weight, width and height of the vehicles used to transport components to site, to avoid the true canopy extent (which will require accurate surveying on site) would, therefore, be required as part of any confirmation of preferred route. In particular, reference should be made to swept path analysis and any impact on trees canopies as a result of the height of vehicles/loads. The agreement of

preferred route should be conditioned as part of any consent. In addition, details of survey requirements and protection of trees shall be conditioned as part of any planning consent.

#### Seamer and Hilton Wind Action Group (SHWAG)

Durham Tees Valley Airport wont explain why the impact of the turbines on their radar system is manageable whilst have further advised that Peel Holdings is the majority owner of DTVA whose other business activities include 'Peel Windpower' which have interests in the development of wind farms.

Comments have been made in respect to the existing targets for renewable energy within the Regional Spatial Strategy and existing provision of renewable energy schemes within Tees Valley, referencing 4no. schemes, indicating that the total energy from these projects is 385.5MW which would well exceed the 2020 target for the Tees Valley and that they are acceptable to the general public as schemes and do not cause the problems created by on shore wind turbines such as noise, visual impacts, harm to wildlife etc.

#### Additional letters of Objection

Ivor Lewis 54 Scugdale Close, Yarm

No additional comments to those referenced within main report.

Julian Bouchier (email comments)

Bringing to the attention of SBC the danger posed in freezing conditions by turbines, submitting a research paper from the German Wind Energy Institute. The formula within the research paper suggest the maximum ice throw from the operational turbine would be 255m and 208m from a static turbine. The conclusion of the research paper submitted concludes that calculations methods and assumptions for ice fragments have to be improved and validated against observation, and furthermore, after the validation of the models, parameter studies have to be preformed in order to improve simplified assumptions for international standards and recommendations.

Mrs Welsh, 20 Manor Drive, Hilton,

Objections relating to visual effect on rural area, danger to migratory birds and interference caused to television reception whilst considers there is no benefit to be gained from these turbines which produce limited power and that the suitability of the prevailing winds has not been proven.

Colin Quinn, Email comment,

Has queried the recommended conditions of the Environmental Health Officer with regard to the proposed conditions and penalty clauses.

Mr Murphey, 6 Leconfield, Seamer

Objects on grounds of visual impact, reduction in house prices, impacts on wildlife, interference with radar, noise pollution, shadow flicker, fire risk, the proximity of the turbines to power lines, ice throw and the efficiency of turbines whilst comments on and government spending and renewable energy.

#### Additional letters of support

M Jackson, 16 High Street, Nafferton, East Yorkshire, YO25 4JR

It is essential we seriously cut our carbon emissions. I have read up on wind farms and have found that there is no noise problem from them, that livestock is unaffected; shadow flicker has never been an issue for me. I feel they do not disfigure the landscape but are very beautiful pieces of engineering. I have seen

them near airports abroad so clearly they are not a major problem for radar. Our landscape has always been affected by man with farming, electricity pylons and industry and this is no different.

## **Material Planning Considerations**

### **Special Nature Conservation Area**

The additional comments are noted from Durham Tees Valley Wildlife Trust in respect to the site of Special Nature Conservation Interest to the west of the site. This site is designated for its flora and fauna and taking into account the comments of DTVW and the wind turbines being located at its closest 550 m away, it is considered there would be no undue impacts on this area.

### **Renewable Energy Targets**

Objectors have commented on existing targets for renewable energy within the RSS and existing provision of renewable energy schemes within Tees Valley, siting the ones listed below.

- Teesside Energy from Waste at Haverton Hill. Operational 20MW facility. (Stockton)
- Sembcorp Utilities Wilton 10 Biomass Power Station. Operational 30MW. (Redcar and Cleveland)
- Teesside Renewable Energy Plant. 300MW facility. (Redcar and Cleveland)
- Teesside Offshore Wind Farm. 90MW facility. (Redcar and Cleveland)

The Teesside Energy from Waste Plant involves a mixed waste incineration process which is not classed as an eligible renewable energy source as defined by the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) and is therefore not considered to contribute to the 2010 and 2020 targets.

Sembcorp Wilton 10 scheme was a boiler replacement scheme which is in operation.

Teesside Renewable Energy Plant at Tees Dock (biomass powered generator) 300MW scheme has not yet gained approval and will be determined by the Sof S.

The Teesside Offshore wind farm (30 turbines) has been approved but not yet built whilst onshore development for this remains to require approval.

Corus Onshore Wind Farm site (18 Wind Turbines) was approved although the associated S106 agreement has not been signed.

Whilst the 48no. turbines approved offer potential provision for renewable energy, until the final turbine models, heights and productivity levels are established, their likely contribution to the Tees Valley targets is not specific. Furthermore, they require further approvals and agreements prior to being able to commence on site.

The RSS requirement for 138MW (10%) by 2010 and 20% by 2020 is to facilitate the achievement of these by the dates specified, which at the moment has not been achieved within the Tees Valley.

### **Ice Throw**

Whilst additional comments and information is noted, the guidance contained within the companion guide to PPS 22 has been referred to and relied upon within the main report in respect to ice throw. The issue of ice throw from moving turbines could be dealt with by a control system to prevent the turbines operating when there is an ice build up on the blades. With regard to ice throw from static turbines, this would not be significantly different from ice formation on structures such as pylons or tall buildings which themselves are located much closer to public areas or rights of way. In view the guidance contained within PPS 22 as detailed within the main report and in view of the turbines being set away from the public rights of way, it is considered that risk of ice throw would not be a significant issue.

### **Other Matters**

Were the application to be recommended for approval then the precise wording of the conditions recommended by Environmental Health and other consultees would be considered further. However, it remains to be considered that the issue of noise limitation from the turbines could effectively controlled by planning condition.

Comments made in respect to visual impacts, impacts on wildlife, interference to television signals, radar, house prices, fire risk, noise pollution and the viability of the turbines has been considered within the main report.

Updated comments from Urban Design are noted and it is considered that these comments are adequately addressed within the main report.

### **Recommendation**

That the application be determined as detailed within the main report.

### **Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services**

**Contact Officer Mr. Andrew Glossop**

**Telephone No 01642 527796**

**Email address [andrew.glossop@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.glossop@stockton.gov.uk)**

**Financial Implications – As report**

**Environmental Implications – As report**

**Legal Implications – As report**

**Community Safety Implications – As report**

**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 –**

Planning Application Reference No. 08/2372/EIS and accompanying documents.

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development and Companion Guide:

Planning and Climate Change

Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy

Planning Policy Guidance 24: Planning and Noise

Adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan (June 1997)  
Adopted Tees Valley Structure Plan (February 2004)  
Regional Spatial Strategy

**WARD AND WARD COUNCILLORS**

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Ingleby Barwick East</b>
<b>Ward Councillor</b>	<b>Councillor K C Faulks</b>
<b>Ward Councillor</b>	<b>Councillor D C Harrington</b>
<b>Ward Councillor</b>	<b>Councillor A M Larkin</b>