

INTRODUCTION: South Cambridgeshire District Council has consulted Uttlesford District Council in relation to a planning application reference S/2032/09/F, as this may have an impact on the Uttlesford District. The purpose of this report is to identify the potential impacts and the basis of the response recommended to this consultation. This application comprises the remainder of the development being considered by Uttlesford District Council under reference UTT/0232/09/FUL for a single turbine (i.e. 7 turbines and ancillary works).

DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION: Installation of 7 wind turbines and associated infrastructure (to include access tracks, crane hardstandings, temporary construction compound, switch house and cables) for land to the South west of Little Linton Farm, Cambridge Road, Linton.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE: The application site is located to the south west of the A1307 and the village of Linton. The site is accessed via a track running from the A1307, through the CamGrain site. The access track is also a bridle way and runs in a north/south direction to Catley Park. Catley Park was formerly a residential site with a dwelling and several outbuildings. All that remains on the site now are the outbuildings, in various states of repair, the landscaped gardens and two ponds. The application site is agricultural land currently used for production of crops. Some of the fields are edged by hedgerows and trees. The site adjoins the site of the single turbine being considered by Uttlesford District Council. The site forms a ridge running between the villages of Hildersham and Hadstock and running in a north/south direction between Linton and Great/Little Chesterford. It is in an elevated position, being approximately 100m AOD. The land falls to the south west with the villages of Great and Little Chesterford being located at approximately 50m AOD. These villages are set within a valley with land rising again further south. To the east of the site the land undulates and the village of Hadstock is at approximately 70-80m AOD. To the west of the site the land falls sharply towards a wide open valley located approximately 10-40m AOD. To the north the land undulates to the north of the village of Linton and then falls away to the wide valley around the city of Cambridge. To the south west and lying within the administrative area covered by Uttlesford are Cow Lane and a dwelling known as Crave Hall, approximately 1km from the district boundary and 1.3km from T6 and 1.25km from T7. The outer edges of the village of Hadstock are approximately 1.65km from the position of T6 and 1.6km from the position of T4. Penn Farm is located off a track to the west of the village and this property is approximately 1.1km from T6 and 1.4km from T4. T7 would be located approximately 230m from the boundary of the area covered by Uttlesford. The committee carried out a site visit on 20 May 2009.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL: The application relates to the installation 7 wind turbines, a switch house and construction of access tracks and the installation of cabling. The turbines would be 80m in height to the hub and would have three blades 45m long. At its full extent this would give an overall height of the turbine of 125m. The proposed turbines would be laid out in two parallel lines, one running along a ridge (T1, 3, 5, 7) and the other adjacent to a public right of way and the proposed access track set on lower ground which then rises towards the boundary of Uttlesford (T2, 4, 6) and the proposed T8 which would be within the Uttlesford district. The overall distance between T1 (located nearest to Linton) and T7 (located adjacent to Hildersham Wood and the Uttlesford boundary) is approximately 1460m. The overall distance between T2 (located nearest to Linton) and T8 (located in Uttlesford) is approximately 1750m. The application site is approximately 700m wide. Access tracks would be constructed from the highway to each of the turbines and each turbine would require a concrete hardstanding for cranes which would be required during construction, if required for on-going maintenance and final decommissioning.

Cables would be run underground to a switch house and then to a local sub-station. The proposed switch house would be located adjacent to T1. Each turbine is related at 2 megawatt (MW) with the overall development (8 turbines) having the potential to deliver 16MW of renewable energy. This energy provision would equate to around 18,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually if produced by traditional power plants.

CONSIDERATIONS: The proposal must be considered in line with national government policy and policies contained in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). In general renewable energy proposals are favourably considered and as both South Cambridgeshire and Uttlesford districts have a low generating capacity for renewable energy this proposal would represent a significant contribution to national and regional targets. The environmental, economic and social benefits of the proposal must also be taken into account when determining a planning application.

The issues relating to this proposal are much the same as those outlined in the report relating to application UTT/0232/09/FUL currently being considered by Uttlesford District Council – please see report.

Impacts on Uttlesford District:

The report relating to UTT/0232/09/FUL identifies the fact that T8, which makes up the remainder of this overall application, would have a detrimental impact on the character and setting of the conservation area of Hadstock. T4 and T6, together with T3 and T5 in particular, would have a more adverse and detrimental impact on the character and setting of the conservation area. These turbines would be highly visible from the central core of the conservation area and would detract from the setting of buildings in the western part of the village in particular.

The network of public rights of way in the area would be located in very close proximity to the proposed turbines and these would result in a significant visual intrusion in the landscape and detract from the rural character of the area.

The proposed turbines could result in a detrimental impact on television reception in the locality, in particular in the village of Hadstock. This should be the subject of a condition requiring remedial works to be carried out where required.

The reduction of noise with distance downwind from the turbine has been calculated in the report using 6dB per doubling of distance from the source. However, where other turbines are erected the single turbine becomes part of a line source, where the reduction is only 3dB per doubling of distance, hence the reduction of noise with distance from the wind farm as a whole will have been underestimated. There has been no attempt within the Environmental Statement (ES) to separate out the potential noise impacts.

The measured outdoor, night time background levels submitted are very low and likely to be even lower inside a property where the effects of the night time noise will be most noticed. Concern is expressed that the noise data was collected at a distance away from the elevation facing the proposed wind farm. Data collected closer to the dwelling could be lower than that collected from the garden which is more exposed and therefore potentially more likely to result in high background readings. In addition, the wind speed at a dwelling sheltered by outbuildings will often be considerably lower than the wind speed at the tip height of 125m. This difference, termed wind shear, is pronounced at night during stable air conditions due to cooling of the land. Under these circumstances the turbine rotates rapidly producing noise which is not masked by wind noise at ground level. These

conditions are likely to be more pronounced by the topography of the area, particularly as the proposed turbines would be located on higher ground than the surrounding villages. Hadstock is located in a valley and therefore could potentially be more adversely affected by this noise. It should be noted that these conditions will be present for longer during the months when days are shorter, resulting in turbine noise outside the normal hours of sleep. As turbine noise is projected horizontally, deflecting towards the ground at distance from the turbine, sound can be inaudible close to the turbine but noticeable at distance. Therefore, properties located within a 2km distance from the proposed turbine could be affected by the noise levels.

CONCLUSION: Officers consider that the proposed development current being considered by South Cambridgeshire District council would adversely affect interests in Uttlesford for the following reasons:

- Affect on the character of the Hadstock Conservation Area
- Form a usual intrusion into the open rolling landscape
- The proposal is likely to give rise to higher levels of noise than identified in the applicant's case which could be harmful to properties within 2km