



SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL Planning & Highways Committee

Report of: Director of Regeneration and Development Services

Date: 03 September 2013

Subject: Planning application consultation from Barnsley Council about a proposed wind turbine at Sheepphouse Farm, Cubley

Author of Report: John Williamson 0114 2734944

Summary:

The proposed wind turbine would have a hub height of 52 metres and blades with a 27 metres radius giving a total height of 79 metres. It is proposed to be located on the hillside north of Stocksbridge

Reasons for Recommendations

The scale of the wind turbine is such that, where it will be visible, it will not dominate views, especially from the local conservation areas, where it is felt that the setting would not be harmed by views towards or from them. It would also not significantly impact on the surrounding areas and their local communities, much of which lies within the green belt as well as the urban area of Stocksbridge. As such there are no serious concerns over the impact of the proposal.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members note the report and agree that Barnsley MDC be informed that the Local Planning Authority have no objection to this proposal subject to a condition requiring an alternative TV service to be provided where the wind turbine affects TV reception

Background Papers:

Category of Report: OPEN

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A WIND TURBINE
SHEEPHOUSE FARM, MORTIMER ROAD, PENISTONE
APPLICATION 2013-0784
CONSULTATION FROM BARNESLEY MDC

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A planning application, including an Environmental Statement, has been submitted to Barnsley MDC for the erection of a 900kW wind turbine, with a height to hub of 52 metres and with a 27 metre rotor radius giving a height to blade tip of 79 metres.
- 1.2 This application also includes a proposal for a 60 metre high meteorological mast to be erected for 2 years prior to the construction of the wind turbine in order to obtain detailed wind data from the site.
- 1.3 The turbine is required to power a dairy unit at the farm, replacing a generator, and any surplus energy generated will be fed back into the National Grid.
- 1.4 The turbine is to be located at Sheephouse Farm, approximately 1 kilometre north of the nearest built up area of Stocksbridge and about the same distance from Midhopstones. The turbine is close to and will be visible from Stocksbridge and its surrounds within the City Council area and accordingly, Barnsley MDC have notified the City Council of the receipt of the application and requested comments.

2. NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY

- 2.1 The Government has a target of 15% of the UK energy supply to come from renewables by 2020.
- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraph 28), sets out the need to promote the development and diversification of agriculture and other land-based rural businesses.
- 2.3 The NPPF also sets out that Local Planning Authorities (LPA's) should help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and recognise the responsibility of all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable and low carbon sources.
(Paragraph 97)
- 2.4 When determining applications, LPA;s should not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and,

where the impacts are , or can be made acceptable, to approve the application. (Paragraph 98)

- 2.5 The Sheffield Unitary Development Plan Policy GE28 encourages the development of wind turbines, subject to the landscape impacts being kept to an acceptable level, particularly in Areas of High Landscape Value and areas conspicuous from the Peak Park, the impacts on living conditions on nearby residents not being significantly adversely affected, there being no harm to nature conservation sites, conservation areas, listed buildings or significant archaeological sites, and the removal of the equipment and site restoration when the equipment is removed.

3. REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 The application has been made to Barnsley MDC and neighbour notification and consultations have been carried out by them. A notification has been sent to Stocksbridge Town Council. Stocksbridge Community Forum and Bradfield Parish Council have been consulted.
- 3.2 In accordance with the procedure agreed with Barnsley Council previously, officers have identified additional areas to be notified of the application.
- 3.3 Neighbour letters have been requested to be sent, (on the Sheffield side) to residents in the Midhopestones, Upper Midhope and Langsett areas plus properties on Unsliven Road, Smithy Moor Avenue, Smithy Moor Lane, Cross Lane and New Hall Crescent..
- 3.4 Stocksbridge Ward and Town Councillors have been consulted.
- 3.5 A copy letter of an original from the Protect Sheepphouse Heights action group, sent to Barnsley Council, objecting to the proposal has been received The group have objected on the following grounds:
- 3.5.1 The planning application contains inaccuracies and misleading information which they are to comment on later. There is a strong implication that the ultimate aim of the application is to secure permission for a number of large turbines at the site rather than the single turbine implied in the application.
- 3.5.2 There has been no public consultation by the applicant prior to submission of the application.
- 3.5.3 The objectors believe that there have been closed meetings between the Parish Councils or individuals therefrom, which the objectors consider has compromised their position in respect of an unbiased opinion on

the proposal.

3.5.4 The objectors believe that financial inducements have been offered on an individual and community basis, which are also believed to have been discussed in closed meetings.

3.5.6 The application should be refused in order to preserve the beauty of the natural surroundings.

4. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

4.1 Landscape

4.1.1 The wind turbine will be visible as a feature in the landscape from substantial distances. There are other vertical elements in the landscape on the northern valley side such as electricity pylons. The turbine will have an impact above and beyond this. The landscape impact can be appreciated in more detail in respect of the effect on the local conservation areas and Green Belt as discussed below.

4.2 Conservation Areas

Midhapestones CA

4.2.1 The application includes a viewpoint diagram that indicates the view of the turbine and mast as likely to be seen from within the Midhapestones Conservation Area (CA). The viewpoint is from the higher land to the South of Midhapestones and looks North East towards the turbine. (See Appendix 1)

4.2.2 There is a line of electricity pylons that can be seen on the horizon. The proposed wind turbine would be located in a position where it would be seen relatively close to a pylon. To the blade tip, it would appear slightly taller than the pylon. As the wind turbine will be seen in conjunction with the pylons, it is not considered that there will be a significantly harmful effect on the character and appearance of the Midhapestones CA or the visual amenities of the locality.

4.2.3 Lower down the valley side, close to the junction of the A616 with Mortimer Road, the visibility of the wind turbine will be restricted due to the height of the trees alongside the A616.

4.2.4 It is considered that the views from Midhapestones CA will not be adversely affected by the turbine deployed on the hillside. Views towards Midhapestones will not generally include the wind turbine and so these views will also not be significantly harmed.

Langsett CA

4.2.5 The wind turbine will be seen in some views east from Gilbert Hill which is to the North of Langsett, and at a distance of approximately 3.8 kilometres from the application site. At this distance, the wind

turbine will appear small and will be seen within a group of electricity pylons and so will not create a prominent feature on the horizon

- 4.2.6 Further down the hill into Langsett and the Conservation Area itself, the wind turbine will not be readily visible due to the Conservation Area being in the valley bottom and the intervening landscape and buildings.
- 4.2.7 Further up the valley side to the South of Langsett, and outside the Conservation Area, the wind turbine will be visible but at the distance involved, will not form a significant feature on the horizon.
- 4.2.8 Views towards Langsett CA will not be significantly adversely affected so the character and appearance of the CA will not be harmed..

Bolsterstone CA

- 4.2.9 Views North West from Bolsterstone CA will also include the wind turbine. It will be seen on the skyline at a distance of just over 4 kilometres. This distance does mean that the wind turbine will appear relatively small, but it will be seen as a standalone feature on the horizon as there are no intervening features that break the skyline close to it. The electricity pylons that do breach the horizon are separated from the structure and are not viewed directly in conjunction with the wind turbine.
- 4.2.9 Although seen as a standalone feature, the relatively small size of the wind turbine when viewed from Bolsterstone will not cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the CA and will not significantly harm wider views of the landscape when viewed from Bolsterstone. (Appendix 2)

4.3 Green Belt

- 4.3.1 Outside of the built up area of Stocksbridge, the land is mainly identified as Green Belt.(GB) As the wind turbine would be seen from views within the GB, the effect on its character and appearance has to be considered. Unitary Development Plan policy GE4 sets out that the scale and character of any development conspicuous from it should be in keeping with the area and, where possible conserve and enhance the landscape and natural environment.
- 4.3.2 The Sheffield Local Plan Core Strategy (CS) seeks to protect the Green Belt and states, in policy CS 71, countryside and open land around the built up areas will be safeguarded by maintaining the Green Belt.
- 4.3.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also seeks to protect the Green Belt and confirms that elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development and would need to demonstrate very special circumstances in order to proceed. This will be a matter for Barnsley Council to address.

4.3.4 The main issue for the Local Planning Authority to consider is whether the proposed wind turbine will cause harm to the character and openness of the Green Belt within Sheffield.

4.3.5 In this respect, view towards the Sheffield Green Belt would not be adversely affected by the installation of the wind turbine. It is at such a distance that it will not form a substantial feature in any views.

4.3.6 The wind turbine will be visible in many views looking out from the Sheffield GB but generally, it will be at such a distance that, although it will be seen above the horizon, it will not be significantly intrusive. The view from Underbank from outside the GB but looking over it is discussed below.

4.4 Other Areas

4.4.1 The wind turbine will be seen from other locations in and around Stocksbridge. At Smithy Moor Lane, by Underbank Reservoir, the wind turbine will be 1.4 kilometres away and will be seen on the horizon. At this distance, the wind turbine will be a relatively large feature but will be seen between the line of electricity pylons and as such it is not considered to cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area (Appendix 3).

4.4.2 Within Stocksbridge itself, the horizon is masked from many views by buildings. Where views are available, such as from higher up the valley side, the distance it is viewed from will mean the wind turbine will be a small feature and will not harm the visual amenity of the area.

4.5 Highways

4.5.1 The main impact of the proposed wind turbine on the highway network will be during the construction phase. The developers propose to use haulage routes, especially for abnormal loads, that do not require journeys within the City Council boundaries.

4.6 Noise

4.6.1 The Environmental Statement contains a noise report examining the potential noise levels at a number of noise sensitive locations, including Underbank within the City Council area.

4.6.2 The report compared these to the relevant criteria as set out in ETSU-R-97. (ETSU-R-97: The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms. This provides a framework for the assessment and rating of noise from wind energy developments. It has become the accepted standard for wind farm developments in the UK.)

4.6.3 At the time of the assessment, the predicted noise levels of the wind turbine were expected to be below the day time and night time noise criteria recommended in ETSU-R-97 to ensure a noise problem does not occur. At the distances involved, noise is unlikely to be a problem within the City Council area.

4.7 Other issues

TV reception

4.7.1 No information has been provided to indicate what effect, if any, the proposal would have on television reception in the area. In the absence of such information, there is a concern that interference could occur. Normally, where this may be possible, a planning condition is attached to any permission given requiring the developer to provide an alternative service within a specific timescale.

Shadow Flicker

4.7.2 Shadow flicker effects occur within 10 rotor diameters of the turbine and within 130° either side of north. None of the City Council area lies within these parameters and so shadow flicker is not considered to be a problem

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no equal opportunities implications arising from this report.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The provision of a renewable energy source is in line with national, regional and local policy in principle. The development will provide a source of renewable energy helping to reduce carbon emissions

8. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

8.1 The proposal would provide for a renewable energy source, contributing to the reduction in carbon emissions and can be supported in principle.

8.2 The turbine is large with a 52 metre hub height and a rotor radius of 27 metres giving a total height to blade tip of 79 metres, but it is smaller than the turbines previously proposed at Sheephouse Heights (which proposed 5 wind turbines with a hub height of 80 metres and 45 metre rotor radius giving a total height of 125 metres and which were refused permission by Barnsley Council).

- 8.3 The theoretical zone of visibility of the wind turbine indicates that it will be visible from a significant area around Stocksbridge and beyond. This does not, however, take into account any intervening landscape features or buildings. The scale of the turbine is such that where it will be visible, it will not dominate views, especially from the local conservation areas, where it is felt that the setting would not be harmed by views towards or from them. It would also not significantly impact on the surrounding areas and their local communities, much of which lies within the green belt as well as the urban area of Stocksbridge. As such there are no serious concerns over the impact of the proposal.
- 8.4 It is recommended that Members note the above mentioned comments on the proposed development and agree that Barnsley MDC be informed that the Local Planning Authority have no objection to this proposal subject to a condition requiring an alternative TV service to be provided where the wind turbine affects TV reception.

Location Plan



David Caulfield
Head of Planning Service

13 August 2013

Appendix 1

Extract from the Environmental Statement indicating the view from Midhopestones
Midhopestones



Viewpoint Grid Ref: SK 23530 95642
Camera Elevation Above Ground: 7.6m
Rotor Diameter: 50m
Hub Height: 50m
Distance to Turbine: 1.50km

This photomontage should be viewed at approximately 327cm unless stated to the contrary.

Spring Brook Wind Turbine
Figure 5.3
Viewpoint 1 - View from Midhopestones

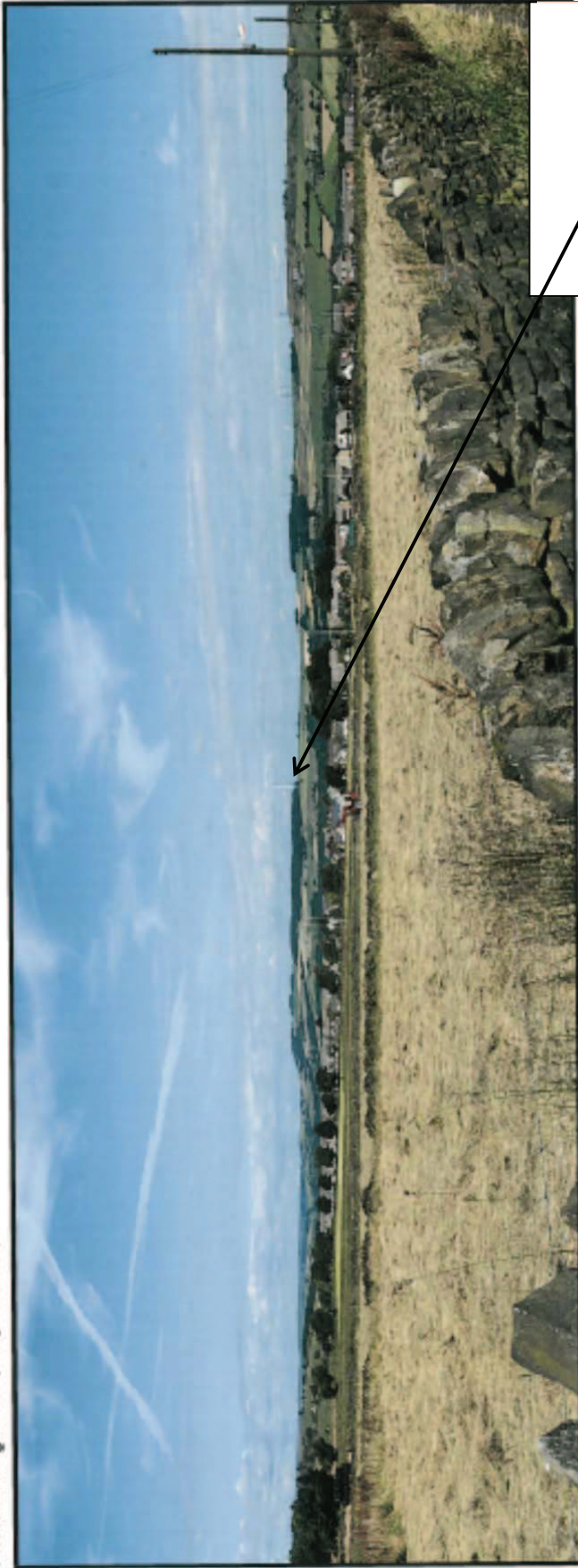


Appendix 2

Extract from the Environmental Statement indicating the view from Bolsterstone

Bolsterstone

Photomontage View (70 degs field of view)



Viewpoint Grid Ref. BS 07115 (M607)
Camera Orientation Above Ground: 1.8m
Riser Diameter: 5m
Hub Height: 23m
Distance to Turbine: 4.05km

This photomontage should be viewed at approximately 327mm when printed at A3.

Spring Brook Wind Turbine

Figure 5.11

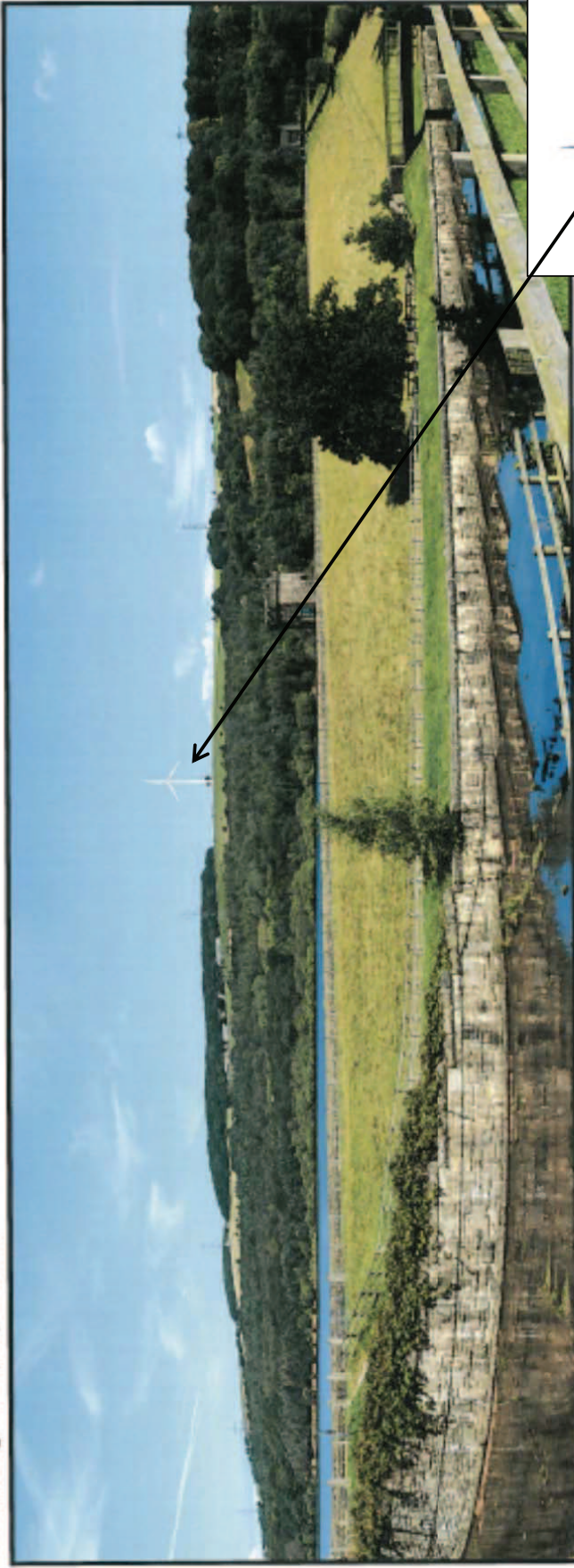
Viewpoint 5 - View from Public Footpath at Bolsterstone



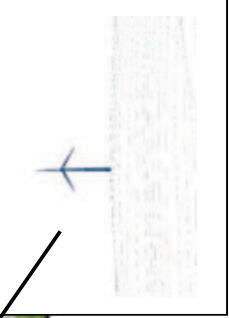
Appendix 3

Extract from the Environmental Statement indicating the view from Underbank Reservoir
Underbank Reservoir

Photomontage View (70 degree field of view)



Viewpoint Location Map reproduced from the Cleveleys Survey Map with the permission of the Controller of HM Land Registry (Map: 8-Cleveley (north)) Reference number: 200211879



Viewpoint Grid Ref: SK 25250 99920
Camera Elevation Above Ground: 1.0m
Ruler Orientation: 04m
Hub Height: 80m
Distance to Turbine: 1.41km

The photomontage should be viewed at approximately 327mm when printed at A3.

Spring Brook Wind Turbine

Figure 5.5

Viewpoint 2 - View from Underbank Reservoir near
Smittry Moor Lane



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