

Spring Brook Wind Turbine

Planning Statement

June 2013



1 Planning and Policy Context

- 1.1.1 This Planning Policy Assessment was prepared by TEW Limited (TEW), and explains how the proposed Spring Brook Wind Turbine (Spring Brook) meets relevant planning policy and legislation.

1.1 Site Planning History

- 1.1.1 On 24th July 2008 a planning application (2008/0784) was approved for a 70m high wind monitoring mast. On 14th January 2009 this permission was extended for a further 12 months (2008/1667). On 16th December 2009, a planning application for five 125m wind turbines at "Sheephouse Heights" (2008/0838) was refused planning permission due to the site being in the Green Belt, the proposal's visual impact on Midhopstones conservation area, proximity to dwellings (300-400m), and visual impact on the Peak District National Park (**Appendix 3.3**).
- 1.1.2 On 8th August 2012, a Screening Opinion (**Appendix 3.2**) was received on a proposal for two wind turbines with a height to blade tip of up to 101m, requesting an EIA be submitted with any subsequent planning application due to potentially significant landscape and visual impacts.
- 1.1.3 On 16th January 2013 a Screening Opinion (**Appendix 3.1**) was received on the current proposal (for a single turbine up to 79m to tip), requesting an EIA be submitted with any subsequent planning application due to potentially significant landscape and visual impacts.

1.2 International and National Policy Drivers

- 1.2.1 UK energy policy is best understood by considering the following steps taken by the Government over the past few decades.

The 1988 Energy Paper 55 and the Electricity Act 1989

- 1.2.2 The UK's response to global warming and its commitment to reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions can be traced through a series of papers and measures starting with 1988's Energy Paper 55 and the Electricity Act 1989, which created the concept of the Non-Fossil Fuel Obligation and then the Renewables Obligation under which supply companies have to purchase increasing amounts of electricity each year from renewable sources.
- 1.2.3 Initial targets of 5% by 2005 and 10% by 2010 were followed by a target for the whole of the UK of 20% of electricity from renewable sources by 2020.

The 2003 Energy White Paper and the 2006 Energy Review

- 1.2.4 The 2003 White Paper set out a new direction for energy policy in which the Government committed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 60% by 2050.
- 1.2.5 The subsequent Energy Review stated that renewable energy is to be an integral part of the Government's long-term aim of reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 60% by 2050, and that renewables would be used to tackle climate change by reducing our dependence and use of fossil fuels for electricity generation.

UK Agreement to Kyoto Protocol, 2005

- 1.2.6 The Kyoto Protocol aimed to achieve a reduction in anthropogenic carbon dioxide levels to at least 5% below 1990 levels by 2012. It sought to ensure that all

reasonable opportunities were taken forward to encourage development, which is energy efficient, including the use of renewable energy.

- 1.2.7 The UN Climate Change Conference in Durban in 2011 resulted in EU countries committing to an extension of the Kyoto Protocol beyond 2012, and all countries agreeing to be part of a legally binding treaty to address global warming, the terms of which will be defined by 2015, and become effective in 2020. At the Doha Conference in 2012, the EU (and other countries) agreed to reduce emissions 18% below 1990 levels in the period 2013-2020.

Climate Change Programme, 2006

- 1.2.8 The Climate Change Programme represents the Government's initial steps to address climate change issues in the UK as a response to the Kyoto Protocol. Essentially it set targets to reduce the UK's emissions of greenhouse gases to 20% below 1990 levels by 2010, with even greater cuts in the longer term. Renewable energy has a key role to play in meeting these targets.

The Stern Report, 2006

- 1.2.9 A major contribution to the climate change debate in the UK came with the publication of the Stern Report, which sought to understand more comprehensively the economic challenges of climate change and how they can be met, both in the UK and globally.

The White Paper, 2007

- 1.2.10 In May 2007, the UK Government published a further White Paper, which stated that a "clear steer" was, henceforth, being given to planning professionals and local authority decision-makers that they should look favourably on renewable energy developments.
- 1.2.11 The Paper also re-emphasised that the Renewables Statement of Need, from the 2006 Energy Review, represents a clear statement of UK policy. The Statement requires that the wider benefits of renewable energy must be taken into account and that any contribution it makes, whatever its size, is a material consideration, which should be given significant weight when considering renewable proposals.

EU Renewable Energy Policy

- 1.2.12 In March 2007, European leaders signed up to a binding EU-wide target to source 20% of their energy needs (not just electricity, but electricity, heat and transport) from renewables. This target, together with a binding target for the UK to supply 15% of its energy from renewable sources by 2020, was adopted in December 2008.

Climate Change Act 2008

- 1.2.13 The Act introduced legally binding targets in the UK to cut carbon dioxide emissions by at least 26% by 2020 (and 80% by 2050) against a 1990 baseline, and a carbon budgeting system capping emissions over five year periods. An increased target of a 34% reduction by 2020 was announced in the 2009 budget.

The Renewable Energy Strategy (RES), July 2009

- 1.2.14 The UK Government has signed up to the EU requirement that 15% of all energy consumed in the UK should be from renewable sources by 2020, i.e. all energy sources and not just electricity. In the light of the difficulties in providing significant elements of fuel and heating from renewables by 2020, the proportion

of electricity supply that will have to come from renewables to balance this out will need to be raised substantially to at least 30%

Low Carbon Transition Plan, July 2009

- 1.2.15 This White Paper was published alongside the RES and sets out the UK's first ever, comprehensive Low Carbon Transition Plan to 2020 by which time the UK will get 40% of electricity from low carbon sources. It sets out the five year 'carbon budgets' to 2022, and indicates that the Government is committed to moving to tighter carbon budgets pending new global agreements.

National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1), July 2011

- 1.2.16 The National Policy Statement for Energy restates the RES and Low Carbon Transition Plan policies, and has material weight in planning decisions. It confirms that 'onshore wind farms are the most established large scale source of renewable energy in the UK' and 'will continue to play an important role in meeting renewable energy targets.'

1.3 National Planning Policy

- 1.3.1 National planning policy in England is currently set out through the following documents¹:
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
 - Planning Circulars
 - National policy statements
- 1.3.2 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. It sets a framework within which local people and Councils can produce their own local and neighbourhood plans, and (along with circulars and statements) is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 1.3.3 The Government is in the process of distilling over 6000 pages of planning guidance associated with the planning policies which were revoked upon publication of the NPPF.
- 1.3.4 At the heart of the NPPF is a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development', both through plan preparation and decision taking. For decision taking, this means²:
- approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
 - where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting planning permission unless:
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole; or

¹ The Government's planning policy for traveller sites and the National Waste Management Plan for England are also considered national planning policies but are not relevant to this application.

² DCLG (2012), paragraph 14.

³ DCLG (2012), paragraph 14.

- specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.

1.3.5 Regarding renewable energy, the NPPF states³ that to help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, local planning authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources. They should:

- have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources;
- design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts;
- consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure the development of such sources;
- support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside such areas being taken forward through neighbourhood planning; and
- identify opportunities where development can draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers.

1.3.6 The NPPF (98) also instructs local planning authorities in their determination of planning applications to:

- 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.

1.3.7 Regarding areas of the search and location criteria, the NPPF states the following:

“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”.

1.3.8 Further guidance on wind energy developments is included in the National Policy Statement for Energy, which sets out factors influencing site selection and technical considerations for determining applications.

1.3.9 Regarding Green Belts, the NPPF states that their fundamental aim is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence (79). The NPPF sets out the 5 purposes Green Belts serve (80). The 2 purposes relevant to the Spring Brook proposal are:

- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

³ DCLG (2012), paragraph 97.

- 1.3.10 The NPPF considers that when located in the Green Belt, elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development. In such cases developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances if projects are to proceed. Such very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources (91).
- 1.3.11 The NPPF reflects the new 'duty to cooperate' enshrined in the Localism Act, requiring public bodies to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those which relate to strategic priorities. Strategic priorities - set out in local plans - should include policies to deliver climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape (156). Although the Spring Brook site falls completely within Barnsley Council's administrative area, a 5km radius around Spring Brook encompasses land administered by two other local planning authorities: Sheffield City Council, and the Peak District National Park Authority.

1.4 LDF Core Strategy

- 1.4.1 The Barnsley Core Strategy was adopted in September 2011, and sets out the Council's vision for the future development of Barnsley over the next 15 - 20 years and is the principal, overarching document in the LDF.
- 1.4.2 The 2008 Yorkshire and Humber Plan (RSS) was revoked⁴ on 22 February 2013. It set minimum targets for installed renewable energy generation capacity in Barnsley of 15 MW by 2010, and 34 MW by 2021 (ENV5). The Barnsley Core Strategy restates the local RSS renewable energy generation target of 34MW by 2021.
- 1.4.3 The revoked RSS and current Core Strategy targets are derived from the 2004 Renewable Energy Assessments and Targets Study (GoY&H and the Y&H Assembly (2004)) and a previous 2002 Capacity Study for the region. A more recent capacity study for Local Government Yorkshire and Humber, prepared by Aecom in 2011, points to a potential commercial wind resource of 86MW in Barnsley, predominantly in the southwest of the borough.⁵
- 1.4.4 Policy CSP6 of the Core Strategy allows for development that produces renewable energy as long as there is no significantly harmful effect on:
- the character of the landscape and appearance of the area
 - living conditions
 - biodiversity, geodiversity and water quality
 - heritage assets, their settings and cultural features and areas
 - highway safety, and
 - infrastructure including radar
- 1.4.5 The policy requires proposals to be accompanied by information that shows how the local environment will be protected, and that the site will be restored when production ends.

⁴ With the exception of Green Belt policies around York.

⁵ Local Government Yorkshire and Humber (2011), Figure 23

- 1.4.6 The Core Strategy recognises that some proposals for renewable energy will have significant effects on the local area – such as prominence in the landscape. In such cases, the Council will ‘carefully weigh up the environmental, social and economic benefits of the proposals against effects on the local area including any effects on the National Park, the Green Belt and European and Natura 2000 designations’.
- 1.4.7 The Core Strategy (9.41) commits the Council to preparing a Supplementary Planning Document on Renewable Energy - looking at landscape capacity across the Council area. This is currently at the early stages of preparation, and a draft is not expected until summer 2013.
- 1.4.8 Policy CSP 34 provides for the protection of the Green Belt and does not allow for uses other than those set out in national policy unless very special circumstances justify it.
- 1.4.9 Policy CSP21 encourages a viable rural economy by allowing development in rural areas which supports sustainable diversification and development of the rural economy. Development in rural areas is expected to
- not have a harmful impact on the countryside, biodiversity, Green Belt, landscape or local character of the area
 - protect the best quality agricultural land⁶
- 1.4.10 The land within the Spring Brook site is classified by DEFRA⁷ as Grade 4 agricultural land.

1.5 Barnsley UDP

- 1.5.1 Saved policies in the Barnsley UDP are gradually being replaced by LDF policies. The weight to be given to saved Local Plan policies which have yet to be superseded by LDF policies depends on their degree of consistency with the NPPF.
- 1.5.2 Saved Policies GS18 (local nature reserves, natural heritage sites, ancient woodland, RIGS, nature conservation sites) and BE4 (archaeological sites) are discussed in the ecology and heritage sections of the discussion below, and in more detail in the respective ES chapters.
- 1.5.3 Saved Policy ES12C, which relates to the control of development in the vicinity of existing wind energy generation installations to safeguard them from a reduction in local wind speeds, is not relevant to the Spring Brook proposal.

1.6 Discussion

- 1.6.1 The discussion is structured according to the criteria set out in Core Strategy Policy CSP6 and draws on other relevant policies, guidance and the detailed assessments in the relevant ES chapters.

The character of the landscape and appearance of the area

- 1.6.2 Barnsley Core Strategy Policy 37 expects development to retain the character and distinctiveness of the individual Landscape Character Area in which it is located.

⁶ The NPPF defines the best and most versatile agricultural land as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a.

⁷ <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/website/magic/>

- 1.6.3 The 2004 document 'Planning for Renewable Energy Targets in Yorkshire and Humber'⁸, which set the RSS and Core Strategy renewable energy targets for Barnsley, assigned sensitivity ratings to each of the landscape character areas in the region:
- landscapes protected at national level are Zone 2 - 'areas whose character would be significantly adversely affected by wind energy development';
 - landscapes protected at regional or local level are Zone 3 - 'broadly suitable for wind energy development, if potential impacts on landscape character are fully explored and guarded against through good design and siting'; and
 - non-designated landscapes are Zone 4 - 'acceptable for a significant number of wind energy developments' (GoY&H and the Y&H Assembly (2004), Vol.2, p.19).
- 1.6.4 The Council's screening opinion (**Appendix 3.1**) confirms that the Spring Brook site does not lie within any specific landscape designation. And the 2011 regional capacity study confirms the "practically viable wind resource" around the Spring Brook site. Both the 2004 and 2011 studies were however undertaken at a strategic level, using regional character areas (from the Character Map of England). The 2004 document states (p.20) that it is "not intended to give guidance for either local plans or individual applications. Specific designations in local plans or Individual proposals may be appropriate within the highest sensitivity zones, whilst there may be objections or a refusal to an application within the low sensitivity zone if it is inappropriately designed or sited." The 2011 study recommends "an assessment of the sensitivity of the landscape to objects such as large wind turbines is carried out for the whole region, either at a sub-regional or local level" (p.42), noting that only one such study has been carried out – for the South Pennines.
- 1.6.5 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) in the ES has assessed the capacity of the landscape around Spring Brook to absorb wind energy development, following the refusal of the 5 turbine Sheephouse Heights proposal in 2009, and during the recent EIA screening stages.
- 1.6.6 As the LVIA study area covers multiple administrative areas, the baseline landscape character descriptions are drawn from Landscape Character Assessments for Barnsley, Sheffield, the Peak District, as well as from the South Pennines capacity study.
- 1.6.7 A survey of operational, consented and 'in planning' wind turbine developments within 10km of Spring Brook was carried out in consultation with the Council.
- 1.6.8 The LVIA incorporates Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping and photomontages/wirelines from 12 sensitive viewpoints agreed with the Council. The assessment of the proposal's landscape and visual impacts includes potential cumulative impacts (in combination with other existing and proposed wind energy schemes from certain views).
- 1.6.9 The visualisations are accompanied by supporting text, describing details of the methodology used to produce the photomontages and ZTV's, and appropriate ways of using these tools to assess the proposal (e.g. appropriate viewing distance) and assessing visual impact from the viewpoints.

⁸ GoY&H and the Y&H Assembly (2004), Vol.2

- 1.6.10 The impact of the proposal on the settings of protected heritage assets in the area (Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) is discussed in more detail below, in the Heritage Assets section, and in Chapter 9 of the ES.
- 1.6.11 Barnsley Core Strategy Policy 34 and the NPPF (91) require very special circumstances to justify a non Green Belt use at Spring Brook. A recent case at the High Court has also established that if very special circumstances are to exist, they must clearly outweigh harm not only to the Green Belt but any other harm that may be identified.⁹
- 1.6.12 The NPPF sets out the aims and purposes of Green Belt policy, and states that 'many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development' when located in the Green Belt. However, there is no absolute bar on wind farm development in the Green Belt, as indicated in the Scout Moor¹⁰, Marr¹¹ and Cliffs Farm¹² decisions. At the Darrington¹³ appeal, the Inspector noted that 'the decision on individual cases turns on the balance between harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm on the one hand and the benefits that the wind farm would bring on the other hand. The weighing of harm against benefits is a matter for a case by case assessment' (p.84).
- 1.6.13 The Spring Brook proposal will harm the Green Belt in so far as it contributes to a loss of openness. This loss needs to be quantified and weighed against (*inter alia*) the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources. Of relevance to this consideration is the temporary nature of the project. Any adverse affect on the open character of the area will be reversed and restored post decommissioning.
- 1.6.14 The LVIA considers the degree to which the Spring Brook proposal would contribute to a loss of openness, and thereby conflict with Green Belt policy. The wider benefits are summarised in the conclusions below and in more detail in Chapter 15.

Living Conditions

- 1.6.15 Wind energy developments can create jobs locally, but may also impact on local communities' amenity. There are few residential properties in close proximity to the site, the closest are between 260m to 360m to the west. The visual impact of the proposal on nearby properties is discussed in the LVIA.
- 1.6.16 It is generally accepted that where a separation distance for wind turbines from habitations exceeds ten times the rotor diameter of a turbine blade (A.D. Clarke (1991)), shadow flicker will not be significant. In the case of the proposed turbine, which will have a maximum blade diameter of 54m, shadow flicker could be an issue at distances up to 540m. The shadow flicker assessment which does not take into account the effect of intervening trees was undertaken based on a 540m Assessment Zone, demonstrating that several receptor locations may be

⁹ High Court of Justice Judgment (The River Club v SSCLG & Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames ([2009] EWHC 2674))

¹⁰ Inquiry on S36 application - Rochdale, Greater Manchester (2005)

¹¹ Planning application - Doncaster, South Yorkshire (2007) - 07/00445/FULA

¹² Planning appeal - Lancashire (2008) APP/D2320/A/08/2069152

¹³ Planning appeal - Wakefield, West Yorkshire (2009) APP/X4725/A/09/2101120

exposed to weak shadow flicker resulting in potential impacts of low significance. Mitigation is unlikely to be required. Figure 12.1 demonstrates the potential shadow area. Further details are provided in **Chapter 12** of the ES, Shadow Flicker.

- 1.6.17 An appropriate shadow flicker condition can be applied stating that demonstrable effects would be mitigated by enabling turbine operational controls.
- 1.6.18 Barnsley Core Strategy Policy 40 requires development proposals to demonstrate that they are not likely to result directly or indirectly in an increase in various forms of pollution, including noise. The Council's screening opinion highlighted the potential for noise disturbance due to the proximity of residential properties.
- 1.6.19 The Spring Brook turbine has been sited and designed to fully comply with the relevant noise guidelines. In accordance with UK Government guidance, wind energy proposals should follow the established industry best practice guidelines supplied in the ETSU (1997) report 'The Assessment of Rating of Noise from Windfarms'.¹⁴ The noise assessment included as **Chapter 11** includes a noise contour plan (Figure 11) illustrating worst-case scenarios in relation to the potential audibility of the wind turbine at proximate residential properties, accompanied by a full description of the methodology used. A table illustrating predicted noise levels and cumulative noise levels at proximate dwellings is also included (Table 11). The conclusion of the operational noise assessment is that the noise levels at the nearest properties to the proposed turbine would not exceed the levels identified in ETSU-R-97.
- 1.6.20 An appropriate noise condition can be applied to any planning permission to ensure noise emissions are kept within acceptable limits.
- 1.6.21 A key impact on people and settlements can be the construction of the development itself. In some cases a method statement may be required to detail elements of the process, which may have impacts on residents or visitors in the area.
- 1.6.22 **Chapter 10** details the anticipated vehicle movements onto the site during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the wind turbines. The chapter also details the vehicles, abnormal loads, routing and measures considered necessary to minimise highway impacts such as phasing, wheel washing and local safety measures.
- 1.6.23 Given that the predicted night-time noise levels at affected properties will not exceed the levels identified in ETSU-R-97, shadow flicker will not affect any of the neighbouring properties, and the visual impact of the turbines on nearby dwellings will be low, its impact on amenity is considered low.

Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Water Quality

- 1.6.24 Core Strategy Policy 36 requires development to conserve and enhance biodiversity and geological features.

¹⁴ ETSU-R-97 recommends the noise limit should normally lie in the range 35-40 dB(A), except where the occupants of a property receive a financial benefit from the wind farm, where a higher limit of 45 dB(A) may be appropriate.

- 1.6.25 The 2004 and 2011 regional renewable energy capacity studies include natural heritage sensitivity in their assessments, and consider the Spring Brook site of low natural heritage sensitivity. The site does not lie in a sensitive area as defined in the EIA Regulations. And, the Council's screening response confirms that it is unlikely the proposal would have significant environmental effects on SSSI located 1.6km to the west (Spring Meadows, Alderman's Head and Cow Croft Meadows).
- 1.6.26 The proposal's potential impacts upon habitats and species are considered in **Chapter 7** of the ES and **Appendix 7.1**, which presents an Ecological Impact Assessment of the site and an exploration of opportunities for habitat creation/enhancement.
- 1.6.27 Core Strategy Policy 3 requires all development to use Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). Due to the relatively small footprint of the proposal and the fact that there are no natural watercourses close to the turbine location, hydrological impacts resulting from the proposal will be very limited. All construction designs and methods would be in accordance with Environment Agency Pollution Prevention Guidelines.
- 1.6.28 The Ecological Impact Assessment, attached as Appendix 7.1, has concluded that the proposed turbine would not have any adverse ecological effects. Given that the wind turbines would only result in a slight change from the baseline position, the ecological and hydrological impact is likely to be negligible.

Heritage assets, their settings and cultural features and areas

- 1.6.29 The historic environment provides a sense of place and local distinctiveness, and development plan policies rightly provide protection for local heritage assets.
- 1.6.30 Core Strategy Policy 30 expects development to protect or improve:
- the character and/or appearance of Conservation Areas, SAMs, Listed Buildings (including any locally listed buildings or buildings of archaeological significance), archaeological remains of local or national importance
 - historic parks and gardens and other historic landscapes including key views from and within these landscapes
- 1.6.31 There are no protected or listed structures on or within the Spring Brook site. The closest is the Grade II-listed, Take Off stone, 378m to the northwest of the proposed wind turbine location. Midhopestones Conservation Area lies 1.15km to the southwest. The nearest Scheduled Monument is the Wayside Cross, 2.25km to the northwest.
- 1.6.32 Due to the absence of identified heritage assets within the site, the site itself is considered to be of low sensitivity.
- 1.6.33 Given the presence of cultural heritage sites in the surrounding area, the proposal has the potential to affect the setting of those sites. Following the assessment of impacts on setting in the LVIA and Heritage Assessment chapters it can be concluded that the proposal would not significantly affect the historic integrity of those sites, although in some cases it would change to a small degree the quality of their settings.
- 1.6.34 The effect of a proposal on an area's cultural heritage can impact on tourism in the area. Wind farms in some areas of the country have been shown to attract visits, but they have the potential to have negative impacts on visual amenity. In

addition to the heritage assessment, the LVIA has considered potential impacts on tourist routes in the area, such as the Trans Pennine Trail.

- 1.6.35 There are no existing or proposed recreational routes within or immediately adjacent to the turbine, but an access track is proposed into the site to allow for the installation, maintenance and decommissioning of the turbine, which would allow visitors access.

Highway safety

- 1.6.36 The proposed Spring Brook wind turbine is sited away from main roads and railways, and would not present a safety risk for road and rail users during its lifetime. Only class C roads and tracks come close to the site. The turbine will be set back from the closest road by more than its height and would pose no risk to driver distraction. Therefore its impact on public roads in terms of road safety throughout its lifetime will be negligible.
- 1.6.37 A transport assessment has been carried out to inform site design, project planning, and to ascertain a suitable (and safe) route for the delivery of project components. The results are set out in **Chapter 10**.

Infrastructure including radar

- 1.6.38 Major airports and technical sites are safeguarded by Directions under the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1992.
- 1.6.39 Potential effects of the proposal on aviation and defence interests have been assessed in consultation with the MOD and airport operators. Aviation interests are discussed in **Chapter 13** of the ES.
- 1.6.40 Wind turbines produce electro-magnetic radiation, which can interfere with broadcast communications and signals.
- 1.6.41 The potential impact the proposal could have on radio-communications links including interference with television reception (AM and digital) to properties in the area and consultation responses from Ofcom are set out in Chapter 13 of the ER, confirming that the quality of radio and TV reception and communication systems would not be adversely affected by the proposal. An appropriate condition can be applied to the permission to address any adverse impacts.

1.7 Summary and Conclusions

- 1.7.1 The conclusions of this Chapter are that the Spring Brook project:
- meets the requirements of applicable development plan policies;
 - does not compromise the reasons behind any relevant area designation;
 - addresses the issues of visual impact, and cumulative visual impact; and
 - makes a significant contribution towards the national and regional aims of sustainable development and the use of renewable energy, with limited impact on the natural/historic environment and on local amenity issues.
- 1.7.2 In reviewing the main relevant policies at international, national and local levels, the issues described in this summary can be considered to be the most relevant.

Social and Economic Benefits of Addressing Climate Change

- 1.7.3 As a renewable energy scheme this proposal has the potential to significantly contribute to international and national objectives on addressing climate change and reducing carbon dioxide emissions.
- 1.7.4 Spring Brook will generate enough electricity to supply the equivalent of around 503 homes with electricity every year for its operating life. Through generating electricity from a renewable source, it could also prevent the emission of approximately 1017 tonnes of carbon dioxide each year, or 25,426 tonnes over its lifetime.
- 1.7.5 The proposal is considered to be consistent with the aims of international and national policy, and the Development Plan.

Meeting the Renewable Energy Minimum Targets

- 1.7.6 This proposal has the potential to contribute up to 900KW of renewable installed capacity and will therefore make a significant contribution to the renewable energy targets that have been set for the UK and the Core Strategy targets.

Visual Impact Assessment

- 1.7.7 This is perhaps the key issue in terms of planning policy and is discussed in more detail in **Chapter 5**.
- 1.7.8 The proposal has been designed to minimise its impact on the landscape with a reduction in number and scale compared to previous proposals.
- 1.7.9 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) considers the potential impacts of the wind turbine in its immediate surroundings and the extent and nature of its visibility on a range of receptors. Typically, when assessing a wind energy proposal, these potential impacts are likely to be key areas of consideration by the determining authority.
- 1.7.10 The LVIA provides visualisations (including photomontage images and zones of theoretical visibility) to illustrate how the proposal would appear. The visualisations have been produced in accordance with the latest best practice guidelines, such as Scottish Natural Heritage's 2006 guidelines.
- 1.7.11 The proposal is considered to meet all the relevant landscape and cumulative impact policies at national and local levels.

Impact on the Natural and Built Environment

- 1.7.12 The potential impacts of Spring Brook upon the ecology and bird life in the vicinity of the proposal have been fully assessed and are set out in **Chapter 6**.
- 1.7.13 The potential impacts on archaeological features and cultural heritage have been assessed in **Chapter 9**. The assessment considered the impacts - both direct and indirect - during construction and operation upon historic sites, listed buildings, conservation areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs), and included consideration of their settings. The assessment concludes that the proposed development would have limited impacts on known archaeological sites.
- 1.7.14 The proposal is considered to comply with policies at national and local levels.

Local amenity, noise and shadow flicker

- 1.7.15 The proposal has been assessed for impacts related to visual amenity (**Chapter 5**), and noise and shadow flicker (**Chapters 11** and **12**). No significant impacts are predicted.

Rural development and Diversification of the Rural Economy

- 1.7.16 It is acknowledged that a sustained level of local employment is unlikely to result from this type of development. However, Spring Brook will help to diversify and sustain the existing farming business, which is consistent with national and local policy objectives.

Telecommunication, Television and Electromagnetic Interference

- 1.7.17 Microwave link operators have been consulted regarding the proposal. The results of the consultation process are set out in **Chapter 13**, which confirm that, subject to appropriate siting, the Spring Brook turbine will not have any significant impacts on television reception, electromagnetic or other forms of radio or telecommunication links.

Traffic and Transport

- 1.7.18 The potential impacts of the traffic associated with the development upon the local road network are described in **Chapter 10**.

Construction Issues

- 1.7.19 A detailed plan and schedule of the construction phase for Spring Brook is described in **Chapter 2: Project Description**.

Decommissioning and Restoration

- 1.7.20 A temporary planning consent of 30 years duration is sought for the Spring Brook project. Details of the future decommissioning of the wind turbine together with a description of how the site can be restored are contained in **Chapter 2: Project Description**.
- 1.7.21 In line with Core Strategy Policy 6, the developer will undertake to decommission the development at the end of its operating life. It is considered that these issues can satisfactorily be dealt with through the use of appropriate planning conditions and the subsequent preparation of a Decommissioning Method Statement.
- 1.7.22 The proposal is therefore considered to comply with policies regarding the removal of wind energy structures and remediation.

Local Content of works

- 1.7.23 Local businesses will be encouraged to tender for the construction works, which would be worth around £375,000 (see **Chapter 16**).

Community Benefit

- 1.7.24 A community benefit package of up to £10,000 per year, equivalent to £250,000 - £300,000 (in real terms) over the lifetime of the project, will reduce energy bills for those living closest to the wind turbine and has the potential to provide valuable funding support for local groups and community projects.

1.8 References

- Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (2011) Barnsley Core Strategy, <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/environment-and-planning/planning/local-development-framework/core-strategy>
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