

MEMORANDUM

To : **Debby Klein**

From : **MANDY NEILL, SENIOR LANDSCAPE OFFICER**

Date : **11 July 2012**

Your Ref : **S121643/F**

LANDSCAPE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

SITE: PENTWYN FARM, DORSTONE, HEREFORD, HR3 6AD

PROPOSAL: SINGLE 50KW WIND TURBINE WITH A MAXIMUM BLADE TIP HEIGHT OF 35M, ALONG WITH THE ACCOMPANYING ACCESS TRACK, CRANE HARDSTANDING AND ELECTRICAL SWITCHGEAR HOUSE WITH ASSOCIATED UNDERGROUND CABLING.

The site was visited 9 July 2012. Pre-application advice was provided in response to an EIA screening request in May 2012 (reproduced below). The current application addresses the concerns that were raised with regards to negative landscape impact. It includes a thorough and detailed landscape and visual assessment in accordance with national recommended guidelines. The key viewpoints have been identified and suitable baseline information included. The zones of theoretical visibility are clear and the associated visuals are well presented.

I suggest that the magnitude of landscape change to some of the viewpoints would be medium, rather than low as assessed by the report. In particular viewpoints 1 and 5, where a majority of the turbine structure will be visible above the ridgeline, it will be noticeable and may be prominent. I accept, however, that it will not be a determining factor of the landscape character or dominate the field of view. Consideration of alternative sites was also demonstrated on site and through the pre-application stages. The use of a mole technique for installing under ground cables will limit the physical landscape impact and the proposed route identified on site will avoid disturbing tree or hedgerow root zones.

On balance this application does meet the requirements of UDP Policy LA2 as the identifiable change in the landscape is not considered significant to effect the overall character or visual amenity. The LVIA professional assessment demonstrates that landscape impact has been considered as part of the proposal.

Pre application advice to Planning Officer, by email, May 2012.

The landscape character types are Ancient Timbered Farmlands (on the highest area) and Wooded Hills and Farmlands (on the lower slopes). I am concerned that the noticeably rolling topography, with only small scale woodlands and little development, will not accommodate a wind turbine without a negative impact. There seem to be few public footpaths in the area, but view points should be considered from the public highways, certainly within 1km of the site, for example Brown Lane to the north, the B4348 to the east and the C road to the south. There could also be some further view points, from high points across the valleys, such as south towards Vagar Hill, east towards Arthur's Stone and views when leaving Dorstone travelling west. I note that the red dot, adjacent to Pentwyn Farm, is not at the highest point of the hill and the rising ground to the north will provide some backdrop to a turbine. It would be particularly useful for the energy company / agents to provide a photomontage of the proposed turbine to demonstrate the extent to which it will break the skyline. Trees and hedgerows can also filter views of the turbine, but it should be a least 50m away to avoid bird and bat habitat corridors.

AMANDA NEILL, CHARTERED MEMBER OF THE LANDSCAPE INSTITUTE