



PLANNING SERVICES

Long Stratton Norwich Norfolk NR15 2XE

Our Ref: RBC/06/2104/ES

Your Ref:

Please Contact: Richard Cooper

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3 November 2006

Dear Mr Chapelhow

Scoping Opinion for Potential Development of seven wind turbines (around 125m in height) at land at Busseys Loke, Hempnall under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999

Thank you for your scoping request for the potential development of seven wind turbines (around 125m in height) at land at Busseys Loke, Hempnall.

As you are no doubt aware the EIA directive requires the EIA to "identify, describe and assess the direct and indirect effects of a project on the following factors: human beings, fauna and flora; soil, water, air, climate and the landscape; material assets and the cultural heritage; and the interaction between the factors". It is also important that the EIA establishes accurate baseline information and provides a full analysis of impacts for the life cycle of the project from construction, through operation, to de-commissioning with a comparison to the 'do nothing' option. The EIA should clearly set out the impacts to individual receptors as well as the cumulative impact of scheme as a whole as well as any proposed monitoring. The EIA should also explain the reasoning behind the site selection and the scale of the project. This should include examination of alternatives e.g. availability of other sites, alternative number of turbines.

The following sections expand upon some of the areas set in your initial letter and regarding the impacts that the Council feels should be covered in the EIA.

1. Proximity to flight paths including issues regarding, but not restricted to, Norwich Airport, Military air bases (and low flying routes) and smaller airstrips e.g., Topcroft, Hardwick and Seething. I note in your letter of the 20 September that "consultation will take place with the Civil Aviation Authority and Defence Estates and no issues have been identified". Whilst this is somewhat ambiguous as to whether the consultation has or will take place, clearly any copies of correspondence should be included in the EIA. Could you also confirm if Defence Estates respond on behalf of USAF bases?

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**Head of
Planning Services**
John Tomlinson



2006-2007
Positive Youth Engagement
(in the Community and
Democratic Process)



2. Electromagnetic interference (including effects on radar, television signal scattering, radio and telecommunications e.g. Ofcom and other operators), with particular reference to interference to the signal from the Tacolneston transmitter.
3. Ecological impact – For all environments. There are County Wildlife Sites and a SSSI within the vicinity and the potential impacts upon these and the species inhabiting them should be considered. Consideration should also be given to any potential impact upon non-designated areas e.g. dispersal networks that may support designated sites and facilitate species movement, also areas of semi-natural vegetation particularly relating to siting of turbines themselves. Natural England also recommend a phase 1 habitat survey to establish the habitats that are actually present and a number of studies e.g. breeding birds, wintering birds, vantage point surveys to determine bird movement, great crested newts and a bat survey. The suggested parameters for these studies are given in their response (copy attached). The EIA should also examine whether the proposal will affect any other scheme/designation e.g. Environmentally Sensitive Area, whether any of the affected roads are classified as "Roadside Nature Reserves" and if so, the impact upon them.
4. Ornithological impact including disturbance, habitat loss or damage, migration routes, nesting patterns, bird strikes and a full protected species survey e.g. woodpeckers, owls and other raptors (see also 3: ecological impact) as well as a detailed survey to establish the presence of other species using or passing through the site. A copy of the RSPB's response is attached.
5. Hydrological impact.
6. Landscape impact – I note that you propose to carry out some landscape assessment work. This should be done with particular reference to the South Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment and the Draft Wind Turbine Sensitivity Study (extracts enclosed) which aims to provide a transparent, robust and defensible evaluation framework that can provide a sound baseline for making decisions about wind energy development applications on landscape grounds.
7. Visual impact – I note that you propose to carry out some visual impact assessment work. This should be done with particular reference to Appendix 1 of the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on developer requirements for the consideration of landscape and visual impact of wind turbine development in South Norfolk (copy enclosed). Please contact the Council to discuss the most suitable viewpoints for montages/CGI.
8. Access & vehicle movements – I agree with your proposals to consult and agree the most suitable route with the Highway Authority. Further details of any proposed highway alterations, tree or hedgerow removal and the "mitigation measures" mentioned are required. Separate applications maybe necessary for works to TPO trees or hedgerows covered by the Hedgerow Regulations. A prime concern is the safety of horse riders, cyclists, pedestrians and road users during the construction phase. The EIA should also set out whether any alterations are temporary or permanent. The EIA should also establish the type and frequency of vehicle used to service the proposal during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the project, including details of width, vertical clearance and axle weight (see enclosed County Council response for more details).
9. Site safety – The EIA should include full technical details of turbines including issues such as ability to deal with lightning strikes, structural fatigue, likelihood of catastrophic collapse/failure of structure and measures to prevent ice formation on blades.
10. Details of any ancillary works/buildings required for maintenance and servicing during and post construction.
11. Issues of concern raised by the Environment Agency as listed in table I7 of the attached guidance note.
12. Archaeological heritage – no objection from Norfolk Landscape Archaeology although they would like to see a monitoring condition included as part of any planning approval.

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13. Noise - The Council has concerns regarding the proposed impact of noise and vibration on the surrounding locality. Rural areas such as Hemphall have extremely low background noise levels. A comprehensive noise assessment should be incorporated as an integral part of the EIA. This should establish existing background noise levels in the surrounding area for both daytime and nighttime periods in a variety of locations (with particular reference to residential properties) and taking local weather conditions into consideration. The noise assessment should include information with regard to anticipated noise levels from the turbines and include a frequency breakdown of noise levels and any noise from maintenance operations (especially hours of noisy activities). The noise assessment should be carried out with reference to the ESTU document produced by the Department of Trade and Industry "*The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms*". The Council will look to set noise limits at the nearest noise sensitive dwellings at a level determined in accordance with published guidance.
14. Details of grid connection point(s). Where and how is it intended to connect to the grid, what apparatus will be used? Are any additional structures required?
15. Will the turbines or the site be illuminated in any way? Any lighting should be kept to absolute minimum and of a non-polluting design to accord with Norfolk County Council's Environmental Lighting Zones Policy that classifies Hemphall as a rural dark landscape.
16. Public access issues – direct or indirect impact upon footpaths, Bridleways, Public Rights of Way, Green Lanes and potential users (including equines) with reference to distance of structures from them (see County Council & Natural England's minimum distance guidelines).
17. Reliability and efficiency of turbine power generation. Further information as to how this proposal will contribute to national and regional targets for renewable energy, backed up by evidence from similar operational wind farms.
18. Impact upon residential amenity – shadow flicker, reflections from rotors (particularly sunrise/set) and the potential impacts of the strobe effect upon human health.
19. Impact upon setting of listed buildings/conservation areas e.g. Churches, Hemphall Conservation Area.
20. Impact upon agriculture/loss of agricultural land.
21. Cumulative impact with other schemes.
22. National Grid has an intermediate pressure main within the site (copy enclosed) and stipulate that no turbine should be placed closer than one and a half times the mast height, the EIA should confirm that National Grid and any other pipeline/infrastructure operators are satisfied that the positioning of the turbines does not endanger any of their apparatus/ installations.
23. Decommissioning process. The EIA should expand upon what is intended for the site at the end of its operational life, what it is proposed to remove from the site and how. It should also cover proposals for site restoration.

As part of its scoping response the Council consulted a wide number of organisations and individuals including Local Members and Parish Councils. This consultation has generated significant interest and feeling regarding the proposal.

Whilst the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has not yet been approved by the Planning Inspectorate (the Inspector's Report is expected very soon) it is hoped that the SCI will be adopted by the end of the year. Assuming the Inspectorate do not make any changes to the major applications section of the SCI, the Council will expect the applicant of any major development proposal to demonstrate that they have publicised and engaged with the community regarding their proposal as set out in the following table.

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Type of Application	At what stage?	Suggested action for the applicant	Action by the Council
<p>Major Applications and Departures from the Development Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential development over 50 units; Other applications with a floorspace above 2,000sq.m; Applications that do not conform with adopted development plan policies; and Applications requiring an Environmental Assessment. 	Pre-application	<p>Pre-application discussions with Council officers – including advice on whether a masterplan or development brief is required.</p> <p>Pre-application discussions with infrastructure and service providers and environmental/conservation bodies to identify constraints and contributions towards infrastructure.</p> <p>Publicity and engagement with the community – including holding public exhibition(s), meeting(s) and issuing a press release/advert.</p>	General advice, by phone and in person at the Council's main office.
	Application	<p>In addition to any statutory requirements (design & access statements, serving notice on site owners etc.) applicants to submit a statement outlining the methods and results of pre-application consultation.</p> <p>Press release & public exhibition, if not undertaken at the pre-application stage.</p>	<p>Site notice(s) in a prominent location(s).</p> <p>Consultation letters to neighbours considered to be materially affected by the proposals.</p> <p>Consultation letters to statutory consultees and other individuals/organisations considered to be materially affected by the proposals.</p> <p>Inclusion in the Public Notices of the local paper.</p> <p>Inclusion in the weekly list of planning applications (available by subscription and at www.south-norfolk.gov.uk)</p>
			<p>Application available for inspection at www.south-norfolk.gov.uk and at the Council's main office – including facility to submit comments via the website.</p> <p>Attendance at public meetings where requested.</p> <p>Press release, where this is considered to be in the community interest & has not been undertaken by the applicant.</p> <p>Public exhibition, where this is considered to be in the community interest & has not been undertaken by the applicant.</p>

I would therefore encourage a widespread consultation with all the communities, individuals and organisations who may be affected by the proposed development so that their concerns can be addressed and in order maximise the opportunities for public involvement and ownership of any project.

Please also find enclosed the following:

- List of organisations consulted as part of the scoping process
- Copy of scoping response from Natural England
- Copy of scoping response from RSPB
- Copy of scoping response from National Grid
- Copy of scoping response from Environment Agency
- Copy of scoping response from Norfolk County Council
- Copy of scoping response from Hempnall Parish Council
- Copy of scoping response from Council Member for Hempnall Ward
- South Norfolk Local Plan: Protection of Environmental Assets Chapter
- South Norfolk Local Plan: Controlling the Impact of Development Chapter
- South Norfolk Local Plan: Utilities Chapter
- South Norfolk Landscape Assessment: Landscape Types A & B – Rural River Valley and Tributary Farmland respectively
- Draft South Norfolk Wind Turbine Sensitivity Study: Landscape Types A & B – Rural River Valley and Tributary Farmland respectively
- Supplementary Planning Guidance outlining developer requirements for the consideration of the landscape and visual impact of wind turbine development proposals in South Norfolk District

If you would like clarification on any of the above points please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Richard Cooper
Senior Planning Officer