

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING COMMITTEE

8TH JUNE 2010

**Planning Consultation by South Staffordshire Council
Erection of two wind turbines (132m high to tip) plus underground
cabling, access track, substation compound, temporary site compound
and ancillary development at
ROUNDHILL SEWAGE FARM WHITTINGTON HALL LANE
KINVER STOURBRIDGE SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE
10/0232/LPAC**

OPEN	
DIRECTOR:	Director of Planning and Regulatory Services
CONTACT OFFICER:	Paul Round - Extension 2516 Paul.Round@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	None

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To make a decision on the Planning Consultation received from South Staffordshire Council for development at Roundhill Sewage Works.

2. RECOMENDATION

- 2.1 **The Committee is asked to resolve to respond to the consultation by offering NO OBJECTIONS to the application.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The District Council received a planning consultation from South Staffordshire Council on 22nd April 2010. The consultation relates to development located just outside the District boundary to the north-east of Caunsall at Roundhill Sewage Works.
- 3.2 The site is a large sewage plant operated by Severn Trent Water, who is the applicant in this case. The site is located within the West Midlands Green Belt.
- 3.3 The application proposes the erection of 2 wind turbines within the site and associated roadways and infrastructure. The turbines measure 80m to the hub, with a 52m blade length, giving a total height when the blades are upright of 132m. The total diameter of the blades is 104m.

- 3.4 The consultation process allows Wyre Forest District Council to have an input into the determination process of South Staffordshire Council by providing comments of how the scheme impact on Wyre Forest.
- 3.5 All Members of the Council were informed of the application upon receipt of the formal consultation from South Staffordshire Council. At the time of writing no comments have been made on the proposal.
- 3.6 Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council have also been invited to provide comments to inform this report. Unfortunately as their meeting takes place on 1st June (i.e. after the deadline for the completion of this report) any comments the Parish Council makes will be provided on the Addenda & Corrections Sheet.

4. COMMENTS ON THE CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The application has been submitted with extensive documentation and an Environmental Statement.
- 4.2 It is for South Staffordshire Council to consider the appropriateness of the development in the Green Belt and the normal planning considerations in this type of development. The consultation process allows Wyre Forest District Council to comment on the impacts on the area which relate to visual and noise impact considerations.

Visual Impact

- 4.3 A visualisation study has been undertaken to help assess the impact of the development from various vantage points around the region. Four have been specially done within Wyre Forest District highlighting key views from the north, south, east and west. These are considered in turn.

Caunsall

- 4.4 Views have been taken from the Caunsall Road looking over the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal, a Conservation Area. The Conservation Officer has been consulted and has responded as follows:

Whilst the subject of sustainable energy is an emotive subject, in particular the erection, appearance and impact of wind turbines, it is also widely recognised as an essential way forward in supplying energy to an increasing demand, with serious attempts at reducing CO2 emissions. In view of this, the support for looking seriously at new methods of energy supply has had considerable support from Central Government, and new policies and governmental guidelines have emerged over recent times, even incorporating these into areas such as the historic environment (PPS5), where the need for sustainable energy has to be balanced with the impact on the [historic] environment.

In understanding the requirements of the application, one also has to understand the limitations and expectations of energy produced

through wind, via such turbines as are proposed. Whilst wind is nearly always around us in some form, the speed of wind required to produce sufficient power is generally unavailable as a constant, but instead is variable, and generally needing some form of “battery” or storage, or the facility to sell this back to the National Grid during times of high produce, to exchange for power at periods of low wind (and hence low or nil energy production).

There has also been much argument over the aesthetics of such installations, but this has to be considered an extremely subjective argument on both sides.

In view of the increasing requirements for considering sustainable energy, not just in terms of local supply, but in terms of national supply, it is my professional view that this needs to be balanced against the impact the installation of such turbines will have on the environment, both physically and aesthetically. In my opinion, whilst there may be a view that these turbines will damage the aesthetics of the area, there is an equal argument that they will create important new focal points for the area - I do not feel that they will have any detrimental impact on the historic environment of the District, and thus recommend support for them.

- 4.5 It is clear from the visualisations that whilst Caunsall is the closest point of the District to the development being 2800m away, due to the terrain and the vegetation that surrounds the waterways, only small part of the turbines will be visible. In this location it is considered that there will be some impact, but this will be minimal and will not detract from the quality of the landscape. In this regard, the views of the Conservation Officer on the impact on the Conservation Area, are supported.

Monarch’s Way, Barnettbrook/Woodrow

- 4.6 This location is 7822m (7.8km) from the nearest turbine to the east of the District and offers a very small glimpse of the hub and blades of the turbine, most of which will be masked by existing vegetation. As such from this location it is concluded that no harm will ensue.

North Worcestershire Path, Shatterford/Kingsford

- 4.7 This location is 6697m (6.7km) from the nearest turbine and is to the west of the district. Again only the hub and blades will be visible as the remaining parts of the turbines will be masked by Kinver Edge. Due to the relatively small amount of the turbines visible and the distances involved, once again no harm will arise from this location.

Haberly Road, Kidderminster

- 4.8 This location is 8681m (8.7km) from the nearest turbine to the south of the District. This is probably the most open aspect considered as part of the study. The turbines will be seen across Kidderminster and will have an impact. However it is judged that due to the distances involved that the proposed turbines will not detract unduly from landscape, and whilst becoming prominent features will create only a relatively small degree of harm and are not significant enough to warrant objecting to this application.

Shadow Flicker

- 4.9 It is acknowledged in the companion guide to PPS22 that whilst problems caused by shadow flicker are rare, applicants should provide an analysis to quantify the effect at the particular location. This has been completed and it is aptly demonstrated that no properties within Wyre Forest will be affected by Shadow Flicker.

Noise

- 4.10 A noise assessment has been carried out on a worse case scenario basis and has produced noise readings for various properties within South Staffordshire. No properties in Wyre Forest have been included. The report clearly demonstrates that noise at the boundary of Wyre Forest will be less than 35 db(A). The companion guide to PPS22 recommends that maximum noise levels from wind farms of 43db(A) at night time and includes the following table as a comparison of noise levels.

Source/Activity	Indicative Noise Level dB(A)
Threshold of Pain	140
Jet aircraft at 250 m	105
Pneumatic drill at 7 m	95
Truck at 30 mph at 100 m	65
Busy general office	60
Car at 40 mph at 100 m	55
Wind farm at 350 m	35-45
Quiet bedroom	20
Rural night-time background	20-40
Threshold of hearing	0

- 4.11 On the basis that no part of Wyre Forest District will be exposed to excessive noise levels as detailed above, it is considered that there will be no adverse impact on the District from noise.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal or policy implications

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Having considered the major considerations for Wyre Forest as set out above, it is concluded that in respect of visual and noise considerations that no significant adverse impact will occur as a result of the proposed development. On this basis it is concluded that a **NO OBJECTION** response should be returned to South Staffordshire Council.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 There are no risk management issues.

9. CONSULTEES

- 9.1 The Conservation Officer, Wolverley & Cookley Parish Council and all Members of the Council (at the time of receipt of the formal consultation) have been consulted.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Planning Consultation 10/0232/LPAC
South Staffordshire Council Planning Application 10/00256/FUL
South Staffordshire Local Plan
Staffordshire County Structure Plan
Regional Spatial Strategy
Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development
Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change -
Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1
Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts
Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment
Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
Planning Policy Guidance 24: Planning and Noise
Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy
Planning for Renewable Energy Companion Guide to PPS22