

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

RPC SUB-GROUP – STATUTORY CONSULTATIONS

Date: 12 December 2007

Subject: Planning application consultation ref A/07/124

Site Address:	Petsoe Manor Farm House, Petsoe End, Emberton
Proposal:	Construction of a wind farm comprising 7 wind turbines up to 125m high, a substation, an anemometry mast, access tracks including access off the public highway, underground electrical cabling (all for a period of 25 years) and a temporary construction compound.
Local Planning Authority:	Milton Keynes Council
Applicant:	MK Windfarm Ltd
Date consultation issued:	27 December 2007

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 contribute to regional targets on renewable energy and regional objectives on climate change and 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).

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 is located 2.5km east of Emberton, and is north of Milton Keynes along the A509. The site extends over a distance of approximately 1km from east to west and 1km from north to south.
- 2.2 A location map is included in Annex I.

3. Details of the proposal

3.1 The proposal seeks approval for the following:-

- 7 wind turbines;
- A maximum height to blade tip of 125m;
- Substation;
- Anemometry mast;
- Underground electrical cabling;
- Access tracks including access off the public highway; and
- Temporary construction compound.

3.3 The application identifies that the proposal will have a life of 25 years, that each turbine will have a generating capacity of 2-3MW, thus the total installed wind capacity of the proposal would be between 14 and 21MW (which, for illustrative purposes, would be sufficient to meet the annual electricity needs of approximately 7,000 – 9,000 typical UK homes).

3.4 This report is based on the Non-Technical Summary of the Environment Statement and the Planning Statement, which were the only documents available to the Assembly at the time of writing this report.

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;
 - Policies E2 of RPG9 and NRM4 of the draft South East Plan – Biodiversity.

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 the Thames Valley and Surrey, the target is 140MW 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 14-21MW 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 Policy EN5 of the draft South East Plan states that renewable energy development should be located and designed to minimise adverse impacts on landscape, wildlife and amenity and that priority should be given to development in less sensitive parts of the countryside. The site does not fall within or contain any landscape designations.
- 5.5 In terms of landscape, the Environment Statement Non-Technical Summary submitted with the application found that the surrounding landscape is undulating and well vegetated so there will be only intermittent views of the proposal from the surrounding areas. It therefore concludes that significant effects on landscape character will be limited to within 2-3km of the nearest turbine and effects on visual amenity will be limited to:-
- Residents within 6km of the nearest turbine whose views will not be interrupted by the landscape or vegetation;
 - Walkers, horse riders and cyclists using local bridleways and footpaths within 3km of the nearest turbine and users of the Three Shires Way and Milton Keynes Boundary Walk;
 - Road users of minor roads around the site.

- 5.6 Policy E2 of RPG9 and Policy NRM4 of the draft South East Plan is concerned with the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. The ES states that overall, the proposal is likely to result in ecological impacts of a minor significance only.
- 5.7 On the basis of the information available the proposal is, therefore, in line with the objectives of Policies E2 of RPG9 and Policies EN5 and NRM4 of the draft South East Plan.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The proposed windfarm development will make a substantial contribution to renewable energy targets, in line with regional policy objectives.

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 contribute to regional targets on renewable energy and regional objectives on climate change and 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).

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Date: 6 December 2007

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