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LUTTONS PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Andrew Macdonald

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7 July 2013

Karen Hood
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Dear Karen

Application No. 13/00551/FUL : Erection of 1no. 500kW wind turbine at Dotterel Farm, Weaverthorpe : Milner.

Luttons Parish Council has been asked to consider the above application. Whilst the Council is supportive of the need to develop sources of renewable energy and for farmers to diversify, the Council is concerned that insufficient weight has been given to the cumulative impact that the increasing number of applications for wind turbines will have on the Area of High Landscape Value and to the consequent socio-economic effects. Reluctantly, therefore, the Council considers that it must **object** to this application until sufficient consideration has been given to the cumulative effects of wind turbines on the Yorkshire Wolds; the Council's reasoning is as follows.

Whilst the Council recognises that each application must be assessed on its individual merit, the Council is concerned at the growing number of applications/approvals for wind turbines in the High Wolds. A search of the planning portal for the adjoining parishes of Kirby Grindalythe, Luttons and Weaverthorpe in the Great Wold Valley reveals applications/approvals for thirteen wind turbines (excluding the ten of the East Heslerton wind farm), with a marked increase since the approval-on-appeal of the turbine at Manor House Farm, Helperthorpe. The majority of these (8) lie around Helperthorpe and Weaverthorpe; in the view of this Council this density of development of vertical structures with motile elements significantly changes the character of the valley. Furthermore, this application is for a significantly taller, larger output (500kW) turbine than comparable farm applications, that will dominate the valley along with the three others approved for that ridge.

The Council has recently received for review three planning applications for wind turbines (13/00551, 13/00699, and 13/00624) bringing the number of current applications/approvals to thirteen. All these applications have been dealt with as 'delegatable decisions' but, since there is now an overarching issue of cumulative impact through over-development, this Council believes that decisions should be taken at member Committee level.

The Council believes that the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment should take more account of the cumulative impact through combined visibility and sequential effects. Guidance on this methodology states: 'if the issue is one of overall impact on landscape character across an area, it may be appropriate to consider all

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schemes within or affecting the landscape of the area. Two windfarms need not be intervisible – or even visible from a common viewpoint – for there to be potential for both to have impacts on the landscape experience for those travelling through an area. It may be desirable to consider the cumulative effects of windfarms on users of scenic road routes, or routes for walkers, along their full length within the agreed study area. The National Character Area 27 (The Wolds) is described as 'A large-scale landscape of rounded, rolling hills, with big skies and long views from the escarpment and plateaux, contrasting with the more enclosed, sheltered valleys.' The Zone of Theoretical Visibility clearly covers high points giving vistas of the surrounding landscape on routes used by both visitors (particularly cyclists and motorcyclists) and residents – and through traffic. However, none of these longer views from routes likely to be used by visitors and residents are included in the Visual Impact Assessment, which should more closely reflect NCA27. Daily movements of residents within the area should feature in the assessment.

Recent efforts to promote the area for tourism and sustainable development have resulted in investment of European, Government and Regional funding. All these projects take advantage from the landscape and heritage of the area that were established by the Enclosures but receive no mention in the appraisal. The presence of wind turbines changes the character of the landscape and the perceptions of residents and visitors.

Saved policy RE1 in the Ryedale Local Plan reads: 'Proposals for the development of individual wind turbines or for groups of wind turbines will only be permitted where: i) they would not have any significant adverse effect on the quality of the landscape'. The emerging policy contained in The Ryedale Plan reads: 'Developments that generate renewable and/or low carbon sources of energy will be supported providing that individually and cumulatively proposals: can be satisfactorily assimilated into the landscape especially in respect of the setting ofthe Wolds.... and would not impact adversely on the local community, economy or historical interests.' Planning Policy Statement 22 states that: 'Planning authorities should also take into account the cumulative impact of wind generation projects in particular areas' and 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.' The Council believes that greater weight should be given to the socio-economic impact of these installations on an area rural deprivation. Whilst a limited number of appropriately sized installations for 'on farm' generation and consumption, spread across the Wolds, might be acceptable in an Area of High Landscape Value, **the Council considers the total number of wind turbines in the immediate vicinity now has a cumulative impact** that is both intrusive and detrimental to the landscape with negative implications for both economic regeneration and our communities' environment.

On 29th May 2012 a High Court judge, in rejecting a planning application for a wind farm, stated 'As a matter of law it is not correct to assert that the national policy promoting the use of renewable resources... negates the local landscape policies or must be given primacy over them'. This Council contends that the designation of the Wolds as an Area of High Landscape Value should take precedence due to the unique character of the area, its rich heritage and the socio-economic benefit that derives from it.

The Council seeks assurance from the local planning authority that the scope of such Landscape Visual Impact Assessments is sufficient to preserve the Wolds as an Area of High Landscape Value and to weight assessment in the interests of local economic and human factors.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Andy Macdonald
Clerk to Luttons Parish Council