

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	Full Planning Committee - 01/03/2011	Item No: 5.2
Report Originator	Michael Boniface Development Officer	Application No: KET/2010/0802
Wards Affected	Slade	
Location	Broughton Road (land north of), Pytchley	
Proposal	Full Application: 15m high anemometer mast for a period of up to 12 months	
Applicant	Glanmoor Investments Ltd	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To describe the above proposals
- To identify and report on the issues arising from it
- To state a recommendation on the application

2. RECOMMENDATION

THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL MANAGER RECOMMENDS that this application be APPROVED subject to the following Condition(s):-

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this planning permission.

REASON: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and to prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

2. This permission shall be limited to a period expiring on 1st March 2012. At or before the expiration of this period the mast hereby permitted shall be permanently removed and the land restored to its former condition.

REASON: To clarify the terms of the permission and to avoid unnecessary long term visual impact in accordance with policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

3. Prior to the commencement of development, full details of the colour and finish for the proposed mast shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with these approved details.

REASON: To ensure an acceptable visual appearance in accordance with policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

Notes (if any) :-

- NONE

Justification for Granting Planning Permission

The proposal is in accordance with national and local policies as set out in Planning Policy Statements/Guidance Notes 1, 7, 13 and 22, Policies 1, 2 and 40 of The East Midlands Regional Plan, and Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy. There are no material considerations that indicate against the proposal.

Officers Report

3.0 Information

Relevant Planning History

None.

Site Description

Officer's site inspection was carried out on 31/01/2011.

The site comprises arable land in open countryside located approximately 800m to the south of Broughton and 2km to the west of Pytchley. The site is rural and agricultural in appearance with native hedgerow boundaries. Land is undulated with a general gradient downwards to the north. Two runs of electricity pylons run either side of the development site and a public footpath exists to the west. Vehicular access would be gained from Broughton Road.

Proposed Development

15m high guyed anemometry mast (for a temporary period of up to 12 months).

Any Constraints Affecting The Site

Public Right of Way adjacent

4.0 Consultation and Customer Impact

Pytchley Parish Council

Comments as follows:

- Concerns regarding lack of public consultation.
- Any grant of permission should be conditional upon a copy of the test results from the mast being provided to the Parish Council.
- The Parish Council reserves its position on any future applications on this site resulting from the findings of the anemometer.

Broughton Parish Council

Objection as the proposed mast would be cumulatively and unacceptably damaging to an attractive landscape already adversely affected by the Burton Wold wind farm which is visible from the site.

Highway Authority

No objection.

Rights of Way

No objection.

Environmental Health

No objection.

Sywell Aerodrome

Objection to the current proposal as a prelude to a full wind farm proposal which could impact aircraft safety.

Neighbours

9 letters of objection for the following reasons:

- There is no evidence that wind turbines produce efficient and economic power, especially in land.
- The development would be an eyesore and spoil the land.
- Turbines are popular because of tax revenues.
- The system for erecting turbines of closed and quiet, relying on a lack of understanding.
- Lack of public consultation.
- Inappropriate location and proximity to village.
- Development is on high ground and would be visible for some distance around.
- No assurance as to temporary nature of development.
- Scheme is a precursor to a wind farm.
- Any change to the open countryside should be deplored.
- Landscape impact.
- Noise.
- House prices will be impacted.
- Wind farms are ineffective at low temperatures.
- Large carbon footprint from erection of turbines.
- No need for the turbines has been demonstrated.

5.0 Planning Policy

National Policies

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

PPG13 – Transport

PPS22 – Renewable Energy

Development Plan Policies

East Midlands Regional Plan

1 – Regional Core Objectives

2 – Promoting Better Design

40 – Regional Priorities for Low Carbon Energy Generation

North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy

13 – General Sustainable Development Principles

Local Plan for Kettering Borough 1995

7 – Protection of the Open Countryside

6.0 Financial/Resource Implications

None

7.0 Planning Considerations

The key issues for consideration in this application are:-

1. Principle of Development;
2. Landscape and Visual Impact;
3. Highways;
4. Other Matters.

1. Principle of Development

The UK has signed up to the EU Renewable Energy Directive, which includes a UK target of 15% of energy from renewable sources by 2020. The development of renewable energy, alongside improvements in energy efficiency will make a vital contribution to these aims.

Although PPS7 and policy 7 of the Local Plan seek to restrict development within open countryside, PPS22 clarifies that “most renewable energy resources can only be developed where the resource exists and where economically feasible, local planning authorities should not use a sequential approach in the consideration of renewable energy projects (for example, by giving priority to the re-use of previously developed land for renewable technology developments)”. The proposed development seeks to gather wind speed data in order to inform the potential viability of a wind farm project; as such it represents an exception to normal planning considerations in terms of location and can be viewed favourably within open countryside subject to an acceptable visual impact and other material considerations as discussed below.

PPS1 (2004) outlines the need for the planning system to deliver sustainable development and to tackle climate change, and the PPS1 supplement ‘Planning and Climate Change’ (2007) states that positive planning for renewable energy development is important for the delivery of the Government’s renewable energy targets. Furthermore PPS22 states that meeting the national renewable energy targets is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for renewable energy development. The proposed development would contribute towards these aims.

There is therefore broad support for renewable energy projects in planning policy and the proposed anemometer is instrumental in determining the viability of such a scheme in the long term. Under these circumstances the development can be supported in principle for the temporary period of 12 months required.

2. Landscape and Visual Impact

PPS7 advises that in rural areas the sensitive exploitation of renewable energy resources in accordance with PPS22 may be acceptable. Although the application site lies in a rural area it does not fall within any areas that are nationally designated for their importance.

The need for renewable energy is clearly enshrined within all levels of planning policy; however, if the governments' targets are to be met, the policy support for renewable energy schemes needs to be backed up by development control decisions. The government sets a hierarchical approach to landscape protection considerations, with the highest protection being afforded to national designations such as AONB and National Parks, however, even in this instance planning permission may still be granted if the overriding public interest outweighs any loss of landscape or visual integrity. In terms of local landscape and nature conservation designations, paragraph 15 of PPS22 clearly states that local designations should not be used to refuse planning permission for renewable energy developments. As such landscape and visual impacts must not be considered in isolation but instead assessed within the context of impact significance and the wider implications and public benefit of the project. Again, it must be recognised that the site in question is not subject to any national or local landscape designation.

The site falls within the 'Central Northamptonshire Plateaux and Valleys' area defined by the Northamptonshire Environmental Character Assessment. This document offers an evaluation of the differing landscape characteristics across the county and suggests that the area in question is likely to be sparsely settled, retaining a remote, vacant character with wide views over the surrounding landscape. Furthermore, it is noted that pasture on steeper land and surrounding villages represents an important contrast to the prevailing arable character. The site in question comprises gently sloping agricultural land and is considered to accord with this general description. The arable nature of the surrounding fields and sparsely located farm complexes contribute to this.

The proposed development is however relatively modest, consisting of a slender 15m high mast supported by 3no. guy wires radiating from the mast to a distance of 5 metres. While the structure will be visible upon views across the landscape, particularly from the adjacent public footpath, it would be seen in the context of the nearby electricity pylons which are larger in scale and height. Furthermore, its design and appearance are such that it will not be unduly prominent or disruptive to the rural scene. It must also be recognised that the application seeks planning permission for a temporary period of 12 months only (in order to gather sufficient wind data), after which the site would be restored to its former condition. Any visual impact would therefore be restricted to this period and a condition should be attached in this regard to avoid any long term adverse impact and to avoid the retention of redundant equipment.

It is considered that the limited visual impact resulting from the proposed development would not be so detrimental as to outweigh the benefits of the scheme in contributing to the government's renewable energy targets, reduction in carbon emissions and preventing climate change.

3. Highways

Vehicular access would be gained from an existing field access from Broughton Road but would only be necessary very infrequently in the initial

construction and maintenance of the mast. The existing access is considered acceptable for this purpose and no adverse impact will result in terms of highway safety. The Highway Authority has raised no objection to the scheme.

4. Other Matters

A number of comments have been made regarding wind turbines. Although the proposed anemometer would collect wind data to assess the feasibility of wind turbines in the future, the application seeks permission for the anemometer only and consideration can therefore be given to this development only. The application does not involve a wind turbine, nor does it prejudice the Local Planning Authorities position in considering any future planning application that may come forward for such a scheme. This application for an anemometer must be considered on its own merits.

Conclusion

The proposed development accords with both national and local planning policy and there are no material planning matters that indicate against the scheme; as such, planning permission should be granted in accordance with section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Background Papers

Title of Document:

Date:

Contact Officer:

Previous Reports/Minutes

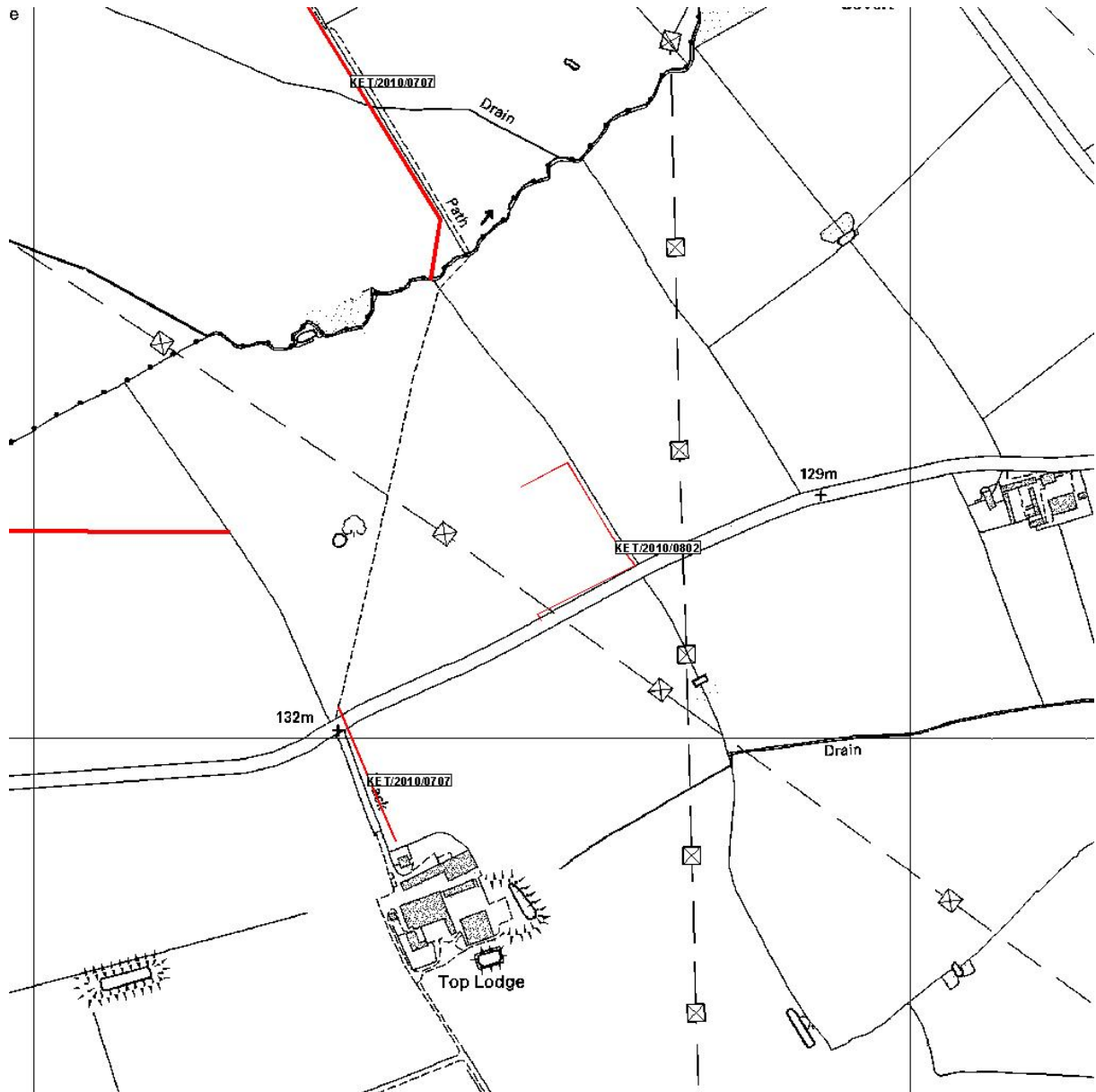
Ref:

Date:

Michael Boniface, Development Officer on 01536 534316

SITE LOCATION PLAN

Broughton Road (land north of), Pytchley
Application No.: KET/2010/0802



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.

LA078344

Date: 07/12/2010 Do not scale from this map. For illustrative purposes only.

