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Our ref: 40b – Planning Conformity/final responses/Wakefield Erection of 6 wind turbines Jul 07

5 July 2007

Becky Walker
Senior Planning Officer (Business Team)
City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
Planning Services
Newton Bar
Leeds Road
Wakefield
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Dear Becky

Planning Application Number: 07/01338/Ful

Erection of 6 wind turbines, highway access, junction improvement and ancillary development at Westfield Lane, Darrington, West Yorkshire

Thank you for consulting the Assembly on the above. The Assembly, as the Regional Planning Body, has been asked to comment on this development as its nature and location mean that it could have an effect on the implementation of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The current RSS for Yorkshire and Humber (based on the Selective Review of RPG12) was issued by the Secretary of State in December 2004. The RSS has the status of a Development Plan Document and forms part of the framework for decisions taken under section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), which means that decisions on all applications have to be taken in accordance with the Development Plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and Circular 08/2005 make it clear that a draft RSS submitted to the Secretary of State is a relevant regional policy against which strategic applications can be considered. This Assembly response therefore also highlights relevant issues that arise from the Yorkshire and Humber Plan (draft RSS) December 2005 – the RSS submitted to the Secretary of State.

The Panel Report of the Examination in Public of the Yorkshire and Humber Plan has now been published (May 2007). This contains recommendations to Government that may or may not be reflected in the Proposed Changes to the Plan that are due to be published for consultation in the summer. The Panel Report backs the Plan's overall approach and strategy. It also includes recommendations for changes or additions to policies. Any points from the Panel Report that are particularly relevant to the Assembly's comments on this application are noted in this response. The Yorkshire and Humber Plan should be published by the end of 2007.

Both the existing and draft regional spatial strategies aim to achieve a more sustainable pattern and form of development, investment and activity across the region, putting a greater emphasis on matching needs across the region with opportunities and managing the environment as a key resource. Within the detailed policies of current and draft RSS, the value of developing renewable energy resources is recognised in policies S6 and R12 of current RSS and policies YH2A and ENV5 of draft RSS.

In seeking the implementation of these policies across the region, the Assembly therefore offers the following comments on the proposed wind farm.

Renewable Energy

Current RSS Policy R12 states that development plans should include measures that help secure a target installed renewable energy generation capacity of 674MW for the Yorkshire and Humber region. Current information at a regional level suggests that 130MW is being generated from renewable resources. It also sets a renewable energy target for West Yorkshire of 146MW by 2010, equating to 22% of the total regional target. Draft RSS also sets a target for installed renewable energy capacity in Wakefield of 10.7MW by 2010 (Table 15.12, Policy ENV5).

The application will help to meet these challenging targets and therefore supports the implementation of the RSS.

Location

Current RSS (Policy R12c) states that development plans should include locational and environmental criteria to be applied in securing the sub-regional targets, maximising the use of renewable energy resources. The draft RSS builds on this and states that it is a local authority's role to identify the preferred type, scale and locations for renewable energy and to also provide supplementary locational and environmental criteria to be used in assessing such development as needed. The Landscape Character Assessment of the Wakefield District was adopted in October 2004.

The local authority will have to take this (and the assessment of the applicant) into account in reaching its decision.

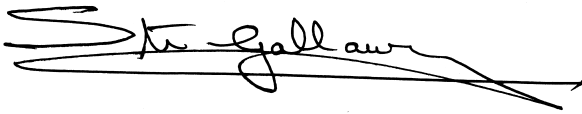
Conclusion

Given the comments set out above, it is concluded that:

- This development is supported in principle by the Assembly as helping to implement the RSS by providing renewable energy generation.
- Local landscape assessments will have to be taken into account by the local authority in reaching its decision.

If you have any queries about these points, please do not hesitate to contact Jenny Poxon on 01924 331555.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Galloway". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Stephen Galloway
Chair, Regional Planning Board
Yorkshire and Humber Assembly