

**EXTRAORDINARY DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE held at
COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 2.00pm on 23
JUNE 2009**

Present:- Councillor J F Cheetham – Chairman.
Councillors C A Cant, R Clover, C M Dean, C D Down, K L
Eden, E J Godwin, J I Loughlin, J E Menell, M Miller, D G Perry,
J Salmon, C C Smith and L A Wells.

Officers in attendance:- M Cox (Democratic Services Officer), K Hollitt
(Principal Planning Officer), R Harborough (Acting Director of Development)
and C Oliva (Solicitor – Litigation and Planning).

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

An apology for absence was received from Councillor E C Abrahams.

Councillor Menell declared a personal interest as a member of English
Heritage and the Uttlesford Futures Environment Working Group.

Councillor C Dean declared a personal interest as a member of the Uttlesford
Futures Environment Working Group.

Councillor Down declared a personal interest as a member of CPRE.

DC12

**APPLICATION UTT/0232/09/FUL – LAND AT LITTLE LINTON FARM
GREAT CHESTERFORD**

Members considered application 0232/09/FUL Great Chesterford for the
installation of one wind turbine with access track, crane hardstanding and
cable on land to the southwest of Linton, Cambs. It was noted that permission
for a further seven turbines was being sought from South Cambridgeshire
District Council.

Before discussion on this item, the Director of Development advised the
Committee that this was a major planning application that should be
considered on its merits, taking account of the development plan, any other
material considerations and the environmental effects, as assessed in the
Environmental Statement and in other assessments. All factors should be
weighed up in coming to the decision and Government policy could not
prescribe how a particular application should be determined. He said that the
report had put forward 3 reasons for refusal and the Committee should ensure
that they were robust and could be demonstrated by sound evidence. Any
additional reasons that did not meet these tests should not be added.

The Principal Planning Officer presented the report which set out the
applicant's case; the reports of the consultees, the representations received
and provided a detailed examination of the planning issues.
Members of the public, Local District Councillors, the parish council's and the
applicant were then given the opportunity to speak.

Councillor Loughlin proposed the recommendation of refusal as set out in the
report and this was seconded by Councillor Godwin

Councillor Loughlin said that officers had used objective analysis and professional judgement to come to their conclusion. For her it was the cumulative effect of all the negative impacts that had led to her decision. She was particularly concerned about the effect on wildlife and said that the council had a duty to preserve beautiful landscapes for future generations. It would only be when the turbine was built that the true impact could be assessed and by then it would be too late.

Councillor C Dean felt this to be an on balance report and she had tried to weigh up the local impact of the proposal against national significance. She was aware that Uttlesford had a high carbon footprint and it was reliant on other parts of the country to supply it with electricity. This particular application would be part of the renewable energy jigsaw. She personally did not object to the appearance of the turbine but understood that this was a subjective matter, although she felt that in time people would get used to them. She had concluded that the small visual impact was outweighed by the national need for renewable energy and she could not vote for refusal.

Councillor Godwin said that she tried to view this application through basic planning principles and to vote in favour she would have to be certain that the proposal was right for the district and the people that lived here. The council had an obligation to the people that lived in the vicinity to ensure that they were safe and she felt that the evidence was not conclusive. She said that this was not the only way to provide renewable energy and at the moment the jury was still out on its efficiency. She said that she would support the refusal on visual impact, noise and the uncertainty about the possible effect on radar.

Councillor Smith asked for confirmation on the objection from NATS. He was advised that an objection had been made but the full report had not yet been received. On basis of the objection he was unable to support the application although he did generally agree with the points made by Councillor Dean. He also dismissed a number of the contrary claims in the evidence that had been submitted.

Councillor Eden said that the turbine would be a very high structure in an elevated area of the open countryside which would be refused if it wasn't for energy policy. He rejected the concept that each district should produce its own energy; this would not make good business sense if it could be produced more efficiently elsewhere. In policy PPS22, it stated that the wind turbine should be in a location that was technically viable but it should also be where the impact had been addressed satisfactorily and he did not feel that this second aspect had been adequately dealt with.

Councillor Cant said there were still a number of uncertainties and conflicting evidence particularly in relation to noise and health, so for that reason she could not support the application. However she could not advocate the creation of non carbon energy and then turn her back on it. She had noted that the RSPB no longer raised objections to wind turbines because climate change itself was more damaging to the birds. She conceded that the turbine would be visually intrusive but felt that people would get used to it over time.

In answer to a question from Councillor Salmon it was confirmed that Duxford Airfield had confirmed that the turbine would have no impact on the visual approaches to the runway. Councillor Menell questioned whether there was a report from the British Zoological Society or other available information about the possible effect on the animals at Linton Zoo. She was advised that there were no papers on this. She felt that she could not support the application with uncertainties in many areas, particularly in relation to health. Councillor Down pointed out that the landscape had already been spoilt to some extent by the pylons on the ridge and she did not object to the windfarm concept. However she felt that there was insufficient concrete evidence to support the application.

Councillor Perry questioned the viability of wind energy as the amount of energy produced was negligible and the turbines were often idle. He felt that this type of application was a stop gap measure until other energy sources were explored. He said that the development would be a blot on the landscape and affect tourism in the district.

The Chairman said that she had read the report and visited the site and had concluded that because of the elevated nature of the area the effect on the landscape would be too significant. She did not consider this to be the right location for this proposal and there were other landscape areas that would be more appropriate.

The proposal was then put to the vote and was carried by 10 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions.

RESOLVED that the application be refused for the following reasons

1. Notwithstanding the positive aspects of the proposal in contributing towards regional and national targets for renewable energy and reduction in carbon emissions, the scale of the proposal, together with the topography of the site will result in a significant harm to the area. The proposed turbine would be located on a prominent ridge in a rural area where there is a wealth of public rights of way. The siting of the turbine would lead to a loss of visual amenity in the area potentially resulting in detracting from the recreational enjoyment of the area. In addition the turbine would appear as a visually prominent feature having a detrimental impact on the character of the Hadstock Conservation Area and the setting of the listed buildings. The proposals would be contrary to the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan Policies ENV1 and ENV2, advice contained in PPG15. The environmental impacts of the proposal are not satisfactorily addressed as required by PPS22 and PPS1.

2. The background noise data has been collected from positions not immediately adjacent to an elevation of the noise-sensitive properties and as such background noise levels are likely to be higher than if they had been measured adjacent to the dwelling. In addition, no consideration appears to have been given to the potential for wind speeds at noise-sensitive properties to be lower than those at the turbine, a fact that could be exacerbated by the topography of the area. As such there is the potential for the proposed turbine to operate at

noise levels that would exceed the criteria set out in ETSU-R-97 and this would also be contrary to ULP Policy GEN4.

3. Objections in relation to operational impacts on radar have been received from Defence Estates and NERL Safeguarding. PPS22 places the onus on the applicant to demonstrate that the proposal would have no adverse effect on aviation interests and this has not been demonstrated.

PUBLIC SPEAKING

The following people spoke against the application:-

District Councillors

Rod Chamberlain and Julie Redfern.

Members of the public (Stop Linton Windfarm Action Group)

Jim Heathcote, Mike Barnard, Sue Robinson, Roger Shaw, Kim Simmonds, AdrianThomas.

Great Chesterford Parish Council

Peter Fentern.

The following people spoke in support of the application:-

Supporters

Paul Garland – Sustainable Uttlesford
Patricia Dale – Friends of the Earth, Ernest Effer.

Applicant

David Linley

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CONSULTATION BY SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Council had been consulted by South Cambridgeshire District Council in respect of planning application reference S/0232/09/F for the installation of seven wind turbines and associated infrastructure on land to the south west of Little Linton Farm, Cambridge Road, Linton. The report set out the main issues that officers considered to be relevant in their response. It was confirmed that a copy of the full reports to the Committee would be enclosed with the Council's consultation response.

RESOLVED that that the Committee agrees that the issues raised in the section entitled "impacts on Uttlesford District" should be forwarded to South Cambridgeshire District Council as this authority's response to the consultation.

The meeting ended at 3.55pm