

14 November 2013

Agenda Item: 4 c

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR POLICY, PLANNING AND
CORPORATE**

**STRATEGIC PLANNING OBSERVATIONS ON A SINGLE WIND TURBINE,
ON LAND SOUTH WEST OF WHATTON STUD, MANOR LANE, WHATTON**

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Committee ratification for comments set out in this report which were sent to Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC) on the 18th October 2013 in response to the request for strategic planning observations on the above planning application for the erection a single wind turbine on Land south west of Whatton Manor Stud, Manor Lane, Whatton, Nottinghamshire.

Information and Advice

2. Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) has been asked for strategic planning observations on the application and this report compiles responses from Departments involved in providing comments and observations on such matters. Officer comments have already been sent to Rushcliffe Borough Council in their role as determining planning authority for this application. A site plan is provided at Appendix 1.
3. The planning application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement, Design and Access Statement and a range of other supporting documents. This report is based on the information submitted with the application in the context of national, regional and local policy.
4. The application site lies within open countryside and is not in the Green Belt.

Description of the Proposal

5. The planning application seeks permission for the erection of a single wind turbine measuring 50m to the hub and 77m to the blade tip. The turbine would be free standing and the hub would be positioned on a tubular steel tower. The turbine would be of a three bladed horizontal axis propeller design, with a blade length of 27m and a total diameter of 54m. Appendix 2 chart illustrates the height of the proposed wind turbine in terms of other surrounding landmarks on the landscape.

6. The blades and the hub of the turbine will be constructed from a glass fibre and will be finished in a light grey. The turbine will be set on a 657.12m³ concrete foundation measuring 14.8m in length and width and 3m in depth. The turbine will connect into the nation grid through a three phase power line located adjacent to the disused railway line to the west of the site and all cabling will be underground.

National Planning Policy Context

7. There are clear aims and policies at a national strategic level that underline the need to meet renewable energy targets. The Governments renewable energy target seeks to generate 10% of UK electricity from renewable sources by 2010, its aspiration by 2020 is 20%. As a minimum, the UK must meet its legally binding target of 15% by 2020 as set out in the EU Renewable Energy Directive.
8. Planning Practice Guidance for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy (July 2013) seeks to ensure that proposals for wind turbines are assessed against their impact upon a range of factors including cumulative impact, safety, ecology, heritage assets, landscape and community benefit.

Rushcliffe Local Plan

9. Rushcliffe Borough Council has formally adopted a Non-Statutory Replacement Local Plan (NSLP) and has determined that it carries significant weight in determining planning applications. This is following the abandonment of their Local Plan process.
10. The following policies are considered to be of relevance in the determination of this planning application; Policy EN20 seeks to restrict development in the open countryside, except for rural activities and other uses appropriate to the countryside and Policy EN24 which seeks to promote renewable energy, other than where sites have nationally recognised designations; and ensuring that location and design minimise increases in ambient noise levels and adverse impact on visual or residential amenity.

Rushcliffe Core Strategy

11. The Rushcliffe Core Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State in October 2012. Policy 1 'Climate Change' seeks to ensure that new development proposals reduce carbon emissions, adopt to climate change and contribute to national and local renewable energy targets. The onus is placed upon the applicant to ensure that their proposal conforms with the criteria set out in the policy and that it would not cause harm to the natural or built environment.

Strategic Planning Issues

Highways

12. The County Council does not wish to raise any strategic planning issues in relation to Highways for this proposal.

Landscape and Visual Impact

13. The Landscape Team are not able to comment fully on the proposal as it is considered that insufficient information has been submitted in support of the proposal. It is requested that the following information is provided:

- The applicant should reconsider the degree of significance assessed for Viewpoint 2
Include additional viewpoints from adjacent high sensitivity residential receptors (2 no) and closest Bridleway (BW1 Langar cum Barnstone)
- The applicant should determine significance of physical impacts, the applicant should also assess the landscape sensitivity of the study area as well as the site itself.

14. Detailed landscape and visual impact comments are set out in Appendix 3.

Ecology

15. The proposals do not give rise to any significant direct ecological impact. Impacts on bats have been specifically considered, and whilst no significant impacts on bats are predicted, limitations within the survey methodology should be noted. In order to minimise impacts on bats, the turbine needs to be micro-sited such that it is a minimum distance (as specified above) from the nearest habitat features.

16. Detailed ecological comments are contained in Appendix 4.

Cumulative Impact considerations

17. An application for two wind turbines at Sibthorpe was refused by Rushcliffe Borough Council in April 2013 and an application for an 87.5m high wind turbine in East Bridgford is pending a decision.

18. In combination with this proposed development, the proposals outlined above are not considered to have any effects in terms of cumulative impacts.

Rights of Way

19. There are a number of rights of way in the area (see Appendix 5). The County Council's main concern relates to the access to the site which will cross the footpath just before the barn near to the turbine location. It is requested that the applicant/contractors ensure that the public are safe to still use the footpath while the construction works are being undertaken. This may include appropriate signage for both the public and the construction staff to be aware of each other and that no obstructions are placed across the path to hinder the walker crossing the track.

20. Detailed Rights of Way comments are contained at Appendix 6.

Overall Conclusions

21. The County Council does not wish to raise any strategic planning objections in relation to highways .
22. The Landscape Team are not able to comment fully on the proposal as it is considered that insufficient information has been submitted in support of the proposal.
23. The proposals do not give rise to any significant direct ecological impact. Impacts on bats have been specifically considered, and whilst no significant impacts on bats are predicted, limitations within the survey methodology should be noted. In order to minimise impacts on bats, the turbine needs to be micro-sited such that it is a minimum distance (as specified above) from the nearest habitat features.
24. In combination with this proposed development, the proposals outlined above are not considered to have any effects in terms of cumulative impacts.
25. The County Council's main concern relates to the access to the site which will cross the footpath just before the barn near to the turbine location.

Other Options Considered

26. This report considers all of the relevant issues in relation to the above planning applications which have led to the recommendations, as set out below. Alternative options considered could have been to express no or full support for the application.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

27. From an ecological perspective the proposal appears unlikely to result in any significant ecological impact.
28. The County Council raises concerns in relation to the direct impacts on the landscape and would wish to see additional information provided in support of the proposal.
29. The County Council considers there to be insufficient information relating to the impacts of the proposal on the historic environment and does not support this element of the proposal.

Statutory and Policy Implications

30. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

31. There are no direct financial implications.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

32. There are no direct implications for Sustainability and the Environment

RECOMMENDATION/S

1) That Rushcliffe Borough Council be advised that the development is supported in principle as it is recognised that significant weight is given to renewable energy at a National and strategic planning level.

2) Concerns are raised in relation to landscape matters and the impacts of the proposal on the historic environment.

Jayne Francis-Ward

Corporate Director, Policy, Planning and Corporate Services

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Nina Wilson, Principal Planning Officer, Planning Policy Team, ext 0115 977 3793

Constitutional Comments (NAB 21.10.13)

33. Environment and Sustainability Committee has authority to consider and approve the recommendations set out in this report by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SEM 23/10/13)

34. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

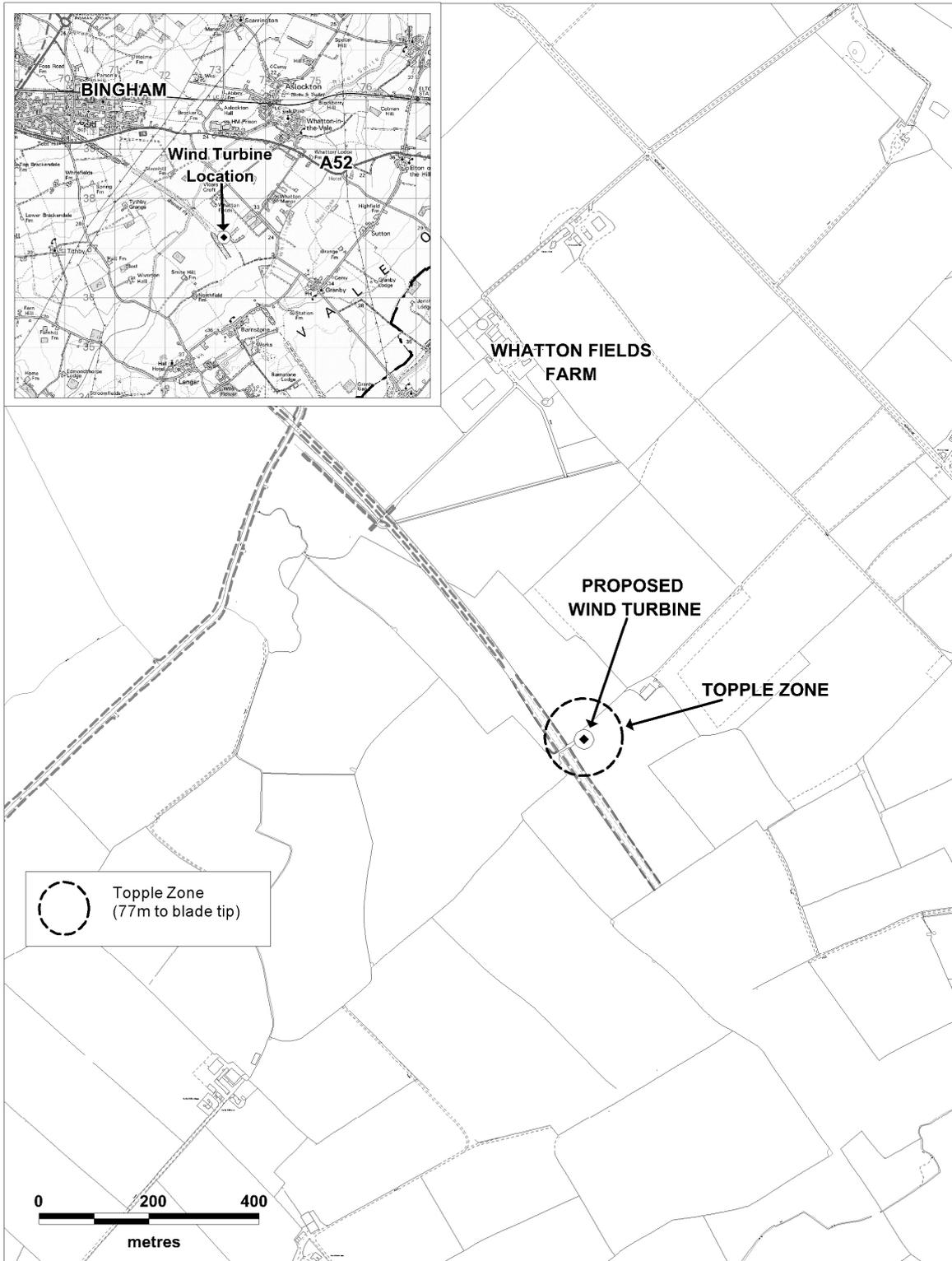
Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

Bingham - Councillor Martin Suthers OBE

Cotgrave - Councillor Richard Butler

Appendix 1 – Site Location Plan



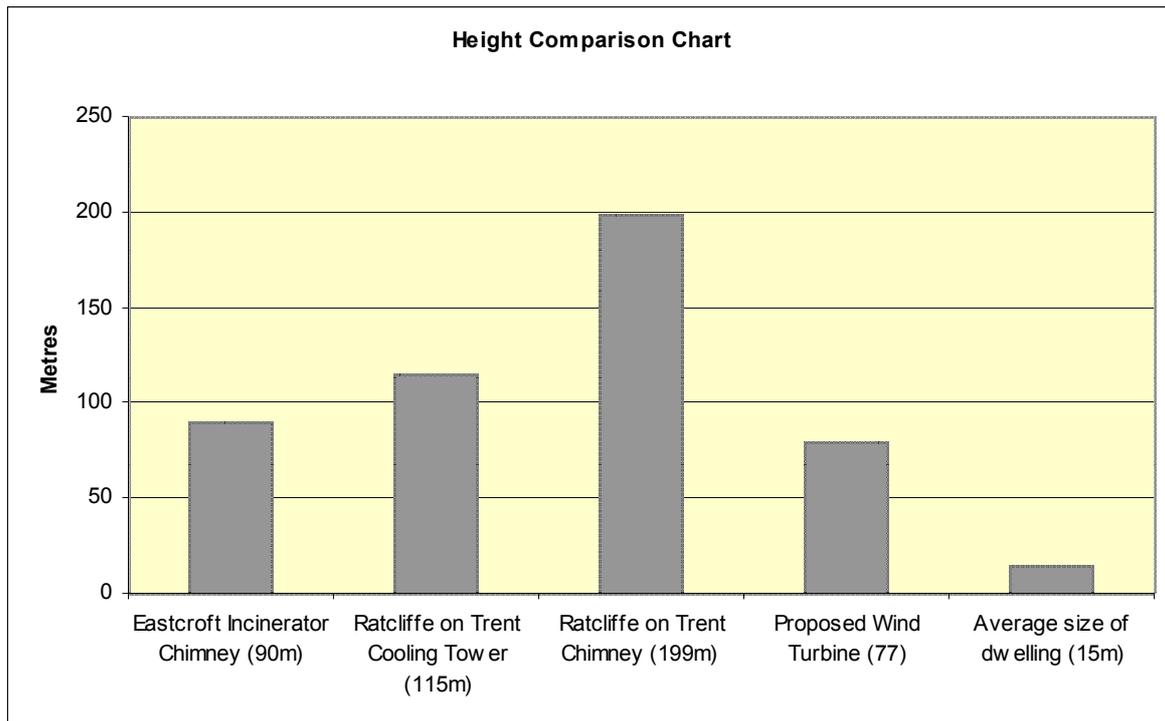

 Trent Bridge House, Fox Road
 Nottinghamshire West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 6BJ
 County Council Tel: 0115 982 3823

Erection of 1 no. 500kw wind turbine measuring 50m to the hub
 and 77m to the blade tip. Land South West Of Whatton Manor Stud,
 Manor Lane, Whatton, Nottinghamshire.
 Planning Application No. 13/01730/FUL


 Scale 1:10,000
 Produced by: JW
 Date: NOV 2013

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Appendix 2 – Height Comparison Chart



Appendix 3 - Detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Comments

PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 2013/01730/FUL

LOCATION: Whatton Manor Stud, Whatton in the Vale
PROPOSAL: Erection of single 77 metre wind turbine and other ancillary development

Thank you for asking the landscape team to comment on the above application. These are the comments of the landscape team only and separate comments will be provided on noise issues by David Collins. The Landscape Team have considered the following documents in order to make these comments:-

- **Application Form**
- **Site Location Plans including plans of turbine and foundations**
- **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Influence- cla ltd – August 13 Final**
- **Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement – Fisher German – August 2013**
- **Abnormal load routeing assessment - SKM Colin Buchanan – March 2013**

The following were considered for information only and no comments are provided:-

- **Ecological Survey**
- **Statement of Community Involvement**

The full comments on landscape and visual impact issues are included in the attached Appendix A, but a summary of the NCC conclusions is provided below:-

To summarise the conclusions of the report :-

- **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Influence- cla ltd – August 2013**

Viewpoints – The applicant should reconsider the degree of significance assessed for Viewpoint 2

Include additional viewpoints from adjacent high sensitivity residential receptors (2 no) and closest Bridleway (BW1 Langar cum Barnstone)

Landscape effects – The applicant should determine significance of physical impacts, the applicant should also assess the landscape sensitivity of the study area as well as the site itself.

Summary and Conclusions – to be amended when the above information has been included

Minor amendments to aid clarity of the report as detailed in Appendix A to be included

- **Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement – Fisher German – August 2013**

Make amendments to aid clarity where cross referenced with LVIA report

- **Abnormal load routeing assessment - SKM Colin Buchanan – March 2013 – No comments**

In summary the Landscape Team are not able to comment fully on the proposal until the above information is provided by the applicant, once this is provided we will consider the relevant reports again.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Influence-cla Ltd – August 2013

1.0 Introduction

Section 1.1 Outline - To the third paragraph should be added the following additional information – ‘... the village of Langar 2.5 km to the south west, and the smaller settlements of Tithby 3.3 km to the west and Elton on the Hill 4 km to the north west. The villages of Cropwell Butler and Colston Bassett are also 5km from the site as well as the smaller settlements of Scarrington and Plungar

2.0 Planning Context

Relevant Policy is listed, including NPPF, RBCSLP and all designated sites within the study area.

3.0 Methodology

The guidance referred to is appropriate to the application and the methodology follows best practice. It is accepted that the GLIVA second edition is referred to as opposed to the third edition which was only published during the production of this landscape and visual impact assessment. The method of illustrating the Zone of Theoretical Visibility is accepted as best practice. The study area has been defined as a 5 km radius which is acceptable.

Landscape assessment methodology

A description of the degree of Landscape Sensitivity has been included, as well as the degrees of magnitude of Landscape Impact.

Visual assessment methodology

A description of the degree of Visual Sensitivity has been included, as well as the degrees of magnitude of Visual Impact.

It is noted that in Table 1, residential receptors are assessed as high visual sensitivity receptors, users of local PRoWs as medium visual sensitivity receptors, and road users and people at their place of work as low visual sensitivity receptors which is accepted.

Viewpoints – these were determined by the consultants themselves, they were not agreed with RBC in advance as would be best practice. Ten viewpoints were assessed in June 2013 when trees were in full leaf, it would have been preferable to carry out this assessment after leaf fall to represent the worst case scenario in terms of visual impact. Also views from some of the closer residential receptors, agreed in Table 1 as of high sensitivity, have not been assessed, we would suggest that viewpoints from the following properties are also included, and from the closest Bridleway.

- View from Northfield Farm to the south west
- View from Whatton Manor to the north east
- View from Bridleway (Langar cum Barnstone BW1) to the south

Assessment of Significance of impacts

The description of each degree of significance of effects of landscape and visual impact has been included in the methodology. Those impacts which are significant in terms of the EA legislation are noted here, these are major and major/moderate landscape and visual impacts. It is also agreed that the landscape and visual impacts of wind turbine developments are generally considered adverse by the majority of people.

Cumulative Landscape and Visual Appraisal

The CZTV has been plotted for all consented applications, all constructed applications, and for those validated in the planning process, within a 15 mile radius of the proposed site, this represents 10 sites, this list includes all applications that NCC is aware of .

Cumulative impact refers to a number wind developments being seen in combination from a particular viewpoint, or a number of wind turbines being seen sequentially on a journey.

4.0 Landscape Baseline Assessment

4.1 Existing Landscape Classification and evaluation

The National, and County Level documents are correctly referred to, the regional landscape character document is not are referred to but this is not critical.

Section 4.1 page 19 - landscape condition should be described here as 'moderate – good' not 'moderate'

These paragraphs refer to the Nottinghamshire Landscape Character assessment in order to describe the character of the study area, this describes landscape condition, and strength of landscape character of the relevant and adjacent Policy Zones.

4.2 – 4.6 No comments

4.7 Landscape Sensitivity Classification and Evaluation

There is confusion in this section between the landscape sensitivity of the site and landscape sensitivity of the study area. After an assessment of the landscape character of the study area a rating is given by the applicant for the application site of low which we would agree with. However there is no landscape sensitivity assessment of the study area, we would suggest this is medium

A low landscape sensitivity is defined by the applicant as follows - '*A landscape of no distinctive character and scenic quality or is damaged, neglected or poor character and lacking scenic quality. A landscape not subject to any form of landscape designation*'

Whilst this may apply to the site itself the first sentence does not apply to the study area as a whole, it is important that this factor is not underestimated as it has a bearing on the overall assessment of landscape impact of the proposals.

4.8 No comments

4.9 Low landscape sensitivity – see above

5.0 Visual Assessment Baseline

5.1 General Views – As described with reference to section 3 above, the viewpoints have been selected by consultant, there has been no consultation with RBC.

. 'ten viewpoints have been recorded to illustrate the general range of visibility across the application site and surroundings, as well as viewpoints with the potential to incur most impact from the proposed development'.

Four photomontages have been produced, not three as noted on page 24.

5.2 Description of Views from Representative Viewpoints

NCC comments on the selected viewpoints based on a site visit on 7th October (with leaf fall underway)

Viewpoint 1- From PROW northwest of Manor Farm stud, looking south – south east towards to application site.

p.25 Receptors are identified as residents of an isolated farm, recreational users of PROW (which is noted in the design and access statement is 85 metres from the site) and people working outside. Visual sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as medium.

p 32 Magnitude of change is assessed as low adverse and temporary at the construction stage, and medium adverse, long term on completion

→ Moderate adverse visual effect

NCC are in agreement with this assessment which is not a significant impact in terms of the EA regulations.

Viewpoint 2 – From PROW public footpath at the junction of Granby Lane and Granby Hill, looking west towards to the application site

p.25 . Receptors are identified as recreational users of the PROW, outdoor workers, this description should also include vehicular travellers. Visual sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as medium. It should be added by the applicant that this is also an identified view in the RBC conservation area - Townscape assessment for Granby.

p 32 Magnitude of change is assessed as negligible adverse and temporary at the construction stage, and low adverse, long term on completion.

NCC are not in agreement with the applicant that the magnitude of change is low adverse at completion, it is at least medium adverse which would mean that the assessment of Minor/Moderate adverse visual effect is under estimated.

A moderate adverse impact is not a significant impact in terms of the EA regulations.

Viewpoint 3 – From PROW off Green Lane, next to residential dwellings on the western fringe of Granby, looking west towards the application site.

p.25 Receptors are identified as residents of Granby, and recreational users of PROW. Visual sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as high because it includes residents at a distance of less than 2 km This is also an identified view in the RBC conservation area - Townscape assessment for Granby

p 33 Magnitude of change is assessed as negligible adverse and temporary at the construction stage, and low adverse and long term on completion.

→ Moderate adverse visual effect

A moderate adverse impact is not a significant impact in terms of the EA regulations.

Viewpoint 4 - From the PROW to the edge of Barnstone, along Main Road looking north towards the application site

p.25 Receptors are identified as residents of Barnstone and road users. Visual sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as medium

p 33 Magnitude of change is assessed as low adverse and temporary at construction stage, and low adverse, long term on completion

→ Minor/ moderate adverse visual effect

NCC are in agreement with this assessment which is not a significant impact in terms of the EA regulations

Viewpoint 5 – Taken from PRow at the Northern edge of Langar Woods, looking north towards the application site

p.25 . Receptors are identified as road users, recreational users of PRow, and some residents of Langar . Visual sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as medium. This is also an identified view in the RBC conservation area - Townscape assessment for Langar

p 33 Magnitude of change is assessed as negligible adverse and temporary at the construction stage, and low adverse, long term on completion

→ minor/moderate adverse visual effect

NCC are in agreement with this assessment which is not a significant impact in terms of the EA regulations

Viewpoint 6 – From PRow opposite Belvoir Castle Car park, looking northwest towards the application site.

p.26 Receptors are identified as road users, recreational users of PRow, visitors using the car park at Belvoir Castle. Visual sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as medium.

p 34 Magnitude of change is assessed as negligible adverse and temporary at the construction stage, and negligible adverse, long term on completion

→ Negligible visual effect.

NCC are in agreement with this assessment which is not a significant impact in terms of the EA regulations

Viewpoint 7 – Taken from PRow to the south of Orston on the residential fringe, looking southwest towards the application site.

p.26 . Receptors are identified as recreational users of PRow and some residents of Orston. Visual sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as medium, although it includes residents, because of the distance from the site.

p 34 Magnitude of change is assessed as negligible adverse and temporary at the construction stage, and negligible adverse, long term on completion

→ Negligible visual effect

NCC are in agreement with this assessment which is not a significant impact in terms of the EA regulations

Viewpoint 8 - Taken from a PRow joining Abbey Lane, at the western edge of Aslockton, looking south towards the application site.

p.26 Receptors are identified as road users, residents of Aslockton, people working outside and recreational users of PRow. Visual sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as medium, although it includes residents, because of the distance from the site.

p 34 The magnitude of change is assessed as negligible adverse and temporary at the construction stage, and negligible adverse, long term on completion

→ Negligible visual effect

NCC are in agreement with this assessment which is not significant in terms of the EA regulations

Viewpoint 9 – From PRow at the eastern edge of Tithby, looking east towards the application site.

p.26 . Receptors are identified as recreational users, some residents of Tithby and farm workers. Visual sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as low, NCC this should be medium as it includes residents, but because of the distance from the site these are of a lower visual sensitivity, as with the Aslockton and Orston residents above.

p 35 Magnitude of change is assessed as negligible adverse and temporary at construction stage, and negligible adverse, long term on completion.

→ Negligible visual effect

This does not affect the assessment of negligible impact , which is not a significant impact in terms of the EA regulations

Viewpoint 10 – PRow on the northwest residential edge of Granby, looking northwest towards the application site

p.27 Receptors are identified as recreational users of PRow and some residents of Granby. This should also include vehicular users. Visual sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as medium.

p 35 Magnitude of change is assessed as negligible adverse and temporary at the construction stage, and low adverse, long term on completion

→Minor/Moderate adverse visual effect

NCC agrees with this assessment which is not significant in terms of the EA regulations

Summary of significance of visual impacts of viewpoints by consultant

- 1 Moderate adverse visual effect
- 2 Minor/Moderate adverse visual effect NCC moderate adverse visual effect
- 3 Moderate adverse visual effect
- 4 Minor/moderate adverse visual effect

- 5 Minor/moderate adverse visual effect
- 6 Negligible adverse visual effect
- 7 Negligible adverse visual effect
- 8 Negligible adverse visual effect
- 9 Negligible adverse visual effect
- 10 Minor/moderate adverse visual effect

5.3 Summary of visual sensitivity - agreed

6.0 Proposed development

6.1 Constraints and opportunities - This section states that there will be no direct impact to surrounding heritage assets and the indirect impact to heritage assets will be limited due to their predominantly constrained settings and distance between the application site and assets.

The applicant has taken into account identified views within the Townscape Appraisals produced by RBC for each of the Conservation Areas. Viewpoint 2 represents the identified view from Granby. Viewpoint 5 represents the identified view from Langar. The Whatton Townscape appraisal does not identify any particularly important views.

6.2 Potential landscape and visual impacts during construction

Summary

Temporary short term impact to the landscape character - agreed

Temporary short term impact to visual character - agreed

Adverse physical impact on the landscape - the degree of impact has not been quantified by the applicant. There is a description of the physical impacts of the scheme at this point, and the abnormal load routing assessment indicates that some hedgerow removal will be necessary, the dimensions of the turbine foundation are detailed in the Design and Access statement, but the degree of physical impact should be quantified in this section of the report.

6.3 Potential landscape and visual impacts on completion

Summary

Physical loss of agricultural land - agreed

Visual impact on residents, and users of PRowS – to this list should be added vehicular users – agreed

Low impact on landscape character – according to the definitions on page 15 this would be described as an ‘Inconsiderable or small change in the landscape and visual conditions’ whilst this may be correct for the wider study area in our opinion this is an underestimate for the immediate landscape and we feel the description as a ‘noteworthy or medium change’ is more appropriate.

7.0 Landscape Impact Assessment

7.1 Impacts on the landscape character of Aslockton Village Farmlands Policy Zone -Agreed

7.2 Impacts on natural characteristics – As section 6.2 there are no details of the degree/magnitude of landscape impact , which should be defined as negligible, low, medium or high

7.3 Impacts on cultural and social factors – no comments

7.4 Impacts on aesthetic and perceptual aspects – no comments

7.5 Residual Impact – summary - low adverse, and temporary during construction -

7.6 Residual Impact - summary - low adverse, and long term post completion – As discussed in section 6.3 NCC opinion is that this is an underestimate of the landscape impact for the local area.

8.0 Visual Impact Assessment

Magnitude of impacts – see earlier summary in section 5 - NCC opinion is that the residual impact for viewpoint 2 is under estimated .

9.0 Cumulative Appraisal

The applicant summary concludes that there is a low magnitude of cumulative impact on Aslockton Village Farmlands Policy Zone, there is limited inter visibility potentially of 7 – 10 wind farm developments within 5 km, including Whatton Manor stud but this inter visibility is restricted by vegetation. Potential successional views are possible but not considered significant. NCC are in agreement with this assessment.

10.0 Summary

10.1 Landscape Impact Assessment

Minor adverse and temporary during construction

Minor adverse and long term on completion – refer to comments in section 6.3
The degree of physical impact needs to be added by the applicant

10.2 Visual Impact Assessment

The main receptors of visual impacts have been identified

Viewpoint 1 Moderate adverse at the operational stage

Viewpoint 2 - 5 and 10 Minor/moderate operational stage - NCC - viewpoint 2 impact should be reconsidered

Viewpoint 6, 7, 8, 9 negligible at the operational stage

10.3 Conclusion

Local landscape impacts only, localised moderate visual impacts

No unacceptable(significant) visual or landscape impacts – NCC are in agreement with this assessment.

Planning statement including design and access statement – Fisher German – August 2013

3.0 Site and surrounding area

Paragraph 2.3 – this paragraph notes the nearest residential properties to the site, views from some of these, but not all, are assessed in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and this has been noted in our comments on the LVIA.

Paragraph 2.5 and paragraph 3.13 – these paragraphs note that the nearest Public Right of Way to the site runs along the north eastern boundary and is 85 metres away at the closest point, again this is not mentioned in the LVIA report

Paragraph 3.5 - Colour RAL 7035 noted

Paragraph 3.6 – The foundation of the turbine is 657.12 m³ in volume and 14.8 x 14.8 x 3 metre depth, this is the only mention of the dimensions of the foundation and this should be referred to when assessing the degree of physical impact in the LVIA.

4.0 Planning Policy

Paragraph 4.14 - The assessment concludes that the proposed turbine could be accommodated without ‘unacceptable landscape or visual effects’ this should say ‘without significant landscape or visual effects’ (significant in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment regulations)

5.0 Pre- application and EIA consultation – No comments

6.0 Potential environmental effects of the development

Paragraphs 6.1 – 6.9 - Any amendments to the LVIA should also be amended in this summary of the LVIA. In summary NCC think that the landscape impact has been underestimated and the visual impact needs to be considered from other close residential receptors and PROWs adjacent to the site. However overall we are in agreement that impacts are not significant in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment regulations, that is they are not greater than moderate/major adverse. The assessment of cumulative impact is accepted as accurate.

It is accepted that the visual impact from Belvoir Castle would not be significant.

7.0 Policy assessment – Applicant to amend this section to agree with the conclusions of LVIA

8.0 Conclusions – Applicant to amend this section to agree with the conclusions of LVIA

Delivery of proposed wind turbine to Whatton in the Vale – abnormal loads routeing assessment prepared by SKM Colin Buchanan – March 2013

This report mentions that vegetation clearance may be necessary to bring the turbine to the site on a flatbed trailer/low loader, this has not been cross referenced in the Landscape and Visual Impact assessment where the degree of physical landscape impact is assessed, this should be taken into account in the LVIA.

Helen Jones
Landscape Architect

Encs. – Appendix A – Detailed comments

Appendix 4 – Detailed Ecology Comments

Re: Erection of 1 no. 500kw wind turbine measuring 50m to the hub and 77m to the blade tip - land South West of Whatton Manor Stud, Manor Lane, Whatton (13/01730/FUL)

Thank you for consulting the Nature Conservation Unit of the Conservation Team on the above matter. We have the following comments regarding nature conservation issues:

General

- The proposals relate to the installation of a 500kW turbine with a hub height of 50m (77m to blade tip), and a rotor diameter of 54m.
- An Ecological Appraisal of the proposal has been carried out, dated July 2013, which provides details of a desktop study and field study.
- The location of the proposed turbine is an improved grassland field of low ecological value, bounded by hedgerows, an area of plantation broad-leaved woodland, and a disused railway line.
- No direct impacts on protected species are identified, although badgers are known from the wider area. The site also possesses some potential for bats and supports a number of common and widespread farmland birds (see below).
- As per the recommendations made in the Ecological Appraisal (at section 4.5), a condition should be used to require that ground works affecting field boundaries (e.g. for cabling) are checked for the presence of badger setts by an ecologist, prior to the commencement of development, and that excavations are left covered overnight or with a ramp at one end to allow any mammals which fall in to escape.

Birds

- No specific breeding or wintering bird surveys have been carried out; however the site represents a fairly typical area of intensively managed arable farmland in south Nottinghamshire.
- As such, the site does not meet any of the criteria outline in Natural England's Technical Information Note TIN069 (*Assessing the effects of onshore wind farms on birds*) where more detailed assessments are required; that is:
 - Locations where Schedule 1 and/or Annex 1 species are present in significant numbers, especially those which may be sensitive to wind farm effects
 - Locations within, or in the vicinity of, designated or proposed Special Protection Areas (SPAs), ornithological Ramsar Sites and ornithological SSSIs, again especially when used by species which may be sensitive to wind farm effects.
 - Known bird migration routes and local flight paths, wetland sites and other locations where potentially vulnerable species occur in relatively high concentrations.
 - Topographical features such as ridges and valleys and, on the coast, cliffs and headlands, which may funnel or otherwise concentrate bird flight activity.

-
- A barn owl box is located with the vicinity of the proposed turbine (although no evidence of use was noted). This species is not listed in TIN069 as being particularly sensitive to the impacts of wind turbines, as individuals tend to fly relatively low.
- A standard condition should be used to control vegetation clearance during the bird nesting season to ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

Bats

- A separate bat survey report has been produced, dated August 2013. The survey methodology employed involved the use of paired static recorders and a manual activity survey, both carried out in July.
- It should be noted that the level of survey effort is lower than that recommended in the Bat Conservation Trust's '*Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines 2nd Edition - Surveying for onshore wind farms*'. Rushcliffe Borough Council may wish to seek clarification as to why a lower level of survey effort was deemed appropriate in this instance.
- No bat roosts were identified during the surveys, although it is stated that it was not possible to rule out the possible presence of bat roosts within 500m of the proposed turbine location.
- Static and manual surveys identified 5 species of bats using the area around the proposed turbine, with common pipistrelle being the most abundant species recorded. Although a low level of activity was recorded at the turbine location, a much higher level of activity was recorded along the edge of the adjacent woodland plantation.
- The report concludes that impacts on bats at a local level are not predicted to be significant, and that the proposed turbine is not likely to adversely affect the favourable conservation status of bats, although it should be noted that low level of noctule activity was recorded, a species which is at high risk and high threat from turbines.
- This conclusion is in-part reached on the assumption that the turbine will be located at least 50m from the nearest bat habitat features (i.e. hedgerow/woodland edge), as measured from the turbine blade tip to the feature, so that collision risk is minimised. Whilst this does indeed appear to be the case, it should be noted that in order to comply with this the turbine needs to be at least:
 - 65.8m from the edge of the broad-leaved woodland along the north-eastern edge of the field and the disused railway along the south-west edge of the field (both with feature heights of 10m)
 - 63.2m from the hedgerow along the north-west boundary of the field (feature height of 6m)
 - 61.0m from the hedgerow along the south-east boundary of the field (feature height of 3m)
 - These distances are calculated using the formula contained within Natural England's Technical Information Note TIN 051 (*Bats and onshore wind turbines*). A condition should be used to ensure compliance with these distances.

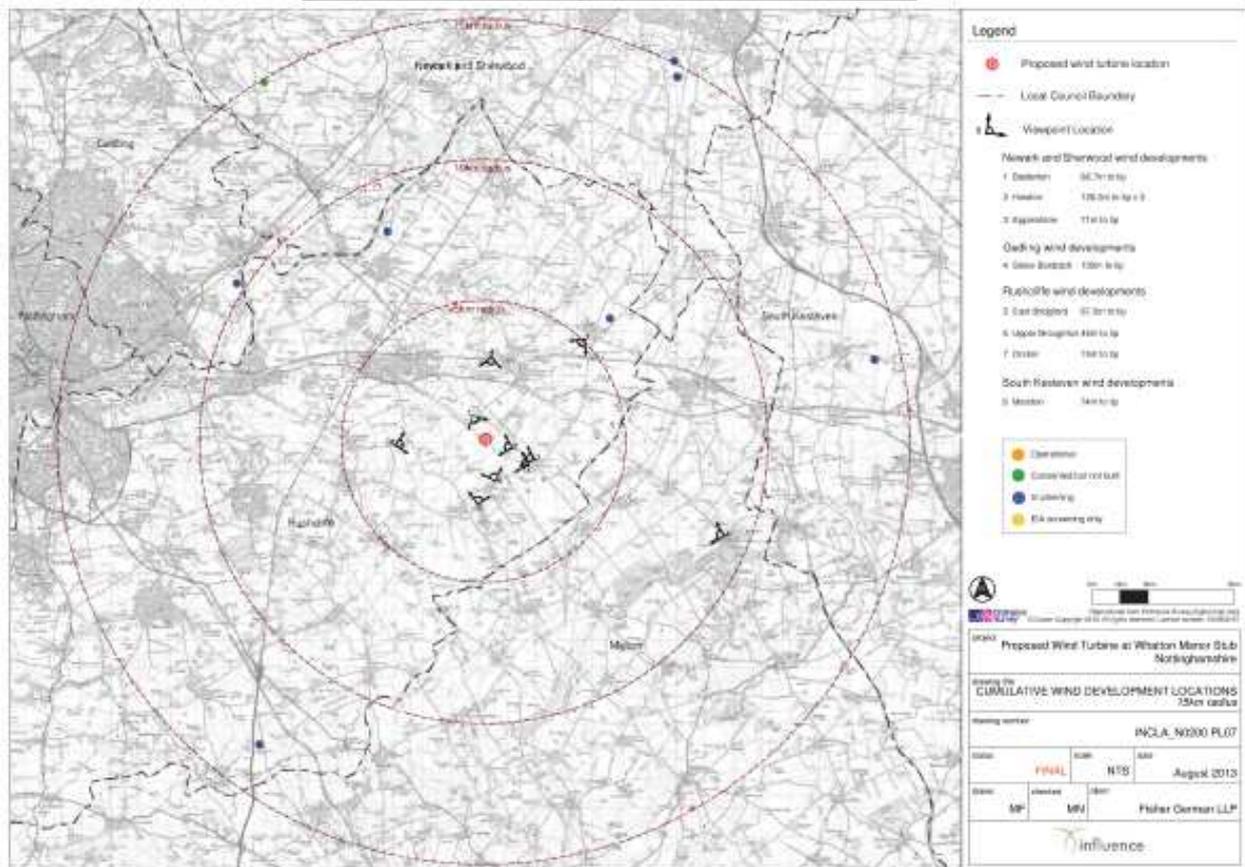
Summary

The proposals do not give rise to any significant direct ecological impact. Impacts on bats have been specifically considered, and whilst no significant impacts on bats are predicted, limitations within the survey methodology should be noted. In order to minimise impacts on bats, the turbine needs to be micro-sited such that it is a minimum distance (as specified above) from the nearest habitat features.

We trust you will find the above comments of use, but if you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Nick Crouch
Senior Practitioner Nature Conservation

Appendix 5 – Landscape Viewpoint Plan



Appendix 6 – Detailed Rights of Way Comments

From: Jane Baines

Sent: 24 September 2013 09:35

To: Emily Dodd (EDodd@rushcliffe.gov.uk)

Subject: 13/01730 Wind Turbine, Whatton Manor Stud

Dear Emily

I have considered this application in relation to public rights of way network. There are a number of rights of way in the area:

1. Footpath no 14 Whatton which leads into Footpath no 17 Langar cum Barnstone. At its closest point to the turbine is just outside the tip height plus 10% distance and therefore is of limited concern.
2. Bridleway no 1 Langar cum Barnstone is some 550m away.
3. There is a claimed bridleway which is 250m away. This has not reached its full determination yet so may or may not be added to the map through a Public Inquiry. However it is outside of the 200m recommended by the British Horse Society so is of limited concern. The first part of this claimed route is used in the access to the site but as this is track already it is unlikely to be left in a damaged state, and there is no public access on it yet (if ever).

The only real concern is the access to the site which will cross the footpath just before the barn near to the turbine location. The applicant/contractors will need to ensure that the public are safe to still use the footpath while the construction works are being undertaken. This may include appropriate signage for both the public and the construction staff to be aware of each other and that no obstructions are placed across the path to hinder the walker crossing the track.

Regards

Jane

Jane Baines

Area Rights of Way Officer

Nottinghamshire County Council

Tel 0115 977 4802

