

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**RPC SUB-GROUP – STATUTORY CONSULTATIONS**

Date: 21 November 2007

Subject: Planning application consultation ref A/07/117

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Site Address:             | Land West of Enifer Downs Farm and East of Archers Court Road and Little Pineham Farm, Langdon   |
| Proposal:                 | Wind Energy Development comprising the erection of 5no. Wind turbines (maximum height 120m), together with access tracks, hard-standing areas, electricity substation and temporary construction compound. |
| Local Planning Authority: | Dover District Council   |
| Applicant:                | Ecotricity   |
| Date consultation issued: | 8/11/07  |

Report of: **Regional Planner**

**Recommendation:**

The South East England Regional Assembly makes the following observations in relation to the application:-

On the basis of the information provided, it is considered that the proposed development would not materially conflict with or prejudice the implementation of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG9 and Alterations) or the draft South East Plan (March 2006) subject to the local authority fully considering the following:-

- The landscape impact of the proposal, including on the nearby AONB, in accordance with Policy E1 of RPG9 and Policies EN5, C2 and C3 of the draft South East Plan.

If the district council is minded to grant permission, it should secure the following through appropriately worded conditions and/ or legal agreements:

- Mitigation measures in relation to flood risk, noise, air quality and impacts on groundwater, and measures to enhance biodiversity of the site in accordance with the objectives of Policies E1, E2, E7, INF1 and INF2 of RPG9 and Policies NRM1, NRM3, NRM4, NRM7 and NRM8 of the draft South East Plan.

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the recommended consultation response to the above application for consideration and agreement.

## **2. Site Description and Background**

- 2.1 The subject site has an area of 4.27 km<sup>2</sup> (with a width of approximately 1.7km and a depth of approximately 4km). It is currently arable agricultural land privately owned. The hamlet of East Langdon is located approximately 450m to the south east of the site, while the hamlet of Pineham lies approximately 450m to the west of the site. The site is flanked by the A256 to the west, and is bounded by two minor roads that cross at the northern most point of the site. A 33kV overhead power line runs over the site via the south east corner.
- 2.2 Surrounding the subject site, the closest residential property is Pineham to the west and Poison Down Farm to the south east. There are a number of other isolated farms in the surrounding area. Notwithstanding these properties, no residential properties are located within 400m of any of the proposed turbine locations.
- 2.3 The South Kent coast lies approximately 3km to the south east of the site. The site does not lie within any designated landscape areas, although the Kent Downs AONB lies immediately to the south and south west of the site.
- 2.4 Woodlands are located to the south of the subject site. The site is also outside of any area designated in the Local Plan (2002 as saved) for landscape protection. Further, it is located some 2.5km from an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Kent Downs).
- 2.5 A location map is included in Annex I.

## **3. Details of the proposal**

- 3.1 The proposal seeks approval for the following:-

- 5 wind turbines;
- Substation;
- Access tracks;
- Underground electrical cables;
- Temporary construction compound; and
- Minor works to the Whitfield roundabout on the A2 (T).

- 3.2 The application identified that the wind turbines proposed will each have a generating capacity of 2MW, thus the total installed wind capacity of the proposal would be 10MW (which, for illustrative purposes, would be sufficient to meet the annual electricity needs of approximately 9490 typical UK households).
- 3.3 Construction of the facility is expected to take 18 weeks, and the proposal is anticipated to have a 25 year operational life.

#### **4. Main Issues and Relevant Policy Considerations**

4.1 The following are the main regional issues associated with the application, along with the relevant Regional Spatial Strategy policies that need to be considered:-

- The strategic basis of the proposal, with the following policies being relevant:-
  - Policies INF6 & INF7 of RPG9 and Policies EN3, EN4, EN5 and EN6 of the draft South East Plan – renewable energy targets;
- The suitability of the site, with the following policies being relevant:-
  - Policies INF8 and INF9 of RPG9 and Policies EN5 & EN6 of the draft South East Plan – location of renewable energy development and development criteria;
  - Policy EI of RPG9 and Policies C2 & C3 of the draft South East Plan – areas of outstanding natural beauty & landscape management.
  - Policy NRM8 of the draft South East Plan – noise.

#### **5. Policy Assessment**

##### Strategic Basis for the Application

- 5.1 Both RPG9 and the emerging South East Plan set out targets for renewable energy generation in terms of installed capacity and percentage of electricity generation. Further, they set out sub-regional targets for land-based renewable energy (in the case of Kent, the target is 111MW by 2010).
- 5.2 The regional and sub-regional targets for renewable energy clearly set the direction for the development of renewable energy, with specific development proposals contributing to meeting these targets. As such, the 10mw wind energy proposal subject to this application will make an important contribution to delivering the overall targets. It is therefore considered that there is a strong strategic basis for the proposal.

### Site Specific Considerations

- 5.3 Whilst the development of renewable energy is a key strategic priority, there is a need to consider the suitability of each individual site for the type of renewable energy proposed and the extent to which it is consistent with the broader regional policy framework.
- 5.4 In terms of landscape, the Environment Statement submitted with the application found that where the turbines can be seen within 5 km of the site, the character of the area would be changed. However, it continues to outline that this effect is reduced by distance and that overall the character of this area would be preserved.
- 5.5 It will be important that the local authority fully considers the landscape impact on the proposal, including the nearby AONB, in accordance with Policy E1 of RPG9 and Policies EN5, C2 & C3 of the draft South East Plan.
- 5.6 Noise is a further consideration in relation to this proposal, with Policy NRM8 of the draft South East Plan seeking to ensure that measures are in place to address and reduce noise. The Environment Statement concludes that once mitigation (noise control) measures have been applied, the wind park can comply with standard noise limits applied throughout the United Kingdom, required by PPS22 - Planning for Renewable Energy.
- 5.7 In addition to landscape and noise considerations, the Environment Statement has also considered the full range of issues that might potentially impact on the environment. It concludes that the impacts of the proposal are acceptable, although in some cases mitigation measures are required. It will be important that all of these matters are considered in detail by the local authority, including in relation to flood risk, air quality and impacts on groundwater, and measures to enhance biodiversity of the site in accordance with the objectives of Policies E1, E2, E7, INF1 and INF2 of RPG9 and Policies NRM1, NRM3, NRM4, NRM7 and NRM8 of the draft South East Plan.

## **6. Conclusions**

- 6.1 At a strategic level, the proposal will make a contribution to meeting renewable energy targets in the South East. However, the impacts of the proposal on the locality need to be carefully considered, especially in relation to landscape and noise issues.

## **7. Recommendation**

7.1 Members are requested to agree the following recommendation to the local authority:-

On the basis of the information provided, it is considered that the proposed development would not materially conflict with or prejudice the implementation of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG9 and Alterations) or the draft South East Plan (March 2006) subject to the local authority fully considering the following:-

- The landscape impact of the proposal, including on the nearby AONB, in accordance with Policy E1 of RPG9 and Policies EN5, C2 and C3 of the draft South East Plan.

If the district council is minded to grant permission, it should secure the following through appropriately worded conditions and/ or legal agreements:

- Mitigation measures in relation to flood risk, noise, air quality and impacts on groundwater, and measures to enhance biodiversity of the site in accordance with the objectives of Policies E1, E2, E7, INF1 and INF2 of RPG9 and Policies NRM1, NRM3, NRM4, NRM7 and NRM8 of the draft South East Plan.

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Date: 21 November 2007

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