

PLANNING JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT

Statement dated 26th March 2012

Applicant:	Peter Turner
Proposed Development:	Installation of 1 No medium scale 50Kw Endurance wind turbine on a 25m monopole mast
Site Address:	Land at Martin's Nest Farm, Victoria, Hepworth, Huddersfield HD9 7TG

Introduction

- 1.1 Planning Policy Statement 22 – Renewable Energy states that “Renewable energy development projects 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.” It asks local planning authorities when assessing planning applications to “recognise that the impact of turbines on the landscape will vary according to the size and number of turbines and the type of landscape involved.” It also asks Local Planning Authorities to consider that “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.”
- 1.2 The proposed turbine at Martin's Nest Farm, hereafter called 'The Farm' will be sited in a location with a good wind resource (a minimum of 7 m/s) where energy output and performance will be high. It is proposed to replace an existing 15Kw Proven wind turbine with a larger Endurance 50Kw wind turbine. The new turbine will be sited in a slightly different location and will stand on a 25m mast – 10m higher than the existing turbine and 14.5m higher overall from ground to blade tip.
- 1.3 The design, scale and appearance of the development has been considered and both technical and environmental factors have been examined to determine, on balance the most appropriate site and type of wind development that optimises energy production and satisfactorily addresses environmental, economic and social impacts. This process is outlined in detail in our accompanying Design & Access Statement.
- 1.4 The proposed turbine:
 - will be sited close to an existing wind turbine where the principle of development has already been accepted; it
 - will be sited as close as possible to the existing farm complex, on land of low amenity/ biodiversity value. and surrounded by scattered developments (farm

houses and farmsteads) and in a landscape where vertical structures such as communication masts, single wind turbines and wind farms are now part of the distinctive character of this area;

- visual impact will be slight and limited to near and middle distant views
- will be sited away from residential properties to prevent noise disturbance and shadow flicker; it
- will be sited in a landscape that has no special designation and is of medium environmental sensitivity, and whose character and appearance can accommodate a development of this scale and nature; it
- will not impact on local wildlife or protected species; it
- will not affect the recreational use of local footpaths; it
- will not affect the historic setting of listed buildings or other heritage assets; it

1.5 The main issues are:

- (a) whether the proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt and its effect on the openness of the Green Belt;
- (b) whether the proposal will cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and effect visual amenity
- (c) Whether any harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to very special circumstance to justify the development.

Inappropriate Development

- 2.1 It is accepted that the development of a wind turbine in Green Belt is deemed to be inappropriate development. PPG2 states that “inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt” and it states that it is for the applicant to show why permission should be granted. In fact “very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist until the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.” In accordance with PPS22 very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with the increased renewable energy production.
- 2.2 The proposed development comprises a single medium size turbine, relatively modest in scale that will replace an existing smaller turbine. Due to the local topography (i.e. its ‘bowl like character’) the turbine will only be seen from a limited number of near and middle distant views. These locations are presented in the separate VIA report. When seen in full the proposed turbine will be seen to have a close relationship with the existing farm complex and this along with its slender form and modest scale will help moderate the loss of openness. Although there will be some effect on openness of the Green Belt (i.e. due to the increase in height from the existing turbine to proposed turbine) this harm will be slight and will be significantly outweighed by the substantial increase in benefits accruing from this development. These benefits clearly demonstrate special circumstances.
- 2.3 The applicant would be happy to sign a Unilateral Undertaking to either revoke the previous planning consent or agree to the turbines permanent removal.

Landscape & Visual Impact

- 3.1 Thoughtful design and careful site selection has resulted in a development proposal that on balance, optimises energy production and minimises overall environmental impact. However, the construction of a new vertical structure in Green Belt will be visible in certain views, but given its very modest scale it will not block the expansive view. It will be sited in an area of pleasant countryside that does not have a national designation and is not protected as a special or high value landscape.
- 3.2 The area has been identified in the recent South Pennines Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Energy Developments (2011) as an area suitable for further wind turbine development – and capable of accommodating turbines of a significant scale, if correctly designed and sited. The landscape character area extends into the Barnsley District. The proposed turbine at Martin’s Nest Farm is a relatively small and has been sited close to the farm buildings. It will only be seen at certain near and middle distant views because of the local terrain – i.e. its ‘bowl like’ characteristics - restricts the size of the visual envelope around the site. It’s slender form and modest height (25m to hub) mean it will be viewed in close context with the substantial range of buildings that comprise Martin’s Nest Farm (even at near distant view) and at other locations its view will be obscured by the terrain. It will sit in a broad landscape where there are several other scattered developments and vertical features clearly visible from key receptors. Even at very close view it will not dominate the landscape or block the expansive view. Furthermore, although there are other turbines in the locality this development will not constitute cumulative impact.

Benefits

- 4.1 PPS22 asks Local Planning Authorities to consider that “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.”
- 4.2 These wider environmental and economic benefits (which include the increased production of energy from renewable sources) can also be used to demonstrate very special circumstances to clearly outweigh any harm by reason of inappropriate development which may impact on the openness of the Green Belt or have an adverse effect on a nationally designated areas such as a National Park, Area of Outstanding Beauty, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves, Heritage Coasts, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Historic Battlefields and Registered Parks and Gardens.
- 4.3 The wind turbine proposed for Martin’s Nest Farm, hereafter called ‘The Farm’ will generate significant economic and environmental benefits and these weigh heavily in favour of our proposal. These are detailed in the attached Appendix and summarised below.
- 4.4 **Summary of Benefits**
It will: -
- generate an estimated 230,000kW annually - enough electricity to power the equivalent of 50 family homes;
 - provide secure and affordable electricity for The Farm and reduce overall energy costs;
 - help reduce carbon emissions saving 125 tonnes of carbon every year;
 - help meet the Government’s Renewable Energy Target for 2021;

- support the rural economy – a key priority of the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Economic Strategy;
- create 5.5 new jobs;
- generate new income to re-invest in the farm business by helping to purchase new equipment and technology to ensure The Farm remains competitive; thereby protecting local jobs;
- reduce the carbon footprint of The Farm, making it almost carbon neutral and enabling it meet the highest environmental standards expected by wholesale buyers and consumers in the food produce market;
- enable The Farm to continue to maintain and manage the rural landscape, thus helping to protect the character and appearance of the area and encourage biodiversity.

Recent Case Law

- 5.1 There have been several appeals recently regarding small to medium turbine developments in Green Belt. I refer you to the following cases from West Yorkshire: -
- Proposed 2 no. 11kw Gaia wind turbines (each 25m to blade tip) at Upper Prospect Farm, Nettleton Hill, Golcar (Ref: APP/Z4718/A10/2138246)
 - Proposed 1 no. 11kw Gaia wind turbine at Crosper Farm, Spofforth, Harrogate (APP/E2734/A/10/2131110)
 - Proposed 1 no. 11kw Gaia wind turbine at Heath Lea Farm, Halifax, West Yorkshire (APP/A4710/A/10/2127607)
 - Proposed 1 no. 10Kw Evoco wind turbine at Brockland Farm, Otley, West Yorkshire (APP/E2734/A/11/2146247)
 - Proposed 1 no. 10Kw Evoco wind turbine at Ings Farm, Castley, West Yorkshire (APP/E2734/A/11/2144654)
- 5.2 All of the Appeals were upheld and in each case the Planning Inspector concluded that the environmental and economic benefits of each scheme significantly outweighed any harm to openness of the Green Belt, harm to landscape character and visual amenity.
- 5.3 In the case of Upper Prospect Farm, Golcar where the renewable energy generated was greater than the energy needs of the farm and where the surplus was being fed into the National Grid (as is the case at Martin's Nest Farm to some extent) the Inspector agreed with the applicant that although "the proposal would be an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt, it would not cause significant or serious harm to the surrounding countryside." He also acknowledged that "the proposal would secure very significant benefits through the generation of electricity from a renewable resource". He considered "these benefits to be a consideration that clearly outweighs any harm by reason of inappropriateness, and other harm identified." The Inspector also stressed that electricity exported to the grid, in addition to that generated to support the farm, served to 'magnify' benefits and not diminish it.
- 5.4 At Martin's Nest Farm the proposed Endurance 50 turbine will generate 230,000kw of renewable electricity (the equivalent of 6 x Gaia 11Kw wind turbines standing at 25m from ground to blade tip or 4/5 Proven 15Kw turbines standing 20m from ground to blade tip).

The Endurance 50 will stand on a 25m mast – 10m higher than the existing Proven 15Kw wind turbine approved under application number 2009/0095 but generate 5 times the amount of renewable energy with all other benefits increasing proportionately. **Therefore the level of benefit is substantial, and on balance these considerations demonstrate special circumstances that significantly outweigh any harm caused by the increase in the overall height and blade diameter of the machine.**

APPENDIX 1

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Renewable Energy

- A1 Wind energy is an abundant natural resource. It is non-polluting, clean and sustainable. The UK has one of Europe's windiest climates and therefore wind energy is an important element in achieving the Government's international commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The UK has a commitment underpinned by the Climate Change Act 2008 to reduce carbon dioxide levels by 42% less than 1990 levels by 2020 and by 80% by 2050.
- A2 The UK Government also made a commitment under The Energy White Paper (2007) that 10% of UK electricity should come from renewable energy by 2010 and 20% by 2020.
- A3 PPS22 states that "increased development of renewable energy resources is vital to facilitating the delivery of the Government's commitments on both climate change and renewable energy." Furthermore it advocates that "positive planning that facilitates renewable energy developments can contribute to all four elements of the Government's sustainable development strategy:
- Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone - by contributing to the nation's energy needs, ensuring all homes are adequately and affordably heated; and providing new sources of energy in remote areas;
 - Effective protection of the environment – by reductions in emissions of greenhouse gases and thereby reducing the potential for the environment to be affected by climate change;
 - Prudent use of natural resources – by reducing the nation's reliance on ever diminishing supplies of fossil fuels; and,
- A4 The proposed turbine at Martin's Nest Farm will deliver significant benefits towards all four elements of the sustainable development strategy and as such adds significant weight to our planning application. It will contribute towards the reduction of greenhouse gases by saving approximately **125 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year** (at least 2,500 tonnes over twenty years) and generate an average of **230,000kWh of electricity per annum** from renewable sources reducing our reliance on fossil fuels. This is equivalent to the electricity usage of **50 family homes**. All energy generated will be fed back to the national grid. It will contribute to the Government's renewable energy targets and help meet the regional and local targets identified under Policy ENV5 and in table 10.2 of the Yorkshire and Humber Plan.
- A5 In April 2011 the Renewable Energy Foundation published a report entitled Renewable Output in 2010. The report uses data provided by the Department of Energy and Climate Change and data made available as part of Ofgem's reporting of subsidy claims under the Renewable Obligation. It concludes that the UK failed to reach its 10% renewable electricity target for 2010 producing only 6.5% of electricity from renewable sources – a shortfall of

more than one third of the target figure which puts extreme pressure on the delivery of targets for 2021.

- A6 It is clear that fundamental change is required to bring about greater public awareness of the benefits of wind energy, political support locally for wind energy schemes and greater support and understanding from local planning authorities particularly for small scale wind developments located in areas which have low-medium sensitivity to wind developments, where the wind resource is good and where on balance potential environmental impacts can be satisfactorily addressed.

Environmental Management

- A9 Farming has shaped the landscape for thousands of years and farmers provide an important stewardship role helping to protect and manage the environment. This may be at risk if farms are not allowed to adapt and diversify and this includes investment in new technology, new plant and processes and new business opportunities. Investment in cheaper, cleaner energy is an important part of this process. The development of a wind turbine at Prospect House Farm will bring new investment into the business and facilitate continuing improvements and on-going maintenance of the farm's estate.
- A10 The Farm is part of a registered Environmental Stewardship Scheme (Uplands Entry Level)- and under this scheme the farm has agreed to repair and maintain its dry stone to help protect the distinctive character of the area. Income generated through the wind turbine will assist this continual programme of work.
- A11 If agricultural businesses are not able to diversify (particularly on the more marginal Pennine fringe), and allowed to fail then their management role will cease and the character and appearance of the countryside as we know it will change irrevocably forever. Viable farms are essential if the rural landscape is to continue to be managed; thereby protecting its distinctive character, and maintaining its condition and environmental quality.

Supporting Business and Economic Growth

- A12 A Ministerial Statement entitled 'Planning for Growth' was issued by the Rt. Hon Greg Clark MP on 23rd March 2011. The statement outlines the Government's proposal to reform the planning system to promote sustainable economic growth and jobs. It introduces a strong presumption in favour of sustainable development and requires local planning authorities to plan positively for new development and to deal promptly and favourably with planning applications that comply with up to date national planning policy. When determining applications local planning authorities are obliged to have regard to all relevant considerations to support economic recovery including energy, environmental, transport and heritage consents. They should support enterprise and give appropriate weight to economic, environmental and social benefits of proposals; including long term or indirect benefits such as increased consumer choice, more viable communities and more robust economies (which may, where relevant, include matters such as job creation and business productivity. This statement is highly relevant to renewable energy developments.
- A13 In addition Objective 6c (ii) in the Regional Economic Strategy for Yorkshire and the Humber aims to secure a strong and diverse rural economy by "promoting sustainable economic development in remote rural areas and drive change to support farming and land based industries."

- A14 The proposed development, although modest in scale, will stimulate economic growth and create jobs. A wind turbine is an essential part of Prospect House Farm's business plan to modernise and diversify the farm to ensure that it remains viable in a very competitive industry.
- A15 The 80 acres pig farm is a successful business that employs the equivalent of **5 full-time staff** and which supports other small businesses and sub-contractors in the local supply chain. It has a turnover of almost **£600,000** and is an important player in the rural economy of Barnsley and Kirklees. The proposed turbine will help the farm diversify and the additional income generated through feed in tariffs will be essential to the future prosperity of the farm, enabling it to re-invest for the long term. Income will be used to develop the farm business, helping it to re-invest in new technology, machinery and equipment, and thereby ensure it remains competitive and thus protect local jobs.
- A16 The Farm is a commercial pig farm that uses a considerable amount of electricity. The supply of clean and affordable electricity is very important. It will enable the Farm to reduce energy costs, keep its margins low and allow it to supply produce at prices that are attractive to supermarkets and ultimately consumers.
- A17 Supermarkets and wholesalers have become increasingly environmentally aware. Compliance with their environmental buying policies is now essential if farms are to retain and win supply contracts. Meat produced at The Farm is sold to Morrison's. Morrison's and other wholesale buyers have strict environmental controls and are working with their producers to reduce the carbon footprint of its supply farms by improving energy efficiency through new techniques and practices, new equipment and by encouraging renewable energy generation. Farms that are unable or unwilling to adapt to these changes will find themselves frozen out of the market place. It is therefore imperative that Martin's Nest Farm is allowed to continue to modernise its business, to strive to achieve carbon neutrality and produce a healthy and sustainable product that is now demanded by UK consumers.
- A18 The farm has already invested in new machinery to improve production, reduce energy use and improve environmental practices. The new turbine will enable The Farm to drastically reduce its carbon footprint, enabling it to meet the very highest environmental standards now imposed by wholesale buyers and consumers -helping it to not only retain contracts but to expand the business and potentially create new jobs.

Job Creation

- A19 The design, construction and project management of the proposed wind development will create an equivalent of **4 full time** jobs (measured as 1 job equal to 50 person weeks and calculated using Yorkshire Forward's/ European Commission job creation methodology). It will also help test the development of new technologies assisting the future process of research and development in the growth industry of wind turbine manufacture. A further **1.5 full time jobs** will be created over the expected 20 year lifetime of the turbine through regular maintenance and servicing contracts.