

North York Moors National Park Authority

Scarborough Borough Council (South) Parish: Staintondale	App Num. NYM/2011/0566/FL
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Proposal: **Erection of a 50 kW wind turbine (maximum height to blade tip 34.2 metres)**

Location: **Grange Farm, Staintondale**

Applicant: **ES Renewables Ltd, fao: Mr Robert Dixon, Grange Farm, Staintondale, Scarborough, YO13 0EN**

Agent: **ES Renewables Ltd, fao: Mr Robert Dixon, 52 Caledonia Street, Scarborough, YO12 7DP**

Date for Decision: 21 October 2011

Grid Ref: SE 498699 499699

Director of Planning's Recommendation

Refusal for the following reason:

- 1 The proposed wind turbine by reason of its height, nature and siting in an isolated location in open countryside would constitute a visually obtrusive structure in the open countryside which would be seriously harmful to the character and appearance of this part of the National Park. As such the proposal would be contrary to NYM Core Policy D which seeks to ensure that renewable energy installations are of a location, scale and design appropriate to the locality and to NYM Core Policy A which seeks to ensure that new development conserves and enhances and does not harm the Parks special qualities.

Consultations

Parish - No objections.

Highways - No objections.

Environmental Health Officer -

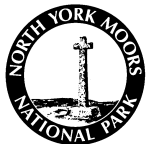
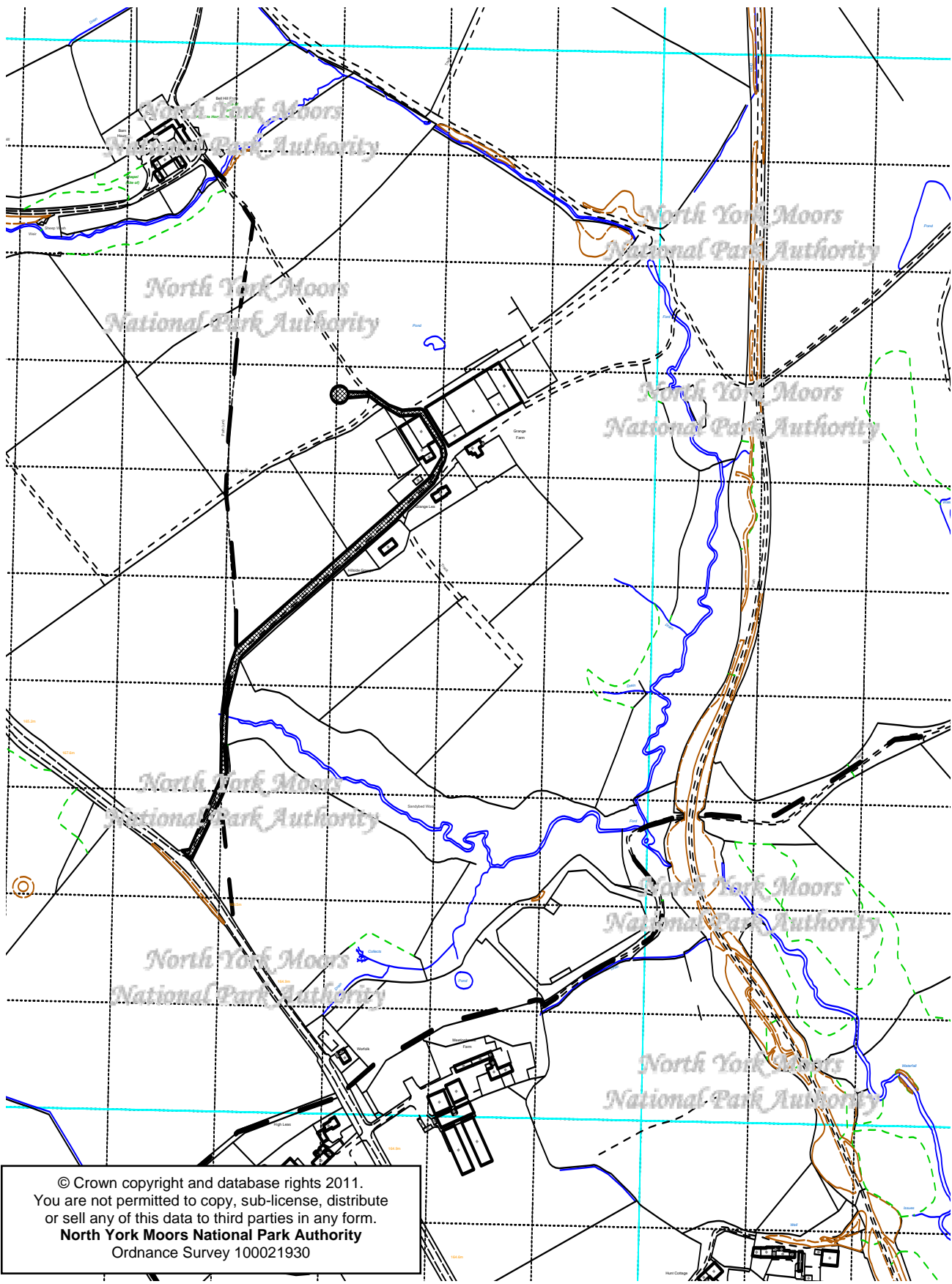
NERL Safeguarding - No safeguarding objection.

ARQIVA (responsible for providing BBC and ITV transmission network) - No objections.

Ministry of Defence -

Site Notice Expiry Date - 29 September 2011.

Others - **Leanne McDowell, 14 Eton Avenue London** - Support the application as see no aesthetic reason to oppose the plan as believe it is a sympathetic development which may even enhance the natural beauty of the coastal moorland. Also, studies show that turbines do not have a significant effect on property values. It is imperative that carbon emissions are reduced and it is up to planners and local communities to see past prejudice and support wind power for the good of the country.



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 Bondgate
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Scale: 1:5000



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Mike Gregson, Smugglers Rock, Ravenscar - Support the proposal as wind power will help in the fight against climate change and a greater range of ways to generate electricity. Also, wind power makes farms more viable and secure and wind power needs promoting in the National Park to enable businesses to survive.

A Cooper, Kine Rigg Farm, Staintondale - Due to the siting the turbine will not be too visible and therefore not have an impact on the landscape. The National Park should be encouraging the use of renewable energy to help farmers like Mr Else to continue to produce the best organic milk.

J Emsley, Coomboots Dairy Farm, Scalby - Planning Policy Statement 22 states that small scale developments should be permitted within such areas as National Park's where there is no significant environmental impact. This application meets those criteria, being located on rolling farmland, not open moor, would be placed down-slope, would not be very visible and would be sized to meet the farm's electricity use.

Anthony White, Bent Rigg Farm, Ravenscar - Support the application as Bent Rigg Farm is located north of Grange Farm and feel the turbine would not be of detriment to the local area. Renewable energy is very important in tackling global warming.

Mr Gwyn Llewellyn-Rees, 2 South View, Upper Torrs, Ilfracombe, Devon - Support the application as don't believe the turbine would be either visually obtrusive or unattractive. Projects such as this which provide green energy should be supported. This will have a minimal impact on the landscape as closely related to the farm buildings.

Background

Grange Farm is a long established farmstead located within the loose knit community of Staintondale. The farmstead comprises a farmhouse and agricultural workers dwellings and a number of substantial modern agricultural buildings and various hardsurfaced areas. The farm is situated within a dip in the landscape with mature trees on the rising land to the north east. However, although in a dip, the site is visually prominent from rising land to the south west and from Public Rights of Way (particularly the old railway line to the east). The maximum height of the farm buildings appears to be no more than approximately 7 metres.

This application seeks permission to install an un-guyed single pole mounted wind turbine with a maximum height to blade tip of 34.2 metres on a 24 metres high tower with a maximum radius of blade area of 9.6 metres. The mast would be situated approximately 60 metres to the north west of the farmstead on agricultural land. The turbine is rated at 50 kW, about five times the output of the recent spate of on-farm wind turbines.

This application follows the refusal of an earlier application in 2009 for an 18 metre high turbine, situated proximately 60 metres to the east of the farmstead on agricultural land.

The applicant's agent has submitted a detailed statement in support of the application, in brief they state:

The turbine will serve a large organic family farm which has large energy consumption due to the running of the milking parlour. The turbine will enable the farm to become carbon neutral and it would be uneconomic to build one of a series of smaller turbines. Other forms of renewable energy have been ruled out though inefficiencies. Furthermore, the Government supports small turbines of up to 100 kW in National Parks. Natural England also claims that Climate Change will do more environmental damage than that of wind turbines.

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Background (continued)

The site is not on moorland but undulating farmland and is in close proximity to the 45 metre high police mast at Ravenscar. There are only about three or four other farms within the National Park with this size of electricity use so it will not set a precedent.

The applicant has written in support of his application stating that:

1. National guidelines are to support turbines of this size in the National Parks.
2. There is a large economic benefit to this wind turbine that outweighs its impact on the environment.
3. The farm is not viable without the turbine.
4. The farm is not competitive with other farms outside the National Park that have turbines.
5. We will be forced to sell the farm because it is not possible to run a dairy farm in the National Park.
6. Large amount of local support and support from people that holiday in the area.
7. Overwhelming support from the Parish Council.
8. Each planning application should be judged on its own merits.
9. There are no alternatives to enable us to produce all of our electric.

The applicant has submitted further comments suggesting that reference is made to the appeal at Westfield Lodge where a turbine 183% above the buildings was passed. The Inspector decided any harm from the visual effect of the turbine was outweighed by the wider social, environmental and economic benefits. He compared the turbine to the height of a tall tree and the landscape to pleasant, but far less spectacular agricultural land, very similar to this turbine and landscape. Reference should also be made to the Draft National Planning Policy Framework, in which it states that the Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning must operate to encourage growth and not act as an impediment. Therefore, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system. Only if the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits should it be refused, this wind turbine will have minimal effect on the landscape and is well sited and there for should be passed.

Main Issues

The key issue is considered to be whether the height, design and position of the wind turbine in this prominent location represents a scale of development which can be satisfactorily assimilated in the landscape of this part of the National Park so that it does not harm the landscape character or special qualities of the area and if not whether there are material circumstances to outweigh the harm.

The relevant NYM Local Development Framework policies are Core Policy A (Delivering National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development) and Core Policy D (Climate Change) together with Planning Policy Statement 22 (Renewable Energy).

Policy Context

Core Policy A of the NYM Local Development Framework is concerned with delivering National Park purposes. This is achieved, in part, by limiting the scale of development and level of activity to that which would not have an unacceptable impact on the wider landscape or the quiet enjoyment peace and tranquillity of the Park, nor detract from the quality of life of local residents or the experience of visitors.

Policy Context (continued)

Core Policy D of the NYM Local Development Framework is concerned with climate change. The policy states that the Authority is supportive of addressing the causes of climate change and with regard to renewable energy sources, states these should be of appropriate location, scale and design for the locality.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 22 states the Government's commitment to support appropriate renewable energy developments. In National Parks, the guidance states that renewable energy projects should only be permitted where they would not compromise the objectives of landscape designation and it envisages that small scale projects which are not harmful could be acceptable.

Members will be aware that in order to provide applicants with good quality advice on how to resolve the potential conflicts between landscape conservation in a National Park and promote renewable energy generation, the Authority has produced and adopted, following public consultation a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on renewable energy. In respect of wind turbines, the guide advises that turbines should be close to and visually related to existing buildings and the height should be proportionate to the nearest buildings and no more than 50 percent higher than the closest building and no more than 50 metres from the building/curtilage. In this case the nearest buildings (farm buildings) appear to be no more than approximately 7 metres which would suggest a wind turbine no higher than 11 metres to blade tip and is 60 metres away from the buildings to avoid bat issues. This proposal would conflict with the SPD due to its remote siting and significant height.

Impact on Landscape and Public Rights of Way

As a result of the size, design and proposed location of the wind turbine, which is some distance from buildings or any other form of physical development, Officers consider that the turbine would have a significant impact on the character and appearance of this part of the National Park. The turbine would be located some 60 metres from the nearest building, in very open and undulating land, which slopes steeply to the west. The result would be a very isolated and prominent man-made feature in this otherwise uninterrupted landscape. There is also a Public Right of Way which runs to the west of the site and the site is also prominent from views travelling by car on the Staintondale Road and also on Bent Rigg Road that rises up to the west. Visitors to the area would have their attention drawn to and be able to clearly see the turbine and Officers consider that the imposing structure, which would be unrelated to any other buildings, would have a negative effect on the appearance and therefore enjoyment of this part of the National Park.

Other Considerations

The applicant has explained that the reason for seeking a 50 kW wind turbine is to meet all the requirements of the farming operation on site. However, what makes the site a good operational site also serves to exacerbate the visual impact of the proposal.

Officers have assessed the likely impact of this proposal from a wide area around the site and after detailed consideration, Officers consider that the turbine would be visually prominent from a number of vantage points and would result in an unduly obtrusive and alien feature in this open landscape.

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Material Considerations

National Parks are protected by law for future generations because of their natural beauty and for the opportunities they offer for recreation. They are designated under the provisions of The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949 and have two statutory purposes:

1. To conserve and enhance their natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage.
2. To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of these special qualities.

Policies and decisions that could have an impact upon National Parks have to take these two purposes into consideration.

It is notable that within the last month the Government has issued its long awaited micro-wind permitted development provisions for dwellings. In the original document it was proposed to allow single wind turbines to be erected within National Parks subject to caveats without planning permission. It now states that the majority public view was against such a position and wind turbines will now need planning permission to help balance renewable energy issues with landscape protection issues.

Recommendation

It is not considered that the proposal can be satisfactorily accommodated within the landscape without resulting in an adverse visual impact on the character and appearance of this quiet part of the National Park or having an adverse impact on the quiet enjoyment, peace and tranquillity of the Park. The proposal would therefore conflict with National Park purposes, Planning Policy Statement 22 and Core Policies A and D of the NYM Local Development Framework and as such, refusal is recommended.