

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

5 February 2014

**AUTHOR/S:** Planning and New Communities Director

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**Application Number:** S/0439/12/FL

**Parish(es):** Litlington

**Proposal:** Installation of five wind turbines of maximum height to tip of 100m, a single 60m lattice tower meteorological mast, on-site substation, access tracks, hardstanding areas, external transformers, temporary construction compound, and associated infrastructure

**Site address:** Land at Highfield Farm, west of Royston Road

**Applicant(s):** Highfield Wind Energy Limited

**Recommendation:** Refusal

**Key material considerations:** Renewable energy generation, landscape and visual impact, cumulative impact, residential amenity, cultural heritage and archaeology, rights of way, noise, shadow flicker, aviation, ecology, ornithology, highway safety, and utilities and telecommunication.

**Committee Site Visit:** 04 February 2014

**Departure Application:** No

**Presenting Officer:** Paul Sexton

**Application brought to Committee because:** Officers consider that the application is one which should be presented to Committee for decision

**Date by which decision due:** 02 July 2012

### Update to the Report

#### Name of Applicant

The name of the applicant above has been corrected so that it reads Highfield Wind Energy Ltd only.

## **Agenda report paragraph number 179 – Consultation – Comments of Hertfordshire County Council**

**Hertfordshire County Council**, as Highway Authority for the A505 considers that the proposal would not have an unreasonable impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining highways subject to the implementation of conditions requiring the submission and approval of a Construction Management Plan, Construction Method Statement, and a restriction on the number of HGV movements at the site (no more than 40 in and 40 out per day Mondays to Fridays, and 30 in and 30 out on Saturdays), and informatives.

In response to concerns regarding driver distraction on the A505 it comments:

“Whilst it is likely that the installation of a wind turbine will distract drivers it must be noted that there are a number of turbines/wind farms across the country which are similarly, including major motorways such as the M25 and the recent wind turbine that is under construction through the Arlesey access study in Bedfordshire.

Hertfordshire County Council concurs with the following Government guidance, Planning for Renewable Energy - A Companion Guide to PPS22 that also considers the issue of distraction to drivers stating that ‘Drivers are faced with a number of varied and competing distractions during any normal journey, including advertising hoardings, which are deliberately designed to attract attention. At all times drivers are required to take reasonable care to ensure their own and others’ safety. Wind turbines should therefore not be treated any differently from other distractions a driver must face and should not be considered particularly hazardous. There are now a large number of wind farms adjoining or close to road networks and there is no data available on the history of accidents at any of them.’ “

In response raised regarding the impact of flicker it comments:

“Shadow flicker occurs under a special set of conditions when the sun passes behind the hub of a wind turbine and casts a shadow. When the blades rotate albeit there may be five turbines in use at any one time, shadows pass over the same point causing an effect called shadow flicker. Shadow flicker effects already occur in various situations such as travelling under overhanging trees and next to hedges.

It may be possible that shadow flicker could occur for very short durations to drivers travelling the adjacent highway network, however this would not likely be prolonged as any vehicle is moving and constantly changing direction. It is very noticeable when driving along rural roads nevertheless as the installation is set back some distance i.e. at least 1.1 km from the A505 the effect of the proposal should not be a significant hazard.”

In respect of construction vehicles it comments:

“The applicant has already assessed the construction route to the site due to the length of the vehicles that may be used a swept path analysis should be applied on the access and chosen route to the site as temporary highway works may be required. It is not unreasonable for minor works to be carried out on the highway and I would envisage that similar measures have had to be taken for other wind farms across the country.

I have recommended a condition for a Construction Traffic Management Plan that the construction vehicle route, required remedial works and traffic management is agreed with the highway authority prior to commencement of the development to ensure the proposals are acceptable.

In relation to construction vehicle numbers whilst there will be an increase in HGV's and this is considered as a short term impact that should be mitigated through the Construction Traffic Management Plan and Construction Method Statement this should be considered further when final methods vehicle weights and numbers are known.

Given that the wind turbine is set back from the A505 by some distance the proposal is considered acceptable in highway terms"

The applicant has confirmed that the requested conditions are acceptable.

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