

Application Recommended for Approval

APP/2012/0510

Coalclough with Deerplay Ward

Full Planning Application

Installation of a single micro scale wind turbine (14.97M to hub, 5.6m diameter blades)
HIGHER GIBFIELD FARM, MANCHESTER ROAD, BURNLEY

Background:

An objection has been received from Habergham Eaves Parish Council.

Summary of Reason for Decision:

The development is generally in accordance with the Development Plan, in particular the policies listed below, and there are no other material considerations to indicate that planning permission should not be granted:

Relevant Policies:

Burnley Local Plan Second Review

E21 - Gateways and throughroutes

E27 - Landscape, character and local distinctiveness in Rural Areas and Green Belt

E31 - Wind Farms

GP2 - Development in the Rural Areas

TM7 - Cycling network

Site History:

None.

Consultation Responses:

Highway Authority – The proposed wind turbine has no highway implications and they therefore raise no objections on highway grounds.

Parish Council – Object to the application on the grounds that it will spoil the landscape and question what value a single turbine would have to the energy use in the area. The place in question is highly visible and it could lead to an influx of turbines.

Natural England – Natural England does not consider that this application poses any likely or significant risk to features of the natural environment.

English Heritage – Have no comments to make.

Ministry of Defence – Have no objection to the proposal.

Electricity North West – The development is adjacent to or affects Electricity North West operational land or electricity distribution assets. The applicant must ensure that the development does not encroach over either the land or any ancillary rights of access or cable easements.

Lancashire County Council Ecology Unit – The main ecological issues arising from the proposal include potential impacts on bats (European Protected Species). Further information was requested before determination of the application.

Further information was received in respect of bats on 4th March 2013, and LCC Ecology have now confirmed that based on the information submitted it does seem reasonably unlikely that the turbine would result in impacts on bat populations. A condition is suggested in respect of maintaining grassland within the applicant's ownership, within 50m of the turbine, at a sward height of 20cm or less by regular mowing.

A condition is recommended if the application is approved in respect of no work to be carried out that may affect nesting birds between March and August, unless the absence of nesting birds has been confirmed by further surveys or inspections.

Environmental Health – Confirm that they are satisfied that the proposal is unlikely to result in a loss of amenity due to noise and disturbance caused by the operation of the wind turbine.

Planning and Environmental Considerations:

The proposal involves the erection of one turbine which has a hub height of 14.97m (ground to centre of hub) with a rotor diameter of 5.6m (height to blade tip 17.8m). The tower is a matt grey colour galvanised to BSEN1461 while the turbine housing and blades have an anti-erosion coating in white.

The proposed location is shown on the plans in the report for ease of description.

It is estimated that the turbine would generate an energy output of 13.29 MWh annually. The energy generation represents an annual CO2 saving of approx. 7.14 tonnes.

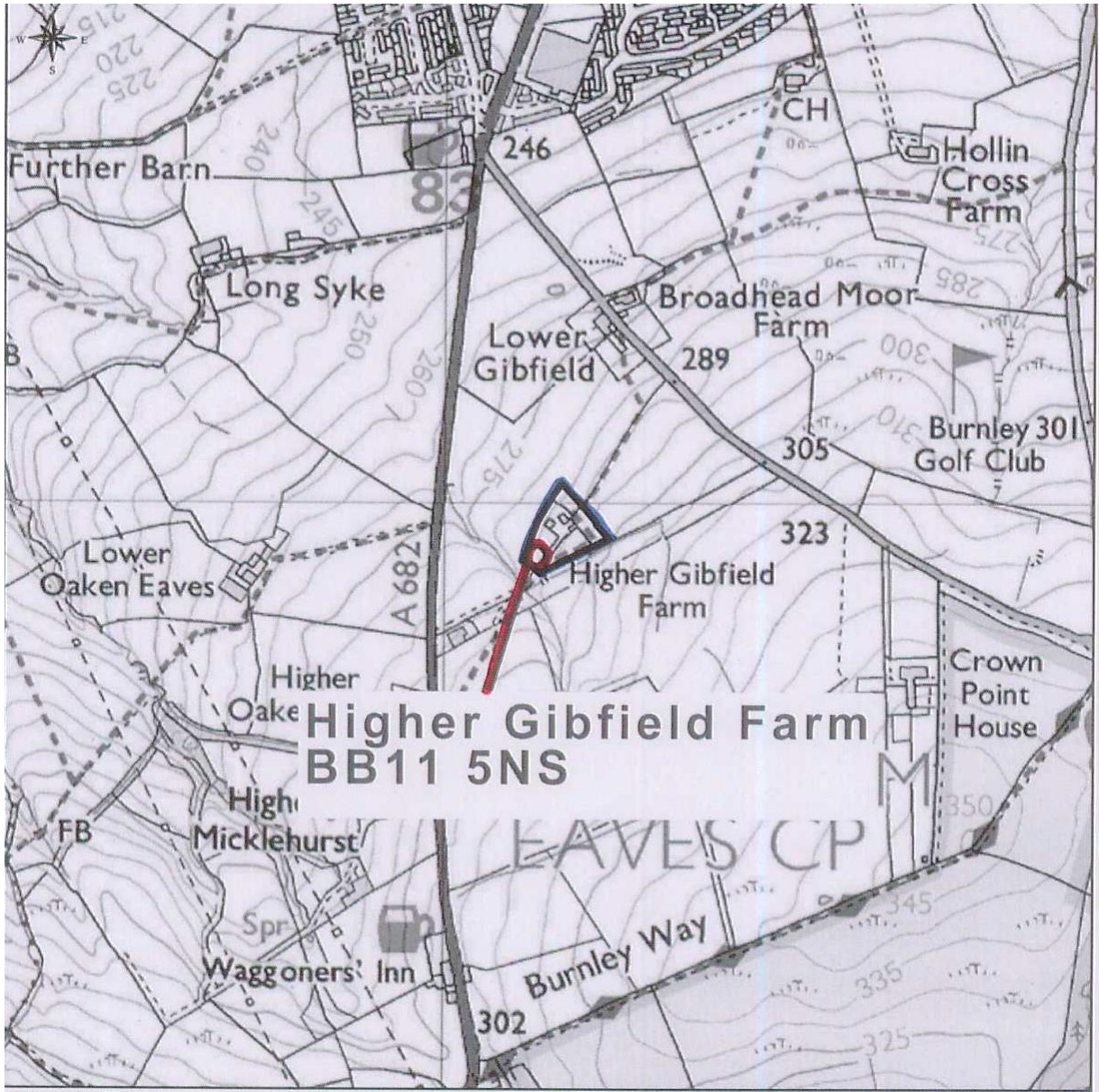
Policies and assessment

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF promotes renewable energy development where appropriately located.

Chapter 10 (Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change), paragraph 97 states “ To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, local planning authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to generation from renewable or low carbon sources.” It goes on to say “They should design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts”.

Regard should be had to Chapter 11 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment). In particular paragraph 109 states “the planning system should contribute to an enhanced natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils”. Paragraph 113 states that local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting landscape areas will be judged. The ‘saved’ policies of the Burnley Local Plan Second Review currently provide this.



application site plan

LOCAL PLAN POLICY E31 – WIND FARMS

The development of wind farms and related development will be approved, provided that:

(a) there is no unacceptable impact on the character of the landscape or on the visual amenity of the area by reason of the siting, number, design, colour or layout of the wind turbines;

Comment In order to catch high wind speeds turbines are located in an exposed location. The proposed turbine is located on an area of rough ground to the south west of Higher Gibfield Farm and is adjacent to agricultural land; it would be sited at a height of 285m above sea level (the land rises up gradually from Manchester Road south eastwards).

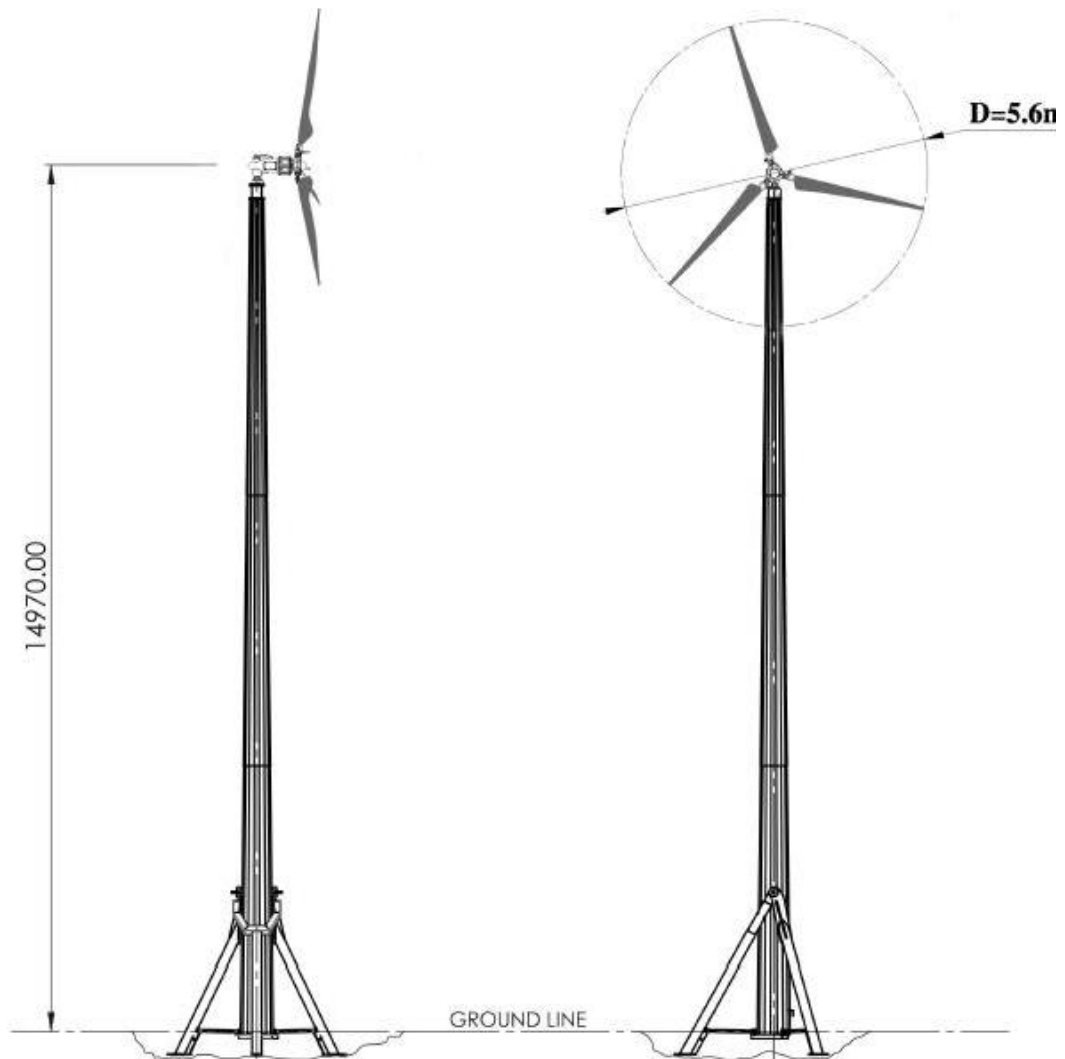
The turbine would be approx. 300m from the nearest neighbouring dwelling (Higher Oaken Eaves).

The turbine design consists of a tubular solid tower. The height to blade tip is 17.8m and to the middle of the hub 14.97m. The photomontage below shows the turbine in the landscape.



Due to the siting, small scale and slender design of the turbine, it would only have minimal visual impact on landscape quality; this could be considered to be mitigated by the positive results the turbine would have on the environment such as the reduction in CO2 emissions by an annual saving of 7.14 tonnes which will assist in a reduction in global warming.

(b) there is no unacceptable effect on the setting of buildings and sites of architectural and historic interest and sites of archaeological importance;
Comment The turbine would be set apart visually from buildings; there are no designated buildings or sites of archaeological interest in the vicinity.



proposed wind turbine type

(c) there is no unacceptable effect on sites of nature conservation value or biodiversity action plan priority habitats or species;

Comment: The main ecological issues arising from the proposal include potential impacts on bats (European Protected Species). Further information was requested before determination of the application.

Further information was received in respect of bats on 4th March 2013, and LCC Ecology have now confirmed that based on the information submitted it does seem reasonably unlikely that the turbine would result in impacts on bat populations. A condition is suggested in respect of maintaining grassland within the applicant's ownership, within 50m of the turbine, at a sward height of 20cm or less by regular mowing.

Habitats on the site may have potential to support nesting birds, including ground nesting species. A condition is recommended if the application is approved in respect of no work to be carried out that may affect nesting birds between March and August, unless the absence of nesting birds has been confirmed by further surveys or inspections.

(d) there is no unacceptable effect on the amenity of local residents

Comment: The nearest neighbouring property is Higher Oaken Eaves which is approx.300m away The turbine would not be directly in front of the living room windows of this property and visual amenity for local residents would not therefore be significantly affected.

Environmental Health are satisfied that this proposal is unlikely to result in a loss of amenity due to noise and disturbance caused by the operation of the wind turbine.

(e) the proposal is close to the electricity distribution network and the length of any overhead electricity connection cables is minimised;

Comment: The site is favourably located as regards the electricity network.

(f) it does not adversely affect any recreational facilities and routes;

Comment: Footpath no.12 runs close to the site of the turbine, however, there would be minimal visual and auditory impact.



dotted lines are public footpaths



view from closest footpath looking west

(g) any electromagnetic disturbance on existing transmitting or receiving systems is minimised;

Comment: The consultation response from Defence Estates confirms that there would be no adverse effects on military aircraft operation, including radar and low flying operations. Existing telecommunications operators have statutory protection ensuring that disturbance in their operation is avoided.

(h) applications are accompanied by a scheme for removal of any associated structures, and reinstatement of the site to its former use in the event of the site becoming non-operational.

Comment: No such scheme was submitted; a condition would normally be attached if approved to deal with this matter.

E31 (cont) Development that would have a negative cumulative impact in relation to existing wind turbines or extant approvals for these will not be permitted.

Comment: Whilst there are other wind turbines that have been granted consent in this area (i.e. 2 at Crown Point Road – 25m to tip) the height of the turbines is small and any adverse cumulative visual impact would be negligible.

In conclusion, the proposed turbine is considered to be acceptable and in accordance with the Local Plan policies listed above. It is considered that the turbine will not dominate the landscape and will make up only a very small portion of views, even from close range vantage points. Further afield, the turbine will appear as extremely small scale. The cumulative impact of the proposed turbine with existing turbines is considered to be minor due to the limited vantage points of the proposed

turbine in relation to the other turbines, and to the limited scale of the proposed turbine.

Recommendation:

Grant subject to the following conditions:

Conditions:

1. The development must be begun within three years of the date of this decision.
2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the drawings listed above.
3. Any cables for grid connection or other purpose relating to the turbines shall be placed underground.
4. The wind turbine shall be removed and the landscape restored to its original state if or when the wind turbine becomes non-operational, or at the expiration of a period of 25 years from the date of first operation, whichever is the earliest date.
5. The wind turbine shall not be operated when noise emitted exceeds the levels set out in the application.
6. Vegetation clearance works, site preparation, vehicle movements associated with the development, development work or other works that may affect the nesting birds will be avoided between March and August inclusive, unless the absence of nesting birds has been confirmed by further surveys or inspections.
7. Grassland within the applicant's ownership within a 50m radius of the turbine shall be maintained at a sward height of 20cm or less by regular mowing.

Reasons:

1. Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2. For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development remains in accordance with the development plan.
3. To safeguard the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape in the interests of visual amenity, in accordance with Policy E31 of the Burnley Local Plan Second Review.
4. To ensure the long-term protection of the character of the rural landscape, in accordance with Policy E31 of the Burnley Local Plan Second Review.
5. In the interests of the amenities of any nearby occupiers, in accordance with Policy E31 of the Burnley Local Plan Second Review.
6. In order to protect birds from disruption during the nesting period and in accordance with policy E5 of the Burnley Local Plan Second Review.
7. In order to minimise the potential risk of disturbance/collision of bats and in accordance with policy E5 of the Burnley Local Plan second Review.

