

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

3 October 2012

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

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### **S/1653/12/FL – WILLINGHAM**

**Erection of a single 20kW Wind Turbine (20.5m hub height & total height 27m) for Mr Christopher Stringer**

**Recommendation: Approval**

**Date for Determination: 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

#### **Notes:**

**This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the Parish Council's recommendation of refusal is contrary to Officer recommendation of approval.**

**To be presented to the Committee by Matthew Hare**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a single wind turbine with a maximum height of 27m of standard tri-blade design.
2. The site comprises a large agricultural field bounded by tall hedgerow. There is some built development in the far northern corner of the site and this appears to be stable buildings. A vehicular access from Meadow Road serves the site formed by a break in the hedgerow in the southern corner of the field.
3. The site falls outside of the Willingham Development Framework and is therefore within the defined countryside. To the south of the application site on the opposite side of Meadow Rd is a small traveller site.

#### **4. Planning History**

*No history on the site itself, but within the wider field there is the following:*

S/2311/02/F - Mobile Home – Refused

S/1243/08/F - Siting of 2 Gypsy mobile homes – temporary permission to 30<sup>th</sup> Sept 2011

S/2065/10 - Use of land and stationing of residential caravans for 4 Gypsy and Traveller pitches – Refused

S/1692/11 - Removal of condition 1 of planning permission reference S/1243/08/F to allow the permanent siting of two gypsy mobile homes – Refused

S/0307/12/FL - Continued use of land as long-stay caravan site for two gypsy families (1 mobile home 1 tourer each pitch) – Refused

S/1621/12/VC - Removal of condition 1 of planning permission reference S/1243/08/F to allow the permanent siting of two gypsy mobile homes – undetermined.

5. **Planning Policy**

**South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, adopted January 2007**

**ST/5** – Minor Rural Centres

**South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Development Control Policies DPD, adopted January 2007**

**DP/1** - Sustainable Development

**DP/7** - Development Frameworks

**NE/2** - Renewable energy

6. **Consultation by South Cambridgeshire District Council as Local Planning Authority**

**Willingham Parish Council** - Recommends refusal for the following reasons:

- The visual impact upon the flat countryside
- The proximity to existing caravan dwellings
- The optimistic claims for efficiency of about 30%
- The establishment of a precedent for future expansion

**Landscape Design Officer** – No comments received.

**Environmental Health Officer** – following the submission of additional noise impact information the Council's Environmental Health Officers recommend approval subject to the following condition:

"The level of noise emissions from the wind turbine shall not exceed a noise" immission" limit level of 35 dB LAeq,10-minute at any time in free-field conditions, at the boundary of any noise sensitive residential premises / dwellings, at wind speeds of up to 12m/s as measured or calculated at a height of 10m above ground level averaged over 10-minute periods within the turbine site. If the noise from the turbine at any noise sensitive residential premises / dwellings contains any noticeable acoustic characteristics such as tonal, thumping, swishing or fluttering then a +5dB correction shall be added to the overall dB Leq, 10-minute measured operational noise level."

**Local Highways Authority** – Non objections. Recommends a traffic management plan for the construction period.

**Representations from members of public**

One letter of representation received from the occupant of Belsar Farm, Meadow Road raising concerns for:

- The proximity to residential dwellings
- Visual impact

- Mechanical efficiency
- Economic viability
- Subjective opinions on the efficacy of wind power

### **Material Planning Considerations**

7. The key issues to consider in this instance are the visual impact upon the surrounding landscape and residential amenity

### **Visual impact**

8. The proposed wind turbine stands at 20.5m high to its hub with an additional 6.5m when the blades are included.
9. It is considered likely that when adjacent to the application site on Meadow Road that much of the turbine would be obscured from view by the high hedgerow that lines this road. However clearly the turbine would be visible in longer range views from the junction of Meadow Rd with Rockmill End and from Rockmill End itself.
10. Although the turbine would be visible in these views, due to its small scale (relative to other commercial wind turbines) the visual impact upon the surrounding landscape is considered to be of only limited harm.

### **Residential Amenity**

11. The proposed turbine is sited near to an existing lawful travelers site and thus it is important to ensure that the proposals would not unduly impact upon the residents of this site through noise and disturbance.
12. The Council's Environmental Health Officers (EHO's) have commented on the proposals and consider that providing noise levels from the turbine do not exceed 35dB at the boundary of any noise sensitive sites (such as the travelers sites) then there would not be significant adverse harm in terms of noise and disturbance.
13. The applicant has provided a noise report that the Council's EHO's consider sufficient to demonstrate that the 35dB level can be met in this instance. Furthermore the applicant has agreed to a condition to ensure that the turbine never exceeds this noise level (for example though lack of maintenance etc).
14. Such a condition is considered reasonable in this instance, and in light of the above there is not considered to be undue amenity harm in this instance.

### **Further Considerations**

15. The proposals, being a wind turbine, constitute a clean energy source. Irrespective of subjective views on climate change clearly such measures are laudable and at any rate are supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Representation received queries the efficacy of wind power generally, however the NPPF advises that when considering proposals for renewable energy projects local planning authorities should recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions.
16. Whilst limited landscape harm is identified above the contribution of the project to cutting greenhouse emissions is considered to outweigh this.

17. It is necessary to impose a condition seeking the removal and reinstatement of the land should the turbine cease to be operational. This is in accordance with policy NE/2.
18. The traffic management plan recommended by the Local Highway Authority is considered reasonable and necessary in this instance.
19. Concerns are raised by representation for the mechanical efficiency of the turbine, the economic viability of the turbine and precedent for future expansion. None of these concerns are material to this case.

### **Conclusion**

20. Having regard to applicable national and local planning policies, and having taken all relevant material considerations into account, it is considered that planning permission should be granted in this instance.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Planning Committee approves the application subject to the following Conditions and Informatives.

### **Conditions**

1. **The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.**  
(Reason - To ensure that consideration of any future application for development in the area will not be prejudiced by permissions for development, which have not been acted upon.)
2. **The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans & Documents: CF20, SC-01 & SC-02.**  
(Reason – To facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.)
3. **Prior to the commencement of development on site a traffic management plan for the construction period of the turbine, hereby approved, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.**  
(Reason – in the interests of highway safety.)
4. **Within one month of the development, hereby permitted, ceasing to be used for energy generation purposes the Local Planning Authority shall be notified accordingly in writing. Within four months of such notification all apparatus (including any fencing and hard surfacing) shall be removed from the land and the land shall be restored to its former condition in accordance with a scheme of works submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**  
(Reason - To ensure that the turbine and associated equipment is removed from the site when the need for the structure ceases in order to avoid dereliction in the countryside in the long term in accordance with Policy DP/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
5. **The level of noise emissions from the wind turbine shall not exceed a noise” immission” limit level of 35 dB LAeq,10-minute at any time in free-field conditions, at the boundary of any noise sensitive residential premises /**

**dwellings, at wind speeds of up to 12m/s as measured or calculated at a height of 10m above ground level averaged over 10-minute periods within the turbine site. If the noise from the turbine at any noise sensitive residential premises / dwellings contains any noticeable acoustic characteristics such as tonal, thumping, swishing or fluttering then a +5dB correction shall be added to the overall dB Leq, 10-minute measured operational noise level.**

(Reason – in the interests of residential amenity)

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted January 2007)

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