

Wiltshire Council

Southern Area Planning Committee

16 September 2010

Consultation by North Dorset District Council

Reason for Report:

North Dorset District Council (NDDC) has consulted Wiltshire Council on a planning application submitted to them relating to land relatively close to the County boundary.

The land in question is between West Bourton and Whistley Farm, off the B3081, which at its closest point is around 1.6 miles from the boundary. The site is located to the south of Zeals and south west of Mere. The application proposes: 4 x 120m high wind turbine generators, construction pads, substation, temporary construction pound, information board and modified vehicular access

Background:

North Dorset District Council previously consulted the former Salisbury District Council (SDC) on two applications for 6 x 120m turbine generators, and for a temporary meteorological monitoring mast.

The consultations were considered at the Western Area Committee of SDC, who resolved to object to the turbine application for the following reason:

Salisbury District Council maintains its objection to the proposed development on the basis of the adverse visual impact to the rural landscape within its District, including land within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as well as at other locations, and the subsequent impact on tourism, that would result from the erection of six tall, alien, intrusive and animated structures. Indeed, in the Council's view, the Lighting Appraisal submitted with the additional information only goes to demonstrate that the turbines would be visible at night, as well as during the day, and that the 'blinking' of the lights would only add to their visual impact.

The application was recommended for approval by North Dorset District Council's planning officers, but refused by their planning committee (including on landscape impact grounds). However, it is understood that the application was withdrawn before the final decision letter was issued.

The meteorological monitoring mast application (to which SDC did not object) was approved by NDDC's committee.

The current proposal:

The consideration for members is whether to object to the revised application, for four turbines rather than six. The masts remain very tall, at 120m, and in a similar position to the earlier masts, except that two of them (those on the eastern end of the development) have now been removed.

Full details of the proposed masts can be found on NDDC's website at the following address:

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/398945>

Attached to this report is the previous officer's report, which sets out the key considerations for Wiltshire Council. It is considered that these remain the relevant issues, and that the reasons for SDC's original objection (particularly the impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) have not been overcome.

The deadline for responses is 16th September 2010, but North Dorset's case officer has said that if Wiltshire's comments are emailed to them as soon as possible after the meeting then they will be considered.

Options for consideration:

Members are invited to comment on the proposed development, and its impact on land within the County. They have the option of objecting (presumably on similar grounds to last time), supporting the proposal, or not commenting.

The views of the committee will be forwarded to North Dorset District Council for their consideration as part of determining the applications.

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Unpublished documents relied upon in the preparation of this report: NONE

Appendix 1 – Previous Consultation Report to Western Area Committee