

Proposed wind turbines for Weaverthorpe Wind and the Wold Valley Wind Collective on sites to the east and south-west of Weaverthorpe village, North Yorkshire.

Planning Statement

Introduction and background

1. This statement is written in support of two separate planning applications for the erection of single 500KW wind turbines by local community-based groups, namely, The Wolds Valley Wind Collective Limited (WVWC) and Weaverthorpe Wind Limited (WW).
2. The applications are submitted with help and assistance from the Humberside Co-operative Development Agency Limited, and have both been well-publicised locally in the Parishes of Butterwick, Helperthorpe, and Weaverthorpe.
3. A Screening Opinion under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)(England and Wales) Regulations 2011, in respect of the proposals was issued by Ryedale District Council on 6th February 2013, to the effect that an Environmental Statement would not be required.
4. Subsequently, a scoping meeting was held with planning officers from Ryedale District Council (on 15th April, 2013), at which the form and content of the two applications were discussed and agreed in principle.
5. The Wolds Valley Wind Collective is a share limited company with four members, holding one share each with two main two aims:
 - Primarily, to generate low carbon energy for the communities of the Great Wolds Valley, which will help them become energy independent and will also serve to reduce carbon emissions and thus reduce climate change, and;Secondarily, to generate sustainable incomes for its members so they can have confidence in their ability to deliver their social objectives.
6. Wolds Valley Wind Collective is a joint venture between the Landscape Research Centre Ltd (LRC), Wolds Valley Archaeological Trust (WVAT), the Rarey Farm Foundation (RFF) and Humberside Co-operative Development Agency Ltd (HCDA). All the members of the collective are not-for-profit organisations.
7. The Landscape Research Centre is a charity based in Yedingham, North Yorkshire. Its primary purpose is to undertake research into the archaeology of the Vale of Pickering. The director of the centre is Professor Dominic Powlesland DUniv, FSA.
8. The Wolds Valley Archaeological Trust is a charitable trust (not yet a registered charity), which undertakes similar work to the LRC but in the

Wolds Valley area of North Yorkshire. Its director is Doctor Peter Wilson PhD, FSA, FSA Scot, MIFA.

9. The Rarey Farm Foundation is a charitable association based in Weaverthorpe which aims to improve the quality of life for people in Weaverthorpe. It engages in a number of local activities and is currently in the process of building a community training facility at Rarey Farm. The intention is to re-constitute it as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in the medium term.
10. Weaverthorpe Wind is a joint venture between Three Weavers Green (TWG) and Humberside Co-operative Development Agency Ltd (HCDA), both of whom are not-for-profit organisations.
11. Weaverthorpe Wind has two aims:
 - Primarily, to increase the sustainability of the communities of Weaverthorpe, Butterwick and Helperthorpe by offsetting their carbon emissions and generating a sustainable income stream to invest in the communities, and;
 - Secondly, to increase the sustainability of other communities across the wider region by generating a sustainable income stream for HCDA, which can be reinvested into supporting other social and environmental initiatives.
12. Weaverthorpe Wind is jointly owned by TWG and HCDA with HCDA having one Director, TWG having a second Director and Jill Wilson, a local resident, acting as an Independent Director. Whilst the company is jointly owned, any profits will be split 75:25 in favour of TWG.
13. Three Weavers Green is a sustainable development organisation established in 2011 to benefit the communities of Weaverthorpe, Butterwick and Helperthorpe. Its primary aim is the sustainable development of the three communities, with a focus on environmental sustainability but also encompassing economic and social sustainability issues. It is currently a non-trading charitable company, but will apply for registered charity status once it begins trading, which is expected to happen once the turbine is commissioned.
14. It has fifteen members who are all from the three local communities and a board of three directors. It operates as a collective, with the all major decisions being taken by the members.
15. TWG has an open membership policy with anyone resident in any of the three communities being welcome to join. It's current member represents around 10% of the local households.
16. Humberside CDA is a not-for-profit enterprise agency which was originally set-up in 1985 by Humberside County Council as an arms length agency to develop Co-operatives. It became independent in 1996 with the dissolution of

Humberside County Council and has since expanded its remit to include social and ethical enterprises as well as its core constituency of co-operatives.

17. Humberside CDA mainly operates in the area bounded by the Humber to the South, North York Moors to the North and A1M to the West, though it does also engage in a limited amount of activity south of the Humber and in the rest of the Yorkshire.
18. Most of its support services are provided free to client groups and it is involved in the Weaverthorpe Wind project as a way of supporting the communities of Weaverthorpe, Butterwick and Helperthorpe and also the wider co-operative, mutual and ethical sector in the sub-region.
19. WVWC and WW each intend to give an annual grant of £100 to every household in Weaverthorpe, Butterwick and Helperthorpe for a minimum period of 20 years to help with their energy bills, if the two proposed turbines are constructed and commissioned successfully.
20. TWG is a charitable company which will soon be registered with the charities commission. As such, all future income to TWG arising from the proposed turbines will be channelled into local schemes. At present, the organisation is considering schemes for, amongst other things: hedgerow replacement and improvement; improving local biodiversity; community transport; scholarships for local people; assistance for local business start-ups; further investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency schemes
21. LRC is a charitable company which will be utilising funds it receives from WVWC Ltd to engage in archaeological activity in the area. WVAT is a charitable trust which will be engaged in similar activities in the area.
22. The Rarey Farm Foundation will utilise funds from the WVWC to provide community services including running a community cafe, art gallery and craft workshops and the provision of training and similar opportunities for local people in related fields of activity.
23. Humberside CDA Ltd will utilise funds from WVWC and WW to support new and existing co-operative, mutual and ethical enterprises across Humberside, although its focus of activity is Hull, East Yorkshire and North Yorkshire to the East of the A1M (an area roughly centred around the Great Wolds Valley).

The proposed developments

20. The proposed turbines are identical three-bladed 500KW direct drive machines mounted horizontally on a 40 metre tubular steel tower with a maximum blade tip height of 67 metres (Colour: Grey RAL 9003/9016).
21. The WW turbine site is on the south side of a hill called Dikes Fields at approximately 130m above sea level to the north of Cross Thorns Farm, (Grid ref. SE 96113 69384). It lies to the south of Weaverthorpe and south east of Helperthorpe, within the administrative parish of Luttons.

- 22 The WVWC site lies to the east of Weaverthorpe village at approximately 150 metres above sea level, on the northern (south facing) slope of the Great Wold Valley, within the administrative parish of Weaverthorpe, (Grid ref. SE 97858 71145).
- 23 At the bottom of the valley there is a string of linear villages, the most relevant to this development being Weaverthorpe, Butterwick and Helperthorpe. A feature of this valley bottom is the Gypsy Race, an erratic, spring fed stream, which in this part of the valley is dry, or almost dry, for most of the year but which flows occasionally in winter.
- 24 Both turbine sites are located on agricultural land and are sited in excess of 400 metres from any occupied buildings. Each will be accessed from the local road system by means of purpose built tracks, as indicated on the submitted drawings and plans and described in the respective Transport Statements.
- 25 Full details of the proposed turbines are provided in the documentation accompanying the planning application, together with reports from independent consultants on the following issues:- Landscape, Cultural Heritage, Noise, Transport, and Ecology (as agreed with the Council's planning officers at the scoping meeting).
- 26 All connections from the two proposed turbines to the local electricity supply grid are to be made underground, with no surface features other than the turbines themselves, their associated transformer housings and the proposed access tracks.

Planning policy

- 27 The only current development plan policy directly relevant to the two applications is that contained in the (saved) Ryedale Local Plan at Policy RE 1. This states that wind turbines (either individually or in groups) will only be permitted where they will have no significant adverse effects upon landscape, visual amenity, heritage, ecological, residential amenity, or highway considerations.
- 28 In the absence of any more up-to-date policy on renewable energy in the Local Plan, reference to the Council's emerging Local Plan Strategy (2012) is appropriate. This provides additional policy guidance at draft policy SP18, "Renewable and Low Carbon Energy" which generally supports such forms of development subject to considerations relating to landscape, community / cultural issues, ecology, and environmental issues such as air, soil and water quality.
- 29 In December 2012, the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) issued an updated "roadmap" for the future of renewable energy in the UK under the title "UK Renewable Energy Roadmap Update" confirming its previous commitment to renewable energy developments and to achieving its stated target of generating 15% of UK energy from renewable sources by 2020.
- 30 The "roadmap" update notes that the Coalition Agreement included a

commitment to supporting community energy projects giving communities control over their own energy supply. The report also notes that local energy generation is complementary to energy management and energy saving measures, recognising and encouraging collective action to purchase, save, manage and generate energy where appropriate.

- 31 The Government's stated strategy is to empower communities to collectively own, control and benefit from their own energy in locally appropriate ways.
- 32 With specific reference to onshore wind, the Government states that it is seeking to remove barriers to the development of appropriately sited projects, while giving communities more influence in the planning process.
- 33 In 2005 a partnership of all the North Yorkshire planning authorities issued guidance under the heading "Delivering Sustainable Energy in North Yorkshire". This guidance focused on the development of positive planning policies for sustainable energy developments and provides a useful background to the current application.
- 34 Recommendation 7 of the North Yorkshire report advocates "positive support for the development of community renewable energy schemes".
- 35 Although the National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure 2011 (NPS) is primarily directed towards larger scale schemes dealt with via the National Infrastructure Planning Unit at The Planning Inspectorate, it is nevertheless a material consideration in connection with smaller schemes.
- 36 Policy EN-1 highlights the need to meet emissions targets set out on the "roadmap" (see above) and notes that onshore wind has an important role to play in meeting these targets. Likewise, Policy EN-3 reiterates the important role of onshore wind as well as dealing with issues of landscape, visual impact, noise, air-safety, biodiversity, and historic / cultural considerations.
- 37 Finally, the National Planning Policy Framework, (NPPF), issued in March 2012, contains up-to-date guidance on renewable energy developments, which should be followed when local development plan policies are out of date.
- 38 The NPPF contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development, describing this as a "golden thread" running through both plan making and decision taking at the local level (paragraph 14) and making it clear that development which is sustainable should be approved "without delay."
- 39 One of the "Core planning principles" contained within the NPPF seeks to encourage a transition to a low carbon future including the use of renewable resources, for example, by the use of renewable energy (paragraph 17).
- 40 Paragraphs 93 - 98 of the NPPF deal specifically with renewable energy proposals in the context of climate change. Paragraph 97 states that "... local planning authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources" and

“support community-led initiatives for renewable and low-carbon energy...”

- 41 Paragraph 98 confirms that applicants for energy developments should not be required to demonstrate the overall need for the proposed development and that small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions.
- 42 In addition to the above-mentioned policy guidance specifically dealing with renewable energy production, it is acknowledged that the development plan, the emerging Local Plan, and the NPPF, also contain a variety of policies and advice relating to aspects of the proposed development(s) that are material considerations, e.g. ecology, landscape, noise, traffic, and cultural heritage, to name just a few.
- 43 These policies have been borne in mind by individual consultants in the preparation of their reports and recommendations and are considered in more detail below.

Landscape

- 44 Landscape assessments and reports have been carried out and provided by 2B Landscape Consultancy Ltd, an East Yorkshire based practice with extensive experience in the renewable energy field.
- 45 The Assessment methodology follows the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (LVIA, 2013), produced by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment.
- 46 The LVIA process included consultations with Ryedale District Council, desk top assessment, and field work, including the recording and assessment of 32 viewpoints.
- 47 The potential effects on both the landscape resource and upon visual amenity were assessed. In addition, the cumulative effects arising from the visual / landscape interaction of the two proposed turbines, with existing turbines, and with other proposed and/or permitted turbines of which the applicants are aware, were also considered.

Landscape effects

- 48 Published Landscape Character Assessments indicate an overall medium-high or high sensitivity to larger-scale development such as wind farms. Due to the minor scale of the proposed single turbines, it is considered to have medium-low magnitude effects, resulting in an overall moderate significance of effect on landscape character, at a local level.
- 49 No significant effects are anticipated upon landscape aspects like land use, landscape pattern, land form, tree and hedgerow cover or field boundaries.

Visual effects

- 50 Residential receptors have the highest sensitivity. The closest properties

would experience effects of moderate significance, reducing to slight significance at around 1.5-2km distance.

- 51 Recreational receptors are limited to relatively few users of the local footpath network from which the visual effects are likely to be of moderate to slight significance. The Church of St Andrew is a cultural destination from which the visual effects of the proposed turbines are considered to be moderate to slight in the case of WW, and substantial to moderate in the case of the WWC proposal.
- 52 There will be some open views from public highways, although both turbines will be screened from substantial parts of the local highway system.
- 53 Effects will be moderate to slight for viewpoints less than 2km from the proposed turbines, and slight for viewpoints beyond 2km. Effects for workers will be in the same range as for highway users.

Cumulative effects

- 54 The cumulative assessment is concerned with the additional cumulative effect of the proposed turbines. Due to the positioning and spacing of the proposed turbines, relative to each other and to other potential turbine sites, cumulative effects would be experienced by relatively small numbers of residential properties, recreational users, highway users and workers. Potential effects would generally be of low magnitude and none are anticipated to be significant.

Transport Statements

- 55 Transport Statements for both schemes have been commissioned from, and are provided by, Local Transport Projects Ltd, (LTP), of Beverley, East Yorkshire.
- 56 LTP is a well-established company with experience of renewable energy developments throughout the UK.
- 57 The scope of the statements was discussed with LTP and agreed as follows:
 - Identification of most appropriate delivery routes (all vehicles);
 - Assessment of routes and identification of mitigation measures;
 - Swept path analysis at all potentially problematic locations;
 - Consideration of the proposed site access arrangements;
 - Conclusions and recommendations.
- 58 Relevant planning policy relating to highways and traffic issues is to be found at Policy T3 of the (saved) Local Plan, and in paragraph 32 of the NPPF, which requires that development generating significant traffic movements should be accompanied by a Transport Statement / Assessment.
- 59 LP policy T3 requires that all new development should be served by a local road network that can satisfactorily accommodate the traffic it will generate, and that any highway issues raised by a development are overcome (at the

developer's expense) that will not be detrimental to the rural character of the District or compromise road safety.

- 60 In the present case, LTP conclude that both developments are capable of being accessed by all forms of vehicles without any adverse effects on the road (or public footpath) network or on highway safety, subject to the implementation of a few minor (and temporary) measures along the preferred route.

Noise

- 61 Noise reports for both schemes have been commissioned from and provided by Environmental Noise Solutions Ltd of Doncaster (ENS).
- 62 ENS is a well-established company with experience of renewable energy developments throughout the UK.
- 63 ENS were commissioned to undertake an assessment of potential noise impacts on local residents associated with the two wind turbines and to make appropriate recommendations based upon noise emission data provided by the manufacturer using the appropriate methodology set out in ETSU-R-97 "The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms".
- 64 Relevant planning policy relating to noise is found in LP Policy RE 1(iv) which requires that there be no unacceptable adverse effect upon the residential amenities of nearby properties as a result of noise from the proposed turbines.
- 65 In addition, paragraph 123 of the NPPF is also considered to be relevant.
- 66 In the present cases the nearest residential properties not associated with the proposals are situated 440 metres (WW) and 700 metres (WVWC) away from the site of the proposed turbines, and ENS conclude that neither of the proposals will be likely to have any adverse effects on residential amenity at these properties by virtue of noise emission.

Ecology

- 67 Ecological surveys relating to both sites have been commissioned from and are provided by Wold Ecology Ltd of Driffield, East Yorkshire.
- 68 Wold Ecology Ltd (WE) is a well-established company with over 30 years experience of renewable energy developments throughout the UK. The Company is an Associate Member of the RSPB and the Bat Conservation Trust, and is a benefactor and corporate member of the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.
- 69 WE were commissioned to undertake a Phase 1 Habitat Survey, including a desk top study, consultation with appropriate bodies, and an extended field survey for each site for which the following species were targeted:

Bats
Great Crested Newts

Badgers

Birds

- 70 The surveys were carried out in May 2013, in accordance with current guidance and meet the requirements of Regulation 53(9)(b) of the current Habitats Regulations.
- 71 WE make recommendations for each site in Section 7 of the two reports based on a set of evaluation criteria set out in 7.2.2. The only UK priority habitat found within either of the study areas were hedgerows, which are locally important for moths butterflies farmland birds bats and dormice.
- 72 The recommendations set out in paragraph 7.4.1.1.4, 5 and 6 with regard to hedgerows are relevant to the current proposals and should be incorporated into any subsequent planning permissions.
- 73 No mitigation works or restrictive planning conditions are recommended for either site in connection with birds, badgers, or great crested newts, while the siting requirements set out in paragraphs 7.6.10.1 and 2 with regard to bats are satisfied in both cases.
- 74 Relevant planning policy in the development plan is found in LP Policies RE 1(ii) and ENV 12 which are both primarily concerned with the protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and other areas of nature conservation importance.
- 75 However, in these two cases there are no such protected sites within 2 km of either site (apart from a small locally designated site at the church yard in Weaverthorpe) and WE conclude that neither of the proposals will have any adverse effects on designated nature conservation sites.
- 76 The draft Local Plan Strategy supports developments that aim to conserve or enhance biodiversity and the incorporation of beneficial biodiversity features (Policy SP 14 "Biodiversity"). In these cases, both WW and WVWC are intending to reinvest some of the income from the proposed turbines into landscape improvements through the reinstatement / improvement of hedgerows in the immediate vicinity of the two proposed turbines and the wider surrounding area.
- 77 The NPPF also encourages the protection and enhancement of natural environments by applying the principles set out in paragraph 118.
- 78 In light of the above, it is considered that neither proposal will have any adverse effects on nature conservation interests provided that any permissions issued ensure that the recommendations regarding hedgerow protection and maintenance are incorporated by means of planning conditions.

Heritage issues

- 79 Heritage issues relating to both sites have been commissioned from, and are provided by, Hilary Byers Dip Bldg Cons, IHBC, a Heritage Conservation

consultant based in Hull, East Yorkshire.

- 80 Hilary was commissioned to produce reports on the potential effects of the two proposed wind turbines on local heritage assets, including archaeology, listed buildings, the character and appearance of the area, and cultural / historic considerations.
- 81 Notwithstanding a “minor” concern with regard to the effect of the WVWC turbine on the setting of the Church of St. Andrew in Weavertorpe, Hilary Byers’ reports conclude that neither of the two proposed wind turbines will detract from the appreciation and understanding of heritage assets in this part of the Great Wolds Valley.
- 82 In reaching this conclusion, Hilary has taken into account the advice contained in the NPPF and the Ryedale Rural Design Guide (1995) as well as making full use of the photographic record and landscape appraisal provided by 2B Consultancy, there being no relevant development plan policies relating to heritage issues in these cases.
- 83 In terms of archaeological considerations, Hilary recommends that a “watching brief” be maintained during the construction phase of the turbine bases, grid connections, and access tracks, and it is suggested that a planning condition be imposed on both permissions to this effect.
- The potential effect on broadcast and point to point radio frequency links**
- 84 Humberside CDA Limited has produced telecommunication and radio / television interference reports for both turbines based on telecoms data provided by Pager Power Limited and radio / TV transmitter data provided by the BBC.
- 85 No telecommunications links pass within less than 300m of either turbine so there is no risk of telecommunications disruption by either turbine.
- 86 The Bilsdale and Weavertorpe TV transmitters serve the area where both turbines are located and an assessment was undertaken of potential impacts. It was concluded that there is a negligible chance of households suffering interference from the proposed turbines
- 87 It is recommended that, for a period of two years following construction, the owner(s) of the turbine(s) investigate any reports of interference with television reception for residences within the reflection zone, primary shadow and secondary shadow zones. Where such interference is attributable to the wind turbine, the owners will undertake to resolve the issue to the full satisfaction of the affected party.
- Shadow flicker**
- 88 Humberside CDA Limited has produced shadow flicker reports for both turbines.
- 89 The companion guide to PPS22 (ODPM, 2004) states that (Paragraph 76,

Technical 5, Annex 8) 'Flicker effects have been proven to occur only within ten rotor diameters of a turbine. Therefore if the turbine has 80m diameter blades [80m rotor diameter], the potential shadow flicker effect could be felt up to 800m from a turbine.'

- 90 This zone of effect is reiterated in national Policy Statement for Renewable energy Infrastructure (en-3), (DECC, 2011a), at Paragraph 2.7.63 onwards, and the Parsons Brinkerhoff report DECC,2011b) which provides an update of the evidence base on shadow flicker for DECC.
- 91 For UK latitudes, the zone projected on to the ground in which properties may be affected by shadow flicker is 130 degrees either side of north.
- 92 The proposed turbines therefore have a 540m zone of potential shadow flicker which extends 130 degrees either side of north.
- 93 Neither turbine has any buildings within this potential zone of shadow flicker, so no mitigation, in respect of shadow flicker, is required for either turbine.

Air safety

- 94 Pager Power was commissioned to produce an aviation safety report for both turbines.
- 95 The report indicated that there is a technical possibility of objections from CAA or MoD but given that other turbines have been constructed in the area with similar height profiles to the proposed turbines there is no expectation that any objection will be raised.
- 96 The Page Power risk reports show that there are no private airfields within 2km of either turbine. Outside this zone, it is unlikely that turbines of the size proposed would have any significant air safety implications.
- 97 We suggest a condition requiring us to inform MoD when works commence and are completed plus maximum heights (for MoD plotting purposes).

Summary and Conclusions

- 98 The two proposed wind turbines would provide energy from a renewable source and make a small, but not insignificant, contribution towards local and national targets for carbon reduction, in accordance with national and local policy aspirations.
- 99 In addition, the proposed wind turbines will make significant contributions to the social, environmental and economic well-being of the area through the channelling of income into schemes of benefit to the local community through charitable organisations.
- 100 The various consultants' reports conclude that neither of the two proposed turbines are likely to have any significant adverse effects on interests of acknowledged importance, including landscape, visual amenity, highways, ecology, residential amenity, and a range of heritage assets.
- 101 In addition, information has been provided on other technical issues including

air-safety, radar and telecommunications, and shadow flicker, all of which indicate that the two schemes can be constructed without causing harm to these additional areas of concern.

- 102 Relevant planning policy in the development plan and elsewhere has been assessed and no significant conflicts with this guidance have been identified.
- 103 Where mitigation measures are feasible, they have been incorporated into the scheme - or can be required through the imposition of suitably worded planning conditions, as suggested above.
- 104 Consequently, and in light of the fact that both schemes have a wide degree of support from within the local communities in which they are located, it is considered that planning permission should be granted for both schemes, subject to the imposition of suitably worded planning conditions.