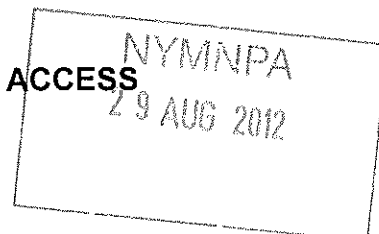


## DOC 3

### EBBERSTON COMMON FARM, NORTH YORKSHIRE YO16 XX

Application for planning permission for erection of Kingspan KW6 6kW / 15m wind turbine

### SUPPORTING STATEMENT, (INCORPORATING DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT)



#### Introduction

1. The proposal is for the erection of a Kingspan KW6 (6kW) turbine on a 15 metre high mast. The turbine will be fully certified and provided by a certified installer under the MCS scheme. It is intended that the resulting energy produced can make Ebberston Common Farm largely self-sufficient in energy, replacing existing grid-supplied electricity. It is calculated that, based on a conservative estimate of expected operating conditions, based on average wind speed of 6.9 metres /sec this will generate 10,000 kW per annum, equivalent to an annual reduction of 5 tonnes of carbon emissions.

#### Planning policy context

2. The increased use of renewable energy technology is supported by national government policy, in pursuit of the carbon reduction commitments entered into under international obligations and reflected in the Climate Change Act of 2008. The National Planning Framework (NPPF), effective since March 2012, retains the previous support in principle for renewable energy contained in the former Planning Policy Statements, which it has replaced. Renewable energy schemes benefit from the general presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is the founding principle of the NPPF. Specifically, paragraphs 97 and 98 express direct support for renewable and low carbon energy sources.

3. The North York Moors Core Strategy Core Policy D expresses support for generating energy from renewable sources of scale and design appropriate to their locality, which help meet domestic, community or business needs within the National Park. The North Yorkshire Renewable Energy Study undertaken in 2005 identified the National Park as a landscape of high sensitivity, in which only domestic scale wind turbines are likely to be appropriate. Specific guidance relating to wind turbines is contained in the National Park Authority's Supplementary Planning Document on Renewable Energy, approved in 2010.

4. Key considerations for the application are the site's location within the Green Belt and the National Park. Whilst renewable energy installations do not fall within the defined categories of development which are regarded as appropriate within the green belt, it can be held that their contribution to carbon reduction can provide the special justification which is required to overcome green belt policy objections. Individual proposals should be assessed in terms of any effects on the character and open-ness of the green belt and judged on a pragmatic basis, as a necessary part of utility service provision to the local community, as with electricity supply lines and telecommunications.

5. It is considered that the present proposal is fully in accordance with relevant national and local policy and that, in particular, it complies with the Supplementary Planning Document guidance. This is explained in the following paragraphs

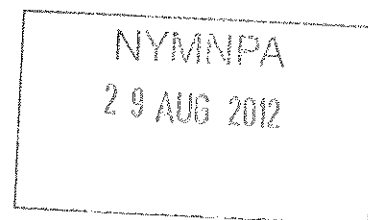
### **The KW6 Turbine**

6. Technical details, including elevational drawings of the turbine are provided in a separate document. For Planning purposes, the key issues, apart from visual appearance and impact, are the effectiveness of the turbine and its potential cause of noise nuisance. The turbine is a well-established and proven product, which is effective over a range of wind speeds, with a low cut-in speed of 3.5 m/s and no maximum cut-out speed, unlike some larger turbines. The turbine has a variable speed direct drive, with no gearbox. As a result, it does not generate any mechanical noise and is only audible at relatively close distance. In higher wind speeds, any increase in noise from the movement of the turbine rotor is countered by the fact that the increased wind itself is likely to cause an increase in background noise levels experienced by receptors.

### **Benefits of the proposed turbine installation.**

7. The proposal offers clear benefits as follows:

- a direct reduction in CO2 emissions
- a contribution to the National Park's strategic objectives relating to climate change mitigation and adaptation, which support the longer term conservation of the landscape.
- a direct net reduction in the demand placed on the national grid, thereby making a positive contribution to energy security and resilience.
- energy self-sufficiency for the applicant, supporting the sustainability of the farm operations which are themselves an important element in the management of the National Park landscape.



As a non-polluting source of locally generated energy, it can achieve these benefits without any negative impact upon the local environment. Small scale generation at the point of usage is a particularly sustainable form of renewable energy and the domestic scale of this proposal meets the National Park criteria.

### **Visual impact**

8. The application site is within the plateau to the east of Dalby Forest, within an area of open pasture, in which grazing is the principal land use. In assessing the possible visual impact of the turbine, the following factors are relevant:-

- It is a single, vertical feature, with no additional visible associated plant or structures. The mast height of 15 metres is not significant within the scale of the surrounding landscape.
- The turbine would not be visually prominent or intrusive. Its position accords with the guidance in the Appendix of the SPG, which recognises that in such locations, the forest itself screens long distance views, as well as providing a backdrop which reduces the prominence of turbines.
- The turbine would not be visible to the majority of visitors to the area, in that it cannot be seen from the main Forest Drive. It would be seen mostly in lateral views by users of the secondary forest road to the west of the site. From this viewpoint, it would appear against the backdrop of the farm buildings, and the angle of visibility would be reduced by the screening effect of Ebberston Plantation in the northern part of the site.
- From the less heavily used footpath network to the east of the site, the turbine would be seen against the background of the forest.
- It is important to note that micro-siting issues have been carefully considered and that the proposed site has been chosen following preliminary officer discussion, in response to concerns expressed about two alternatives which were originally preferred. The present site is at a marginally lower level, than the other sites which were considered, in that it is further from the crown of the wider plateau. Also, it is more closely related to the backdrop of the farm buildings from the more common viewpoints in the locality.

9. Thus, the proposal reflects a compromise, in which a degree of performance has been sacrificed in the interests of the National Park landscape character and quality. In summary, it can be said to exemplify the balance suggested in the SPG, between being suitably screened and having sufficient clearance to operate effectively.

#### **Other siting and access considerations.**

14. In addition to visual impact, other factors have been taken into account. It is considered that a turbine of this scale would not have any impacts in relation to aviation control and safety, nor any implications for telecommunications.

15. Vehicular access for the purposes of installation and servicing of the turbine is available through the applicant's site. No alteration to the local access roads would be necessary and no temporary obstruction would be caused during construction and installation.



### **Amenity of neighbouring residents**

16. The application therefore does not raise significant issues of visual amenity or noise nuisance, as there are no neighbouring houses close enough to be affected.

### **Habitat and nature conservation**

17. The possible effect on natural habitat is an important consideration. It is recognised that turbines of this type do not generally pose a threat to habitat or wildlife. The proposed site is not in or close to any specially designated site of nature conservation importance and the turbine is sufficiently distant from woodland and buildings so as not to pose a threat to any nesting habitats.

18. It is concluded therefore that the scheme does not involve any risk of significant harm to any nature conservation interests.

### **Pre-application consultation**

21. It is understood that the applicant has consulted the closest neighbour about the proposal, although the distance involved rules out any potential adverse effect. Indeed, a similar turbine has already been installed at the closest neighbour dwelling, at South Lodge Farm. The proposal has been discussed informally with the National Park Authority at Officer level and the proposed site has been chosen as a suitable compromise solution, in response to Officer concerns about two alternative locations which were originally preferred.

### **Conclusions**

23. The proposal is for a form of sustainable renewable energy installation, which has been proven to be suitable and effective in areas such as this. It does not give rise to any significant harmful effects sufficient to outweigh the considerable benefits which it offers. It is fully in accordance with relevant planning policy, and the National Park Supplementary Planning Document in particular.

24. The principle of this type of development in this locality is established through the existence of a turbine at the neighbouring farm.

### **Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Regulations) 1999.**

25. It is noted that the proposed development is within the scope of these Regulations, and that the National Park status implies additional safeguards, such that a screening opinion is required. In view of the size of the turbine and its modest scale within its landscape setting and the absence of any significant environmental effects, it is considered that an Environmental Statement is not required.

John Lynch MRTPI



29<sup>th</sup> August 2012