

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

Application Reference Number	14NP0079
Description / Site Address	Proposal to dismantle existing Kingspan KW6 domestic wind turbine and re-erect in new location at Uswayford Farm, Harbottle, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 7BU
Consultation Expiry	29 October 2014, re-consultation 17 November 2014
Last date for decision	3 November 2014 (Extension of time agreed until 30 November 2014)

Details of Proposal

The proposal is to dismantle an existing domestic wind turbine (9 metre hub height, 11.8 metre tip height) close to Uswayford Farm, a remote farmstead that lies within Alwinton Parish and to re-erect the same turbine in a new location, approximately 200 metres to the north of the existing turbine location and around 300 metres to the north of the main building at Uswayford Farm, which is part of a collection of farm buildings. The turbine will be located further uphill than the existing turbine.

For the avoidance of confusion, the application was initially submitted with a plan showing a proposed turbine with a 15 metre hub height and 17.8 metre tip height. Re-consultations and notifications were carried out following the submission of a proposed plan with the correct, lower turbine height.

Planning Policy

- *NNPA Core Strategy and Development Policies Document (Core Strategy)*
Policies 1, 2, 3, 17, 18, 19, 20
- *NNPA Building Design Guide SPD*
- *NNPA Landscape SPD*
- *National Planning Policy Framework*

Relevant Planning History:

14NP0086 – Proposed installation of 16 ground mounted photovoltaic panels to generate electricity for Uswayford Farm – under consideration

12NP0007 – Proposed erection of 6kw wind turbine 9m to the hub – Approved with conditions

12NP0005 – Proposed erection of 6kw wind turbine 9m to the hub – Withdrawn

Summary of Consultations/Representations

Defence Infrastructure Organisation (Safeguarding): No objection

Natural England: No objection with regard to statutory nature conservation sites. The response refers to Standing Advice in relation to protected species.

NPA Ecologist: Has considered the application, including impacts on protected species and raised **no objections**.

NNPA Access and Recreation Officer: No objection. The proposed location is approximately 80 metres to the east of public footpath 25 in Alwinton Parish, which should be protected throughout.

NNPA Landscape Officer: No objection

NNPA Historic Environment Officer: No objection. There are no heritage assets which may be affected by this application, and given the scale and location, the potential for harm to heritage assets is low..

Alwinton Parish Council: Supports the application, stating that sustainable sources of energy are badly needed in the Upper Coquet Valley.

Environment Agency: No comments to make, as it falls outside their scope.

No comments were received in response to consultations sent to NCC Development Management and NCC Building Control.

Site Notice/Neighbour Consultations: No representations were received in response to neighbour notifications.

Assessment

The key material planning considerations are;

- Principle, location and sustainability of the development;
- Renewable energy and climate change;
- Design, impact on landscape, tranquility & amenity;
- Impact on ecology & protected species;
- Heritage impacts;
- Impact on national defence safeguarding

Principle of Development

The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of decision-taking. Policy 1 of the NNPA Core Strategy seeks to ensure that development proposals will conserve and enhance the special qualities of the National Park. Policy 1 also states that applications should demonstrate a reduced impact on climate change by maximising renewable energy generation.

The proposal will not have an adverse impact on the Park's special qualities. The design and the location of the turbine is such that an adverse impact will be avoided, in terms of the design and location within the surrounding landscape and the fact that it will relocate the existing turbine, in an area that will not allow the development to break skylines from wider views of the landscape views. The location has also been chosen to avoid any negative ecological implications and with the intention of achieving a higher gain in terms of

renewable energy generation, as it is understood that the current turbine location means that it is difficult to achieve the expected electricity generation from the turbine.

It is considered that the proposed development meets the criteria set out in Policy 1 and therefore the principle of development is established.

Impact on Renewable Energy and Climate Change

Policy 2 of the Core Strategy & Development Policies Document states that the National Park Authority will facilitate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by supporting proposals which increase small scale renewable energy. Policy 1 also states that to deliver sustainable development, proposals should reduce climate change by maximising renewable energy generation.

The Design and Access Statement states that the existing location of the turbine is not satisfactory due to wind shading effects, making the turbine inefficient and unable to generate enough electricity to serve the adjacent farmstead at Uswayford. It is suggested that the new location should achieve additional benefits in terms of renewable energy generation. However, technical information to support this has not been supplied - wind speed testing for a two week period in May is provided, which suggests that wind speeds are higher in the proposed location, although methodologies for this testing have not been provided. Therefore, little weight can be given to the suggested benefits.

The development is acceptable in terms of this policy, as Policy 2 of the Core Strategy is supportive of small scale renewable energy development. The proposal also accords with NPPF paragraphs 94 – 98. However, it is also essential that this benefit is not outweighed by any detrimental impacts that a proposal may have, including, but not limited to, on the landscape and special qualities of the National Park, scale, design and the relationship with the surroundings and biodiversity and tranquility within the National Park.

Design, Impact on Landscape, Tranquility & Amenity

NNPA's Landscape Officer does not object to the development and has not deemed that this proposed development will have a detrimental impact upon the special landscape character of the National Park.



*Annotated photograph of existing and proposed turbine location viewed from the south-west
(Provided by NNPA Landscape Officer)*

The current turbine would be removed and re-located further north, further up the valley slope. While the turbine is to be moved further away from the cluster of buildings at Uswayford Farm, in a higher location upslope, and will be less visually linked to these buildings and slightly more isolated as a result (particularly in views from receptor points to the west and east), a link would remain and this would not create any substantial or detrimental change to the character of the landscape.

The new location of the turbine would remain below the horizon and the turbine would not break skylines when viewed from publicly accessible receptor sites to the east and west. From most viewpoints, the turbine would be viewed against a forestry or moorland backdrop. In considering this backdrop, the use of a grey turbine with the use of black on the turbine blades would remain an appropriate design when taking into account the surroundings.

In longer distance views from the south, the re-location of the turbine would not have any additional impact, as it would sit below the top of the valley slope and forestry plantation behind it. The turbine would be obscured from view by these to the north.



More distant view of the site from the south (Provided by NNPA Landscape Officer)

Despite moving the turbine further away from the cluster of farm buildings, which it is understood will bring benefits from a renewable energy perspective, in a location that is off-grid, the new location will be acceptable in terms of its design and the impact on the wider landscape. Moving the turbine into the proposed new location would not have any additional harmful impact, when compared to the current location of the turbine. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in terms of the potential landscape impacts.

There is not considered to be any detrimental impact on the tranquility of the National Park. There are also no neighbouring properties whose amenity could be affected that are not supplied by electricity from the turbine. The development accords with Core Strategy Policies 3, 19 and 20 and NPPF paragraphs 56 and 115.

Impact on Ecology/Biodiversity

Natural England has confirmed that there is no impact upon protected sites and NNPA's Ecologist has confirmed that they have no objections or concerns in relation to protected species. The turbine has also been kept over 50 metres from trees and this should help to ensure that there is not a significant impact on protected species, including birds and bats. The development accords with Core Strategy Policy 17 and NPPF paragraph 118.

Impact on Cultural Heritage

There are not considered to be any direct or indirect impacts upon any heritage assets. The development accords with Core Strategy Policy 18 and NPPF Chapter 12.

Impact on National Defence Safeguarding

Impacts on defence infrastructure safeguarding and any impacts upon military aircraft is a material consideration in determination of this application. No objections have been raised by DIO in response to consultation with them.

Conclusion

The proposed development, by virtue of the size, location and design avoids any harmful negative impact on the wider landscape and special natural qualities of the National Park. The application is therefore considered to accord with Policies 1, 2, 3, 17, 18, 19 and 20 of the Northumberland National Park Local Development Framework Core Strategy and the NPPF.

Recommendation

Grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby approved shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To ensure that the Local Planning Authority retains the right to review unimplemented permissions and to comply with Section 91 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

- Application Form received on 28th August 2014
- Noise Performance Test December 2011 received on 28th August 2014
- KW6 Planning Support Document received on 28th August 2014
- Average Wind Speed Uswayford Document received on 28th August 2014
- Design and Access Statement received on 28th August 2014
- Location Plan received on 8th September 2014
- Elevation Plan – KW6 on 9m Flange Bolted Tower received on 23rd October 2014

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt, to enable the LPA to adequately control the development and to conform with Policies 1, 2, 3, 17, 18, 19 and 20 of the Northumberland National Park Authority Core Strategy & Development Policies Document and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. If the turbine ceases to operate for a continuous period of six months (unless such cessation is due to the turbine being under repair or replacement) then, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, within three months of the end of that period a scheme shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for its approval in writing which sets out the following:

i. Proposed details for the decommissioning and removal of that turbine and any ancillary equipment and structures relating solely to that turbine;

ii. A restoration scheme for the land where the turbine and any associated ancillary equipment and structures was removed from; and

iii. Proposals for the management and timing of the works.

The approved scheme shall be implemented within 12 months of the date of its approval by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the turbine provides a source of renewable energy generation whilst in situ, to ensure that it is removed from the land if it ceases to function, and to ensure that the land is reinstated in an acceptable manner in the interests of visual amenity and the landscape character of the National Park and for the development to accord with Policies 1, 3, and 20 of the Northumberland National Park Authority Core Strategy & Development Policies Document and the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. All cabling associated with the development shall be located underground.

In the interest of visual amenity and for the development to accord with Policies 1 and 3 of the Northumberland National Park Authority Core Strategy & Development Policies Document and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. Prior to the commencement of the development, the existing turbine approved under application reference 12NP0007 shall be dismantled.

Reason: In order to prevent a proliferation of turbine developments in this location and the protect the landscape character and visual appearance of the area, in accordance with Policies 1, 3 and 20 of the Northumberland National Park Authority Core Strategy & Development Policies Document and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informative Notes

1. If the planning permission hereby granted is implemented, you should notify the Ministry of Defence (DIO Safeguarding) of the following:

- The date construction starts and ends;
- The maximum height of construction equipment;
- The latitude and longitude of the turbine.

This information is vital as it will be plotted on flying charts to make sure that military aircraft avoid this area.

Contact can be made on 0121 311 2195, by email to: DIOODC-IPSSG3a@mod.uk , or in writing to

Ministry of Defence
Safeguarding – Wind Energy
Kingston Road
Sutton Coldfield
West Midlands B75 7RL
United Kingdom

2. This planning permission is granted in strict accordance with the approved plans. It should be noted however that:

(a) Any variation from the approved plans following commencement of the development, irrespective of the degree of variation, will constitute unauthorised development and may be liable to enforcement action.

(b) You or your agent or any other person responsible for implementing this permission should inform the local planning authority immediately of any proposed variation from the

approved plans and ask to be advised as to the best method to resolve the matter. Most proposals for variation to the approved plans will require the submission of a new planning application.

3. This consent is granted subject to conditions and it is the owner and the person responsible for the implementation of the development who will be fully responsible for their compliance throughout the development and beyond. If there is a condition that requires work to be carried out or details to be approved prior to the commencement of the development this is called a "condition precedent". The following should be noted with regards to conditions precedent:

(a) If a condition precedent is not complied with, the whole of the development will be unauthorised and you may be liable to enforcement action.

(b) In addition if a condition precedent is breached, the development is unauthorised and the only way to rectify the development is the submission of a new application. If any other type of condition is breached then you will be liable to a breach of condition notice.

4. The proposed location is approximately 80 metres to the east of public footpath 25 in Alwinton Parish. This Public Right of Way must be protected throughout. The planned works must have no effect on accessing this route. No action should be undertaken to disturb the surface of the path, obstruct the path or in any way prevent or deter public use of the path without the necessary legal diversion or closure order having been made.

	Signature	Date
Planning Officer		
Development Manager		
National Park Officer		