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Planning Statement

Proposed Wind Turbine Garfield House Farm, Midhopestones, Stocksbridge, S36 4GW

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1.1 Introduction

Philip S. Ryley & Co. have been instructed by Mr Key to make an application for the erection of a 15kW, 15m wind turbine at his farm (Garfield House Farm) near Midhopestones.

The farm supports four members of staff, has 70 Cows, 2 Bulls, 100 Suffolk Ewes, 130 Lambs, 100 Shearlings and a number of guinea pigs and the intention is to use the wind turbine to reduce the operating costs and support this existing rural business.

Section 42 of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires that a statement detailing design principles and outlining access issues must accompany an application for planning permission. Similarly section 3 of DCLG Circular 01/06 outlines that a supporting statement must demonstrate how these considerations have been assessed in the proposal, outline the underlying principle applied and how this relates to the local context.

1.2 Local Plan Designation

The site is designated as Green Belt and an Area of Borough Landscape Value within the Barnsley Local Plan.

1.3 Planning Policy Review

The following Policies are deemed relevant to this application:-

1.4 National Policy

- **NPPF**

The key national policy in relation to this proposal is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF is a material consideration in planning applications and seeks to support a pro-growth agenda. It is underpinned by a 'golden thread', that is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Within the NPPF, sustainable development is determined to have three dimensions:

> *"●● **an economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and*

innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

●● ***a social role*** *– supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and*

●● ***an environmental role*** *– contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy."*

In relation to this proposal, the economic dimension relates to the use of the wind turbine to reduce the operating costs and support this existing rural business. As detailed above the farm keeps sheep and cows and employs four members of staff. Support for a rural business such as this forms part of the economic argument for the proposal and reflects further guidance in the NPPF, particularly paragraphs 19, 20 and 28:

"19. The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. ***Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth****.*

20. To help achieve economic growth, local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century.

28. Planning policies should ***support economic growth in rural areas*** *in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:*

●● ***support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas****, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;*

●● *promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*

●● *support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate*

locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres; and

●● *promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship."*

The promotion and support of a rural business in a rural location has wider social benefits; the farm forms part of a wider farming community and is involved in the stewardship and management of the land under its ownership. Providing a renewable source of energy supports the business and enables it to retain its role, managing the landscape.

Finally the proposal contributes a significant environmental benefit by providing a renewable source of energy for the farm operations; utilising the natural resource of wind which is prevalent in the area. This in turn will help to minimise the CO_2 footprint of the farm and supports the wider shift towards a low carbon economy which is encouraged by central Government.

This approach is emphasized by paragraph 93 of the NPPF, which reiterates the centrality of supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy to what constitutes sustainable development:

"93. Planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. This is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development."

- **Special Circumstances**

Notwithstanding the principles of the proposal in relation to NPPF and its definition of sustainable development, the site lies within the Green Belt and within an Area of High Landscape Value. Consequently very special circumstances needs to be demonstrated to outweigh any harm to the Green Belt created by proposal, in accordance with paragraph 88 of the NPPF:

"88. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations."

In relation to harm to the Green Belt caused by a wind turbine, typically this is linked to the visual impact created by the insertion of a linear object onto the landscape. In this instance, enclosed within the planning submission is a Visual Impact Assessment intended to assess this element of the proposal in more detail. This report should be read in conjunction with the assessment.

The proposed siting of the turbine is in reasonable proximity to a much larger electricity pylon. Given the pylon is north of the proposed turbine (therefore higher on the hillside and much more prominent) and is significantly larger in scale, it is felt that this significantly mitigates against the impact of and harm caused the much smaller wind turbine.

In relation to the very special circumstances of the proposal which outweigh this harm, they reflect those articulated in relation to the definition of sustainable development. The proposed wind turbine will help to reduce the operating costs and support this existing rural business, which provides employment for the locality. The proposal will also result in the reduction of the CO_2 footprint of the farm which uses significant amounts of energy from the national grid[1]. This small-scale project will make a valuable contribution the broader aims of cutting greenhouse gas emissions. These wider environmental benefits constitute very special circumstances which outweigh the minimal harm to the Green Belt caused by the introduction of a small turbine in this location.

- **Other Impacts**

Notwithstanding the landscape impacts considered within the Visual Impact Assessment and commented on in summary above, consideration has been given to other impacts from the proposal as per paragraph 98 of the NPPF:

> *"98. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should:*
> *●● not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and also recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and*
> *●● approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should also expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas."*

[1] More detailed information about energy use/savings can be provided if required.

These impacts relate to noise generation and impact on biodiversity. In relation to the former, noise data from the turbine supplier is enclosed as part of this submission. The nearest third party properties are a significant distance to the south of the site and sheltered by mature landscaping. For these reasons it is not expected that noise generated from the turbine will impact on any local amenity.

With regard to biodiversity impact, a survey has been enclosed as part of this submission detailing any potential impact from the proposal. In line with paragraph 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework, any conditions suggested within the biodiversity survey can be accorded to in order to conserve and enhance any local biodiversity.

1.5 Local Policy

The Barnsley Unitary Development Plan articulates policy in the local area. Of relevance to this proposal are the following extracts:

> *"Policy GS7*
> *WITHOUT PREJUDICE AND SUBJECT TO THE APPLICATION OF POLICIES GS8, GS8A, GS8B, GS8C, GS8D, GS8E AND GS9 IN THIS PLAN, DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE GREEN BELT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS IT MAINTAINS THE OPENNESS OF, AND DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH THE PURPOSES OF INCLUDING LAND IN, THE GREEN BELT."*

The proposal is a single wind turbine of typical linear appearance and form. It is sited in close proximity to a large national grid pylon and consequently it is not expected to impact on the openness of the green belt.

> *"Policy GS9*
> *DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE GREEN BELT, OR CONSPICUOUS FROM IT, SHOULD NOT BY REASON OF ITS SITING, MATERIALS OR DESIGN RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT HARM TO THE VISUAL AMENITY OF THE GREEN BELT."*

The justification of the proposal is the capacity to generate 15kW of energy from a renewable source, which will help supply energy to the farm operations on site. The generation of energy in this form is a material consideration to which significant weight must be attached.

The design of the turbine is fairly utilitarian and has a simple, functional appearance. The materials used are matt finish white and grey metal which will not appear conspicuous on the landscape and are typical of this type of installation. The Applicant did consider siting the

turbine neared to the farm buildings on site, but it was felt that the proximity to mature vegetation to the east and the shelter it provides from the wind led to it not being practical or appropriate. The decision to position the turbine means that any visual impact is mitigated against due to the proximity of the much larger electricity pylon. Furthermore this position is further away from third party properties (beneficial to avoid creating noise issues) and from potential habitats for wildlife. As such it was determined to be the most suitable position within land under the ownership of the Applicant.

"Policy PE8

IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY GS13, WITHIN THE AREAS SHOWN AS BOROUGH LANDSCAPE VALUE ON THE PROPOSALS MAP CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE LANDSCAPE WILL BE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS."

Whilst Policy GS13 has been deleted, PE8 covers the same issues and is relevant here. In relation to this policy, the proposal lies within the Borough Landscape Value Area and consequently visual impact is a key material consideration for a development such as this. As such a Visual Impact Assessment has been enclosed as part of this submission. Notwithstanding the more detailed assessment undertaken in this report, given the sites close proximity to a large electricity pylon, it is not expected that a much smaller turbine sited less prominently (lower down the hillside) would have a detrimental impact on the landscape.

"Policy ES12
PROPOSALS FOR WIND ENERGY GENERATION WILL BE ASSESSED WITH REGARD TO THE FOLLOWING FACTORS :

A) THE EFFECT BOTH INDIVIDUALLY AND CUMULATIVELY ON LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY OF THE AREA

B) THE IMPACT ON RESIDENTIAL AMENITY WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO NOISE, VISUAL OUTLOOK, AND SHADOW FLICKER AND FLASHING FROM TURBINE BLADES

C) THE PROVISION OF A SATISFACTORY ACCESS TO THE HIGHWAY NETWORK HAVING REGARD TO VISUAL AMENITY AND THE SAFETY OF ROAD USERS AND THE EFFECT OF THE PROPOSALS ON ROAD USERS INCLUDING LIKELY DISTRACTION TO MOTORISTS

D) THE EFFECT ON WILDLIFE, ECOLOGY AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE IMMEDIATE AREA

E) THE EFFECT ON AGRICULTURAL LAND USES

F) ELECTRO-MAGNETIC EFFECTS

G) THE PROVISIONS FOR CONNECTION TO THE ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION AND SUPPLY SYSTEM

H) THE EFFECT OF SHADOW FLICKER OR FLASHING FROM THE TURBINE BLADES THE COUNCIL WILL EXPECT A DETAILED STATEMENT WHICH HAS REGARD TO THESE ISSUES, TO ACCOMPANY ANY APPLICATION FOR WIND POWER. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS, WHERE SUCH AN APPRAISAL IS DEEMED NECESSARY IN VIEW OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL."

The individual impact of the turbine is lessened by the presence of existing pylon in the vicinity of the proposal. Relative to this pylon nearby, the turbine is of a smaller scale and consequently any impact of the turbine will be reduced.

With reference to residential amenity, a Noise Report is enclosed as part of this proposal. The proposal is in excess of 200m from the nearest third party properties and as a result it is expected that it will not have an impact on the amenity of other persons. Similarly given these significant distances, the relative isolation of the turbine's location and the presence of mature screening vegetation, it is not expected that any detrimental shadow flicker will be created.

Furthermore the proposal will have no impact of highways safety given its siting in a relatively isolated location and can be assembled in parts on the site so delivery will not create any traffic issues. In relation to wildlife impacts, these are considered in the Biodiversity report which accompanies this submission. Enhancements identified within the report can be offered where necessary in order to preserve and improve the local biodiversity. In addition the proposal is not positioned near any site of special designation relating to archaeology.

Finally the proposal will not affect any nearby agriculture (it will in fact provide a boost to the existing operations on site) nor will it create any electro-magnetic effect. With reference to the latter, a number of installations of these turbines have been approved in sensitive locations (such as nearby to airports) and this demonstrates that electro-magnetic interference is no longer an issue for this type of installations.

1.6 Appeal Precedents

As stated above, the key material consideration for wind turbines is visual appearance and impact. There has been an Appeal Decision within the Yorkshire area which is pertinent to this proposal – APP/W4705/A/09/2118825. The proposal was for a similarly scaled turbine within a Green Belt context. Furthermore the Appeal site was within a Special Landscape Area – a high level of landscape character and visual value. The Appeal was upheld and implications for this proposal are twofold:

(1) *The Inspector recognised the "diluting effect" other factors have in reducing any visual harm of a turbine of identical scale to this proposal and that any harmful visual effect would be reduced to an acceptable level on both the Green Belt and the Special Landscape Area. The factors identified were telegraph poles, pylons, dwellings, hedges, the backdrop of higher land and presence of large vegetation. All these factors are present on and around this proposal and therefore any impact on wider view is diluted. The photomontages demonstrate that the effect of the turbine is minimal and no harm is caused to the landscape.*

(2) *The Inspector identified the value of small-scale renewable energy installations such as this and attached significant weight to this, in line with PPS22. Whilst the innate inappropriateness and harm of the development in the Green Belt was acknowledged, the environmental benefits of production of energy from renewable sources "clearly outweighed" the harm to the Green Belt and constituted very special circumstances.*

1.7 Landscape Comment

The site appears to lie within the B1: Upland Don River Valley in the Barnsley Borough Landscape Character Assessment. Within the assessment, the Landscape Evaluation regards the strength of character of the area to be strong, with the landscape in a good condition. The landscape sensitivity to built development is considered to be high and landscape capacity judged to be low. However, as stated above, the impact of the proposal will be benign in regards to landscape character due to the proximity of a much larger pylon nearby, and will have no significant impact on the landscape condition.

1.8 Context

The context is a proposed wind turbine on a farm in a rural area. The proposal will provide an on-site source of renewable energy, which will be utilised by the farm, significantly reducing operating costs and providing a clean source of energy.

1.9 Design

The design of the turbine is utilitarian and simple and formed from materials which will mean it is not conspicuous on the landscape.

2.0 Amount

The amount of development proposed is appropriate to serve the needs of the farm and will provide a boost for a local employer. Other renewable energy installations have been considered but wind energy was considered appropriate here due to the high wind levels. Solar panels and photovoltaic cells were one option but they do not provide consistent energy throughout the day/night and also throughout the year. Similarly there are not the natural resources under the control of the Applicant for a waterpower installation and their power output is less consistent throughout the year.

2.1 Use

The use of the proposal is to provide a renewable source of energy to supply existing operations on site.

2.2 Scale

The scale of the proposal is akin to a small telegraph pole or single tree and therefore would not appear incongruous within its landscape context.

2.3 Landscaping

No landscaping changes are proposed.

2.4 Appearance

The turbine is formed from matte materials and has a benign and utilitarian appearance.

2.5 Conclusion

In light of the above, the proposal accords with policy and should therefore be acceptable to the LPA.