

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE DATE: 19 November 2008

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APPLICATION REF. NO:	08/00777/FUL
STATUTORY DECISION DATE:	26 November 2008
WARD/PARISH:	Sadberge and Whessoe
LOCATION:	Barmpton Lane, Barmpton
DESCRIPTION:	60 metre high Wind Monitoring Mast
APPLICANT:	Banks Developments Ltd.

APPLICATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

This application relates to the erection of a 60 metre high wind monitoring mast on land adjacent Moor House, approximately one and a half kilometres north of Barmpton. A temporary permission of three years is sought.

The mast will be of a monopole design; there are no associated cabinets proposed in this instance.

It is intended that the mast will collect wind speed data to assist in selecting the design of wind turbines in the event that planning permission is granted for a wind farm in this locality, to be the subject of a separate planning application.

The application site is in an isolated rural location approximately one mile from the nearest classified road, however it lies adjacent a public bridleway and a public footpath. The former is the main access to Moor House.

The land in the locality is primarily arable in nature and has an undulating character.

Whilst the locality is not designated in the Local Plan as being an Area of High Landscape Value, there are areas designated as Sites of Nature Conservation Importance located nearby to the east of the application site.

PLANNING HISTORY

None relating to this site.

PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

Whilst the current proposal does not relate to renewable energy generation directly, it is required to gather data to assess the wind resource of the area and may be seen as a necessary precursor to a wind energy project and as such, in planning policy terms, be treated as if it were a renewable energy development.

Members will be aware of Government document PPS22 – ‘Planning for Renewable Energy’ and its general support for the development of renewable energy projects as a means of reducing carbon emissions.

Following on from that, The North East Regional Spatial Strategy which was published in July 2008 includes advice and guidance on renewable energy development and in relation to onshore wind generated energy, identifies the planning application site (as part of the Tees Plain) as being located close to or within an area of “least constraint”.

The Borough of Darlington Local Plan 1997 includes within its Policy E26 support for renewable energy projects provided they do not significantly detrimentally effect landscape character or visual amenity, or other residential amenity.

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY

The application was advertised locally via a site notice and various third party interests notified. At the time of drafting one resident of Darlington has commented, objecting to the siting of the proposed mast but does not give reasons.

Barmpton Parish Meeting – Comments awaited , expected in time for the Meeting.

CPRE Darlington District – Raise concerns that approval of this application would not prejudice consideration of future wind turbine applications.

CPRE Durham Branch - Raise concerns that approval of this application would not prejudice consideration of future wind turbine applications.

Countryside Access Officer – No objections providing surface of the bridleway access is made good if damaged by construction traffic.

Seven Parishes Action Group – Comments received but do not relate specifically to the current proposal but to possible future applications for wind turbines.

Highways Officer – No objections.

Defence Estates – No comments received.

Durham Tees Airport – No comments received.

PLANNING ISSUES

The main planning issue associated with this proposal is the visual impact it will have on any local residents, members of the public using local rights of way and the local countryside in general.

Impact on local residents – There are no residential properties within approximately one kilometre of the site therefore it is considered that there are no material visual impacts in planning terms to occupiers of these properties.

Impact on users of rights of way – There are no classified roads within approximately one kilometre of the application site, however there is a bridleway running very close to the north of the application site and a public footpath close to the south. Users of both these will inevitably experience visual intrusion into their enjoyment of the countryside by the presence of the proposed mast, however this needs to be balanced with the slender design of the mast together with its temporary nature as it would not be a permanent feature in the countryside.

Due to its design, it would not be visually intrusive from distant views and would only become dominant from relatively close to the structure.

The above, taken together with the wider environmental effects of renewable energy projects which this proposal is intended to facilitate need to be taken into account as a material planning consideration and in this instance, on balance, it is considered that a temporary planning permission as applied for would be appropriate.

SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

CONCLUSION

The application relates to the erection of a 60 metre high wind monitoring mast for a temporary period of three years. Its location is necessarily in an open countryside location as its function is to measure wind speeds in the locality to inform decision making in relation to a possible future planning application for wind turbines.

The mast will be of a slender design and due to its temporary nature. It would not be a permanent feature in the countryside.

It would only be a prominent feature when viewed from relatively close by along the nearby public rights of way, and then only infrequently.

The above, taken together with the wider environmental effects of renewable energy projects which this proposal is intended to facilitate need to be taken into account as a material planning consideration and in this instance, on balance, it is considered that a temporary planning permission as applied for would be appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION

That Planning Permission be granted with the following conditions :

1. A4 – Time limit
2. B5 - Detailed Drawings (Accordance with Plan)
3. C1 – Limited period of 3 years

SUGGESTED SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR GRANTING PLANNING PERMISSION

The decision to grant planning permission has been taken having regard to the policies and proposals in the Borough of Darlington Local Plan set out below, and to all relevant material considerations.

PPS22 : Planning for renewable energy
North East Regional Strategy
Policy 29 of the Borough of Darlington Local Plan 1997 (renewable energy)

INFORMATIVES

Upon completion of the construction of the development hereby approved, the surface of the access bridleway to the site shall be made good to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.