

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

---

**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

5<sup>th</sup> November 2008

**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director / Corporate Manager - Planning and Sustainable Communities

---

### GRAVELEY

**Erection of Wind Farm comprising Eight Wind Turbines, Substation, Anemometry Mast, Access Track and Ancillary Infrastructure, Land South of Great Parlow Close and West of Graveley, in the Parish of Offord Darcy**

**Recommendation: Object to the Application**

#### **Notes:**

**This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee in order for the Committee to decide its comments, which will be reported to Huntingdonshire District Council, who will determine the application.**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The 179 hectare site is a former World War II airfield entirely within Huntingdonshire District Council, but adjacent to South Cambridgeshire District Council's boundary at Graveley, which is the closest village to the site (approximately 1km to the east).
2. The site is within Cotton Farm, which comprises a farmhouse, modern barn and outbuilding. It is an open and generally flat site at an elevation of 53 to 55m AOD, although a stream in a shallow valley flows out of the site to the south west. The land is cultivated with arable crops. Across the site is a number of former Airfield tracks. There is an almost total absence of hedgerows and few trees, although Toseland Wood, a scheduled ancient monument, lies to the south of the site, the boundary of which is defined by a public footpath.
3. Land drops from the site into Graveley village with the High Street continuing to fall eastwards.
4. The application, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2008, comprises:
  - (a) Installation of eight wind turbines (each with a maximum height to blade tip of 127m), aligned north west to south east in two rows of four turbines;
  - (b) Construction of approximately 1.1km of new onsite access tracks and the upgrading of 4.6km of existing access track;
  - (c) Construction of ancillary development comprising an onsite substation near a building on Cotton Farm in the north of the site, crane hard-standing areas, one external transformer adjacent to each turbine where required, connecting cabling and one permanent wind monitoring mast on the south west site boundary;

- (d) Creation of a temporary construction compound close to site entrance and one temporary wind monitoring mast which will be in place during the construction period only; and
  - (e) The use of two site entrances during the period of construction; one from the existing farm entrance off Offord Road at Cotton Farm, and the second from Toseland Road on the south east site boundary, which will be used for the delivery of all turbine components.
5. The proposed wind farm will be connected to the local distribution network via an underground cable running from the onsite substation into one of the two existing 33kv lines which run approximately 1.5km north west and 1km north of the substation.
  6. Construction is likely to be completed over twelve months. The wind farm has been designed with an operational life of 25 years, at the end of which the turbines will be dismantled and removed from the site.
  7. The application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement, Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement.

### **Planning Policy**

#### *National Guidance:*

8. Planning Policy Statement (**PPS**) 1, 'Delivering Sustainable Development', (2005) aims to facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development. It confirms that the Government is committed to protecting and enhancing the quality of the natural and historic environment, in both urban and rural areas.
9. A supplement to PPS1 titled "**Planning and Climate Change**" was published in December 2007. The Statement confirms that tackling climate change is a key Government priority for the planning system and the ambition and policies in the PPS should be fully reflected by Regional Spatial Strategies. This includes setting targets for renewable energy generation and ensuring any local approach (in Local Development Documents) to protecting the landscape and townscape is in line with PPS 22 and does not preclude the supply of any type of renewable energy other than in the most exceptional circumstances.
10. **PPS 7**, 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas', (2004) aims to promote more sustainable patterns of development by protecting the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscape, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and so it may be enjoyed by all (para. 1(iv)). It advises that, in determining planning applications, authorities should provide for the sensitive exploitation of renewable energy sources in accordance with the policies set out in **PPS 22**.
11. **PPS 9**, 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation', (2005) sets out Government's objectives for 'biodiversity and geological conservation'. Planning decisions should aim to maintain and enhance, restore or add to biodiversity and geological conservation interests. Development proposals should be permitted where the principal objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity and geological interests. If significant harm cannot be prevented, adequately mitigated against, or compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

12. **PPG 15**, 'Planning and the Historic Environment', (1994) provides guidance in respect of development which will affect the historic and built environment. The historic environment includes not just buildings, but encompasses the wider landscape. It indicates that development may affect the setting of a Listed Building some way away.
13. **PPG 16**, 'Archaeology', advises that the duty to protect archaeological sites and monuments extends to their setting. Para 27 advises that there is 'a presumption against proposals which would involve significant alteration or cause damage, or which would have a significant impact on the setting of visible remains'.
14. **PPS 22**, 'Renewable Energy' (August 2004) replaced PPG 22. It aims to increase the development of renewable energy resources. Amongst key principles are:
  - (a) Renewable energy developments should be capable of being accommodated throughout England in locations where the technology is viable and environmental, economic, and social impacts can be addressed satisfactorily.
  - (b) The wider environmental and economic benefits of all proposals for renewable energy projects, whatever their scale, are material considerations that should be given significant weight in determining whether proposals should be granted planning permission.
  - (c) Small-scale projects can provide a limited but valuable contribution to overall outputs of renewable energy and to meeting energy needs both locally and nationally. Planning authorities should not therefore reject planning applications simply because the level of output is small.
  - (d) Development proposals should demonstrate any environmental, economic and social benefits as well as how any environmental and social impacts have been minimised through careful consideration of location, scale, design and other measures.

The **PPS** sets out the government's objectives and the need to generate a minimum of 10% of UK electricity from renewable sources by 2010 (with onshore and offshore wind being the largest contributors) and up to 20% by 2020 (with onshore and offshore wind biomass being the largest contributors). The fact that a target has been met is not a reason to refuse planning permission for further projects.

When considering landscape and visual effects paragraph 19 notes these are likely to vary on a case by case basis according to the type of development, its location and landscape setting. Some of these effects may be minimised by appropriate siting, design and landscape schemes. Paragraph 20 goes on to state that the impact of turbines on the landscape will vary according to the size and number of turbines and the type of landscape involved.

15. **'Planning for Renewable Energy: A Companion Guide to PPS 22' (2004)** identifies the key issues in determining planning applications. It is designed to encourage appropriate development and offers practical advice as to how policies can be implemented on the ground. At para 5.10 authorities are advised to come to an objective view on:
  - (a) The extent to which the project is in conformity with the development plan;

- (b) The extent to which the reasons for any area based designations may be compromised;
  - (c) The extent of any positive or negative impacts, and the means by which they may be mitigated, if negative; and,
  - (d) The contribution towards meeting the regional target, but recognising that a small contribution cannot be in itself a reason for refusal of permission.
16. The Companion Guide includes a very detailed technical annex upon wind. It covers issues such as noise, low frequency noise, landscape and visual impact, driver distraction and shadow flicker. It states at Para 5.4, that landscape and visual effects will only be one consideration to be balanced alongside the wider environmental, economic and social benefits.
17. **PPG 24** 'Planning and Noise', (1994) states that noise can be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Development should not cause an unacceptable degree of disturbance.
18. Para 15 of **Circular 1/2003**, 'Safeguarding aerodromes etc', advises that wind turbines can create certain problems for aviation. This includes signals radiated from and received by aeronautical systems.

*Regional Policy:*

19. The **East of England Plan** was published in May 2008.

**Policy ENG2** 'Renewable energy targets', states:

'The development of new facilities for renewable power generation should be supported, with the aim that by 2010, 10% of the region's energy and by 2020, 17% of the region's energy should come from renewable sources. These targets exclude energy from offshore wind, and are subject to meeting European and international obligations to protect wildlife, including migratory birds, and to revision and development through the review of this RSS.'

*Adopted Local Development Framework (LDF) 2007:*

20. This does not comprise the adopted Development Plan, so far as determination of this application by Huntingdonshire District Council is concerned. However, I quote **Policy NE/2** to remind the Committee of this Council's position in regard to renewable energy projects.

**Policy NE/2**

"The District Council will grant planning permission for proposals to generate energy from renewable sources, subject to proposals according with the development principles set out in DP/1-DP/3 and complying with the following criteria:

- (a) The proposal can be connected efficiently to existing national grid infrastructure unless it can be demonstrated that energy generation would be used on-site to meet the needs of a specific end user;
- (b) The proposal makes provision for the removal of the facilities and reinstatement of the site, should the facilities cease to be operational.

The supporting text states that individual or small groups of wind turbines may also be appropriate.

### **Consultation**

21. **Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC)** has carried out the statutory consultation process. This Council is a consultee.
22. Internal consultations have been carried out and the following responses received. These will be sent to HDC with this Council's response.
23. **Ecology Officer** has no objections. He is satisfied that the surveys recommended by the statutory authorities (the Environment Agency and Natural England plus the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) have been completed. Due consideration appears to have been given to the flight paths of bats and the turbines are being located with best practice in mind. Conditions are required to ensure the protection of barn owls and great crested newts. A clear scheme of habitat enhancement and creation, as well as future monitoring, should be secured by condition.
24. **Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services)** has carried out a very detailed assessment of the Environmental Statement in regard to noise (construction and operational), vibration, dust impact and shadow flicker.

Full and detailed noise impact assessment has been undertaken in accordance with "The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms, ETSU-R-97" published by ETSU for the Department of Trade and Industry, which is national planning policy guidance and normal industry practice.

He concludes:

"that based on the analysis, and in accordance with the significance criteria derived in accordance with ETSU-R-97, the noise impact of the operational wind farm is classified as being acceptable.

ETSU-R-97 recommends that wind farm noise limits should be set at 5 dB(A) above existing background noise levels subject to a fixed minimum limit, and that these limits should reflect the variation in both turbine source noise and background noise with windspeed. The windspeeds that should be considered range between the cut-in speed for the turbine, (usually around 4ms<sup>-1</sup>) and 12ms<sup>-1</sup>, with windspeeds being referenced to a 10 metre measurement height.

ETSU-R-97 recommends that wind farm noise fixed minimum limits for quiet daytime periods should be 5 dB(A) above the prevailing background or a fixed minimum level within the range LA90, 10 min 35-40 dB(A), whichever is the higher. For night time periods the recommended limits are 5 dB(A) above prevailing background or a fixed minimum level of LA90, 10 min 43 dB(A), whichever is higher. The night-time minimum fixed level is derived from the sleep disturbance criteria referred to in Planning Policy Guidance Note PPG 24 which is based on World Health Organisation recommendations. Both daytime and night-time fixed minimum levels can be increased to 45 dB(A) or consideration can be given to increasing the allowable margin above background noise where the occupier of the property has a financial interest in the wind farm development.

The majority of noise predictions as detailed in Table 11.8 are below these fixed limits detailed in ETSU-R-97. To control noise emissions and ensure that predict levels are

achieved a condition could be considered requiring limits not to exceed those detailed in Table 11.8. However it could be argued that such limits at locations detailed are unreasonable and not in accordance with national guidance.

In this case it is recommended that noise conditions be attached to control noise emission to be consistent with the limits detailed in ETSU-R-97. Planning conditions relating to wind farm operational noise should always make reference to ETSU-R-97 as it provides the definitive guidance on appropriate techniques to rate and assess wind farm noise”.

On balance he has no objections in principle to the application but recommends that a number of noise conditions should be imposed to protect human health and safeguard the amenity of residential premises. These conditions aim to control site preparation, construction phases, construction noise, vibration, dust impact, site lighting, the preparation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan and operational noise.

He has assessed the impact of shadow flicker. He comments:

“Under certain combinations of geographical position, time of day and year, the sun may pass behind the rotor of a wind turbine and cast a shadow. When blades rotate and the shadow passes a narrow window then a person within that room may perceive that the shadow appears to flick on and off; this effect is known as shadow flicker. It can have health and amenity effects.

It is concluded theoretically that 16 receptor properties within the study area could be exposed to shadow flicker although for very short periods, the worst potentially affected on no more than 24 days in a year and for no more than 12.7 hours in total over the year.

One drawback of the assessment is that no survey of the receptor properties has been undertaken to assess window widths and habitable rooms, as these are required to have an actual impact. Further information could be requested under EIA regulations.

The operating frequency at which photosensitive epilepsy may be triggered varies from person to person but generally it is between 2.5 and 30 flashes per second (hertz).

It is stated that all modern commercial scale turbines, including those for Cotton Farm will operate at frequencies outside the range to cause epilepsy. This may be true but as there is an assumption in the type of turbine that will actually be installed, it is recommended that this is conditioned to eliminate the possibility of health effects arising. Further information of the blade operating frequency could have been provided to demonstrate calculation e.g. blade passing frequency.

Mitigation measures are mentioned in the form of technology to inhibit turbines operation at specific times and dates when shadow flicker is likely to occur, but no detail is provided.

The chapter does not detail magnitude/significance of impact but it can be probably considered as negligible.

However, this environmental effect has been adequately assessed in accordance with EIA regulations and mitigation measures can be precise and reliable.

The following conditions are recommended:

1. To prevent the health effects of shadow flicker, any wind turbine shall only have an operational blade frequency outside the range of 2.5 and 30 flashes per second (hertz): the general frequency at which photosensitive epilepsy may be triggered.
  2. Prior to the operation of any wind turbine a shadow flicker mitigation scheme/protocol for shadow flicker which may be experienced within habitable rooms within any dwelling, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the operation of the turbines shall be in accordance with the approved shadow flicker mitigation scheme/protocol unless the Local Planning Authority gives its prior written consent to any variation'.
25. **Landscape and Design Officer** has not commented. Any comments made will be forwarded to HDC.
26. **Strategic Sustainability Officer** is aware of the proposal but does not consider that it is appropriate to comment.
27. **Graveley Parish Council** has submitted a copy of its very comprehensive comments to this Council.

It recommends to HDC that the application be refused. The summary grounds of objection are as follows:

- (a) 'In sum, we are in no doubt that eight wind turbines up to 127 metres high on the proposed site would dominate and have a major and negative visual impact on the rural and tranquil landscape of the area in and around Graveley. Whilst there would be significant working and health and safety problems for the commercial firms at the edge of the village, the wind farm as a whole would be far too close to village homes. Within the village there would be shadow flicker problems for some and overall there would be an overbearing visual impact which would blight our properties and our lives.
- (b) We recognise that the calculation of noise effects is a complex area and find the information in the NPower Environmental Statement difficult to follow. However, the practical on-the-ground assessments which have been reported to us do not begin to support the theoretical assertions by NPower. We are persuaded that, with the turbines so very close to village properties, many homes would suffer noise and 'whooshing' at levels which would seriously degrade the quality of life for many and be wholly unacceptable. We trust that an expert in the noise field will be looking at the consultants' assumptions, figures and conclusions.
- (c) In all, we consider that the road safety implications for drivers, horse riders, pedestrians and school children are not insignificant and add to the many disadvantages which the NPower proposal would bring to the village and area.
- (d) The potential for radio and television interference would be exacerbated by the siting of the proposed wind farm so close to the village. Delay of a year or more in putting matters right would manifestly be unacceptable and, since NPower have chosen to seek a site on our very doorstep, we believe that they

should be invited now to say just how they would forestall a problem which could be readily anticipated.

- (e) We do not believe that 500m can possibly be a safe separation distance for the much larger turbines which NPower propose and we consider this aspect, together with the other potential effects on workers at the repair shops, to be matters that the Health and Safety Executive would need to examine closely'.

The Parish Council has submitted a village petition from 136 objectors, all of whom live in Graveley.

The petition states:

'Graveley Parish Council is strongly opposed to the Planning Application. Our objections are based on (but not limited to) the proximity of these huge turbines so close to our village, the affect on our local and surrounding landscape and the noise implications'.

Also attached to the Parish Council representations are 70 letters of objections. All but 9 are from residents of Graveley.

### **Representations**

- 28. Cotton Farm Action Group (CFAG) objects. It has submitted to this Council a copy of its detailed representations. CFAG consists of villagers from The Offords, Great Paxton, Toseland, Yelling and Graveley. A CFAG door to door poll in Graveley shows 88% against, 3% for, 3% undecided and 6% undecided. In summary its objections are:
  - (a) The proposed development would be too close to many villages, would have a major negative impact on their settings and identities and on the visual relationship between the villages within the landscape. It would be the dominant feature in the landscape between the designated growth towns of Huntingdon and St Neots, would be visible from most parts of the Ouse Valley and would be at the head of the eastern tributaries to the River Ouse.
  - (b) The proposed wind farm would contravene much of the policy and guidance for the protection of listed buildings and Ancient Monuments and would have a significantly detrimental effect on several buildings and on Toseland Hall in particular.
  - (c) The proposed wind farm would have a severe impact on leisure and on the enjoyment of the countryside. There would be a loss of tranquillity in the immediate area, there could be a loss of tourism revenue and, in all, CFAG believes that the domination of the rights of way network in the area around the wind farm and the loss of visual and recreational amenity which would stem from that would be unacceptable.
  - (d) The road safety implications have not had the attention they deserve. There would be significant congestion problems during any construction phase and that, were the wind farm to be built, it would be a major distraction to drivers, as well as to horse riders, and that could lead to an increased risk of accidents.



- (e) The proposal has significant social and economic implications for the neighbouring villages and that a wind farm would have a marked detrimental effect on the local economy.
- (f) The noise assessments made and the limits used by the applicants are wholly inappropriate for this tranquil area. CFAG believes that, at best, only lip service has been paid to the policies and guidance concerning residential amenity and, as typified by the examples of College Farm and Great Paxton School, concerning the effects of industrial development. CFAG believes that the wind farm would create excessive industrial noise too close to the neighbouring rural villages, that the proposed site does not comply with planning guidelines for renewable energy development, and that the application conflicts with policies for development in rural areas in general and for the local villages in particular. No mention has been made as to whether any safety buffer has been considered for the closer properties and consider that, with the lives of those living in several hundred homes being blighted, the net effect on residents would be wholly unacceptable.
- (g) In summary, CFAG considers that the cumulative effects of the severe loss of residential amenity for so many people, the visual intrusion, the noise, the effects of shadow flicker, the impact on the local landscape and the implications for the local cultural heritage are incalculable. All this, together with the effects on the enjoyment of the countryside, coupled with the potential road and other safety problems and the social and economic implications of this development, far outweigh any potential benefits the scheme might offer.

The above objections are supported by a review carried out by CFAG of the Planning Statement and Environmental Statement, together with photomontages prepared by CFAG from a number of viewpoints.

29. This Council has also been copied in on 55 letters or emails of objection sent to HDC. 41 of these letters come from 23 properties in Graveley. I summarise below the principal grounds of objection:

- (a) Dominating visual impact on High Street and Toseland Road by reason of height, elevation and scale.
- (b) Harm to setting of Listed Buildings, particularly Graveley Church from the east.
- (c) Noise intrusion in a quiet environment and to properties downwind, especially at night.
- (d) Loss of wildlife, particularly owls, bats and many species of wild birds.
- (e) Too close to Graveley, with the nearest houses just over 600m from the turbines and the majority within 1,300m of the closest proposed turbine. These houses (seven referred to in one letter) will be overshadowed, dominated, suffer loss of outlook and suffer from shadow flicker.
- (f) Hazard to road safety by being a distraction and as a result of flickering in the setting sun.
- (g) There are no trees in the vicinity to mitigate visual impact.

- (h) Construction traffic will create problems on narrow country roads, disrupting way of life and impairing access to villages. Lighting and alarms during construction will cause further disruption.
- (i) Industrialisation of open countryside and out of proportion to the landscape.
- (j) Possible effect on TV reception.
- (k) Broken blades and ice blocks separating from blades in cold weather conditions, as well as rotor blades shearing off, would be hazardous.
- (l) Applicant's photomontages are grossly unrepresentative.
- (m) Aircraft will be in danger.
- (n) Impervious surfaces could present a problem with flooding and/or the water table.
- (o) Wind is unreliable and onshore wind energy is two and a half times more expensive than gas or nuclear energy. Wind farms are very inefficient.
- (p) Beating noise and flicker effect would startle horses and upset livestock.
- (q) Threat to health and safety of workers at Fleet Commercial Services Ltd, Toseland Road.

#### **Planning Comments – Key Issues**

30. The main issues for this Council to consider in responding to HDC are: renewable energy targets; landscape and visual impacts upon the built environment and residential amenity.

#### ***Renewable Energy Targets***

31. The latest Renewable Energy Statistics published in June 2008 by Renewables East suggests that the East of England remains on course towards its 2010 overall renewable energy target in MW of installed capacity. This relies on the expectation that two off-shore developments will be generating by the end of 2010.
32. Compared with regional targets incorporated in Policy ENG2 of the East of England Plan 2008, Renewables East estimates that currently 8.7% of the region's electricity consumption is being generated from on-shore renewables. Notwithstanding these statements, Renewables East is disappointed with on-shore wind generation, with the majority of schemes failing to survive the planning system in 2008.
33. However, Committee is reminded that the fact that a target might be met is not a reason to refuse planning permission for further projects.

#### ***Landscape and Visual Impact***

34. In February 2006 HDC adopted a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) titled 'Wind Power'. It provides information on the relative sensitivity and capacity of that district's landscapes in relation to wind turbines, indicates criteria that need to be taken into account when considering specific proposals of the type; and provides guidance on potential mitigation measures where appropriate.

35. The application site falls within the South East Claylands. Here the SPD indicates that the landscape has a high capacity to accommodate a small-scale group of turbines (2-12 turbines). 'Providing it was appropriately sited, such a development would not have an adverse impact on key landscape values'.
36. The SPD requires the following guidance to be taken into account:
- (a) 'Avoid the more undulating, intact and enclosed landscape to the south (around Waresley)'. The proposal complies.
  - (b) 'Avoid those areas where there is already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter'. There are no vertical elements on the application site and therefore the proposal complies.
  - (c) 'Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings'. There is only one large farm building on the site, so this criteria is not a determining factor.
  - (d) 'Respond to the geometric field pattern with turbines sited in a simple linear arrangement with consistent and repetitive spacing between individual turbines'. There is no pattern of field division on the site but the turbines are sited in two lines with regular spacing between each. So the proposal complies.
  - (e) 'Relate to the landform with turbines located along contour lines as opposed to across them'. This is a generally level site so the proposal complies, although turbines 3, 5 and 7 cross a shallow valley.
  - (f) 'Respect the sites and settings of key valued landscape features, notably remnant historic features'. There are no such features in South Cambridgeshire likely to be seriously harmed.
  - (g) 'Respect the scale and setting of the small, intact villages and views to church towers and spines'.

The proposal does not satisfy this criteria. Turbines 2, 4, 6 and 8 would all be sited at an elevation of between 50m and 54m AOD, above the level of land within Graveley village. Turbine 8 would be approximately 1.1km from the Grade 2\* Listed St Botolph Parish Church (at 40m AOD elevation) and approximately 830m from the western edge of the Graveley village framework at the junction of High Street, Toseland Road and Offord Road. CFAG has illustrated by two photomontages that the height, elevation and proximity of the turbines (particularly T8) would be out of scale with and dominate both the Church Tower and the High Street in the centre of the village when seen from viewpoints to the east.

- (h) 'Consider the visual relationship with the Ouse Valley and the 'hidden' tributary valleys that cross the landscape'. This factor has no bearing on South Cambridgeshire.
- (i) 'Avoid introducing solid built structures (transmission stations etc) into rural areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing

farm/utility buildings'. The proposed substation would be sensitively sited alongside an existing building. The proposal complies.

- (j) 'Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development'. This has no bearing on South Cambridgeshire.

### ***Residential amenity***

37. There are several residential properties on Toseland Road some 600m to 700m distant from the nearest Turbine 8. The Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services) has carefully considered the impact of the development upon these properties. He does not object but has recommended that, should HDC approve the application, a number of conditions be imposed to protect these properties.
38. In relation to shadow flicker, PPS22 CG indicates that this can occur inside buildings where the flicker appears through a narrow window opening. It goes on to say that flicker occurs only within ten rotor diameters of a turbine. For Cotton Wind Farm this corresponds to a distance of 900m from each turbine.
39. The applicants (NRL) recognise that:
- In the event that any local residents within 10 rotor diameters of the wind farm find impacts of shadow flicker to be of annoyance once the turbines are operational, NRL will work with them in order to establish the most effective mitigation. Possible solutions can include providing blinds for the windows of rooms affected, or providing planting or landscaping in gardens at the properties concerned. It can be possible to switch off wind turbines during periods where shadow flicker can occur, taking into account the weather conditions present'.
- Conditions are recommended by the Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services) to mitigate any impact.
40. CFAG provides evidence that the height and proximity of turbines to residential properties on Toseland Road will represent an overwhelming and dominating intrusion into their outlook. I agree with that opinion, particularly in regard to properties located south of Hillcrest Farm. Here there is very little effective tree screening on the western edge of the village.

### ***Conclusion***

41. Whilst an open and flat landscape may be able to assimilate the scale of wind farm proposed, the difficulty in this case is that the proposal is simply too close to Graveley village. These large structures sited in an elevated position relative to the village would completely dominate and overwhelm the outlook westwards from the village, the setting of St Botolph Church seen from the east and the outlook from residential properties on Toseland Road.
42. It is not considered that this objection can be mitigated without a complete re-assessment of a revised and smaller scheme.

## **Recommendation**

43. It is recommended that Huntingdonshire District Council be advised that South Cambridgeshire District Council objects for the reasons stated in '*Conclusion*' above.

Contact Officer: David Rush – Development Control Manager  
Telephone: (01954) 713153