

Committee: **PLANNING**

Date of Meeting: **09 March 2011**

Title of Report: **S/2010/1730**
Moss Farm North End Lane, Ince Blundell
(Ravenmeols Ward)

Proposal: Erection of a wind turbine, (tower height 15m) on land to the rear of Moss Farm

Applicant: Mr Michael Clarke

Executive Summary

The proposal seeks to install a 15 metre high wind turbine within the curtilage of a residential dwelling in the Green Belt. The key considerations are the impact on the openness and character of the Green Belt and the very special circumstances that would outweigh any harm. By virtue of wider environmental, social and economic benefits of the turbine, it is considered that any injury to the Green Belt is outweighed and that consent should be granted with conditions.

Recommendation(s) Approval

Justification

When assessed against the Unitary Development Plan and all other material considerations, particularly policies CS2, CS3, DQ1, GBC1, GBC2, Planning Policy Guidance 2 'Green belts' and Planning Policy Statement 22 'Renewable energy', whilst this is inappropriate development and there is injury to the openness of the Green Belt this is outweighed by the wider environmental, social and economic benefits of the turbine and as such the proposal is considered acceptable.

Conditions

1. T-1 Full Planning Permission Time Limit
2. If the wind turbine hereby permitted is taken out of use the turbine shall be removed from the site and the site reinstated to its former condition in accordance with a scheme submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
3. P-10 Wind Turbines
4. X1 Compliance

Reasons

1. RT-1
2. In the interests of preserving the character of the Green Belt.

3. To prevent the emission of noise above a level which would be detrimental to the aural amenity of the area and to comply with policy EP6 in the Sefton Unitary Development Plan.
4. RX1

Drawing Numbers

C12 001, C12 002, 6kW 15m

Financial Implications

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	2010/ 2011 £	2011/ 2012 £	2012/ 2013 £	2013/ 2014 £
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
REVENUE IMPLICATIONS				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

List of Background Papers relied upon in the preparation of this report

History referred to
Policy referred to



Sefton Council Planning & Economic Regeneration Department Andy Wallis - Director <small>Planning & Economic Regeneration is part of the Regeneration & Environmental Services Directorate</small>	S/2010/1730 Moss Farm North End Lane Ince Blundell L38 4JB OSGR: 330226, 404877	Standard Site Plan Scale: 1:1250 Date: 24/2/2011 Drawn By: EBERTon
	Sheet(s): 226A Area: 12123 sqm	Ward(s): Ravenmeols Postcode Sector(s): L38 4 Polling District(s): P6 Parish(es): Ince Blundell Cp

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S/2010/1730

The Site

Moss Farm Cottage on North End Lane, Ince Blundell within the Green Belt.

Proposal

Erection of a wind turbine, (tower height 15m.) on land to the rear of Moss farm.

History

None relevant to the installation of a wind turbine.

Consultations

Environmental Protection Director – No objection subject to a condition relating to noise emission from the turbine being added to any approval.

Highways DC – There are no objections as there are no highway safety implications.

Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service – The proposed turbine is not of a scale that would pose significant risk to birds and therefore there are no objections to the proposal.

MoD Safeguarding – No objection to the proposal.

Neighbour Representations

Last date for replies: 3 February 2011 (expiration of press notice, with site notice expiring 2 February 2011).

Representations received: Representation from Number 4 Cleaver Cottages that while supporting the principle of renewable energy initiatives expressed concern as to the noise that would be generated by the turbine.

Policy

The application site is situated in an area allocated as Green Belt on the Council's Adopted Unitary Development Plan.

CS2	Restraint on development and protection of environmental assets
CS3	Development Principles
DQ1	Design
GBC1	The Green Belt
GBC2	Development in the Green Belt

Comments

As the proposal site lies within designated Green Belt then it must be assessed not only against Unitary Development Plan policies GBC1 and GBC2 but also Planning Policy Guidance 2 'Green belts'.

The applicant has provided a justification statement that relies heavily upon the advice set out in Planning Policy Statement 22 'Renewable Energy' but ignores paragraph 13 of the document which focuses on renewable energy development in the Green Belt and states:

"Policy on development in the green belt is set out in PPG2. When located in the green belt, elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development, which may impact on the openness of the green belt. Careful consideration will therefore need to be given to the visual impact of projects, and developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances that clearly outweigh any harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm if projects are to proceed. Such very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources."

While PPS22 supports renewable energy installations, it is clearly mindful of the requirements of PPG2 whereby renewable energy installations, including the proposal for a 15 metre high turbine with a total rotor diameter of 5.5 metres, would be classed as inappropriate development by definition.

It is clear from the submitted information that the scale of the proposal would, when set against a predominantly low lying area with few structures or natural features above approximately 8 – 9 metres, introduce a highly visible structure that would be at odds with the openness of the Green Belt.

With the above points in mind, the proposal can only be considered acceptable if there are very special circumstances that would outweigh the injury to the openness of the Green Belt that such a proposal would cause.

The applicant has stated that the predicted levels of electricity to be provided by the turbine would cover all of the needs of the dwelling, and would pay for its installation within a five year period. This would bring two benefits in that it would reduce, after the five year period, the outgoings of the household in question but would also reduce their reliance upon centrally supplied electricity with the justification that the turbine would represent a saving of 4,725kgs of carbon per year.

This site is close to an area identified by the Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study (next to the River Alt and south of Great Altcar to the east of the A565 Formby By-Pass) as a suitable zone for wind energy development based upon wind speed evidence. As such, it is clear that the proposal is to be situated in an area that will provide a consistent source of wind.

Based upon the information submitted, it is clear that the proposal brings an environmental benefit and while focussed as it is on one dwelling it presents a long term sustainable solution that ensures a wider environmental benefit.

Furthermore the applicant is a director of a Sefton based company that promotes the use of renewable energy installations and as such, the proposal would also have wider socio-economic benefits as it will assist a local employer and also provide an educational tool for members of the public to understand the benefits such a form of renewable energy could bring.

A representation from a neighbouring residential property raised concerns as to the potential for noise disturbance from the turbine. By virtue of the gearless system within the Proven wind turbines, the attachment of a condition to approval to limit the decibel output of the turbine and the distances from residential properties to the turbine there will be no harm to neighbouring amenity in respect of noise disturbance.

While there is harm to the openness of the Green Belt, this is outweighed by the wider environmental, social and economic benefits that the turbine will provide and as such, the proposal should be granted consent with conditions.

Contact Officer: **Mrs S Tyldesley Telephone 0151 934 3569**

Case Officer: **Neil Mackie Telephone 0151 934 3606**