

Langford Parish Council's response to the proposal for 16 turbines

E5/115

Rep

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Central Bedfordshire Council

Priory House, Monks Walk

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21/5/2009


Attention of David Lamb Team Leader Development Management North

Dear Sir,

Ref Planning Application 09/00118/FULL Proposed Wind Farm.

Please find enclosed the response from Langford Parish Council for your attention.

Given the complexities of this contentious proposal we would be obliged if you would both confirm receipt and ensure our input is circulated to all members of the Central Bedfordshire Planning Committee.



Thank You

Tony Fisher

Councillor

Langford Parish Council Planning Committee

22 MAY 2009

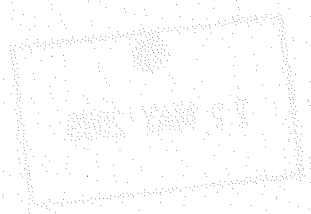
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Copies of this letter to

E.P.Rutt Clerk to Langford parish Council

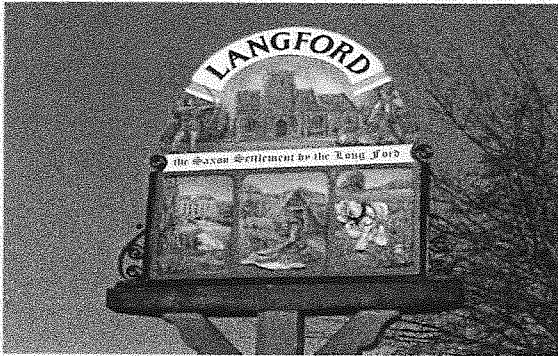
A.W.Spencer Chairman Langford Parish Council

J.A.Clarke Central Bedfordshire District Councillor and Councillor Langford parish Council



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Langford Parish Council



Planning Committee

Response to Planning Application 09/00118/FULL

Proposed Wind Farm Langford-Biggleswade

Version 1.3

18/5/2009

Status Definitive

Prepared by Councillor Tony Fisher

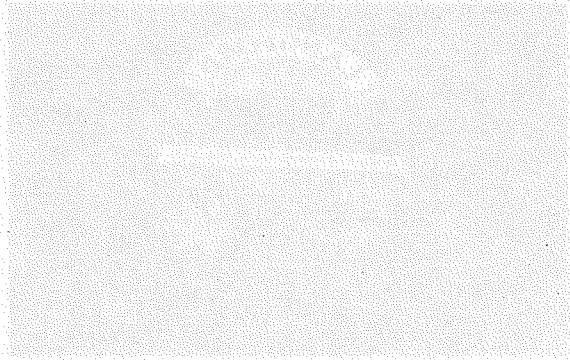
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Planning Committee



Planning Committee

Response to Planning Application 2009/0011

Planning Committee

Contents

Section 1

1 Process followed

2 Executive Summary

3 Detailed response

4 Additional material

Section 1

Process followed by the Parish Council

Following receipt of the application from the District Councils Planning Department the Parish Council facilitated the following.

- 1 An open joint discussion with the lead officer and representatives from Biggleswade Town Council. This was held at Biggleswade Town Hall on the 19th. February 2009 to understand better the timetable and process all parties would have to undertake.

- 2 Arranged for the plans to be displayed at Biggleswade Market with Councillors in attendance.

- 3 Arranged a public display of all the planning data in Langford. This was held on 14th March 2009 in the church hall with Councillors and the Developers in attendance.

Over 300 hundred residents attended this event.

- 4 To formally gauge village opinion after the plans display a Public Meeting was held on the 28th March 2009 in Langford Village Hall. The meeting format was for the Developer to deliver a short summary of their proposal

and a panel to respond to public questions. The panel was chaired by M.P. Alastair Burt and comprised of

A.W Spencer Chairman Langford Parish Council

E.P.Rutt Clerk to the Parish Council

T.Rogers Bedfordshire County Councillor

J.A.E. Clarke Mid Beds District Councillor

R.Jackson The Cooperarative Group

P.Hindsent The Cooperative Group

E.Watts The Cooperative Group

Upwards of 300 local government electors attended participating in lively debate for two hours.

The following resolution was adopted with +293 votes for it, 5 against with 2 abstentions.

“That it will not be in the best interests of the village for the wind farm to be constructed”

5 At the April Parish Council meeting it was formally recorded to oppose the application and encourage residents to write, email their responses to the Planning Dept. To date over 200 have done so expressing their opposition to the proposal.

1. The following information was obtained from the records of the
Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the
Inspector General, Washington, D.C.

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Section 2

Langford Parish Councils Response to Planning Application 09/00118/FULL

Executive Summary

The Parish Council has consulted widely and conscientiously with its residents, neighbours and stakeholders and unanimously and rigorously objects to this proposal. Construction on this scale will destroy the village landscape forever and adversely impact the lives of those 4000 people who reside there. It is in total conflict with the area development plan and is a proposal without merit or precedent which must be put aside without any further waste of public resources.

Our detailed response is contained in section 3 of this document.

Section 3 Detailed Response to the application

Precedent

There is no precedent for a development on this scale so near to a community as this one and there is no earthly reason or support for Langford to become a test case. The planning refusals at South Cambs and N.Herts Weston bear this out and in fact the N Herts DC Planning Officers Brief to committee 23/4/2009 said that it is unlikely there should be any consideration given to wind farm development south of a line Bedford-Cambridge.

We trust Central Bedfordshire will take input from both authorities, in addition We also note the developer was asked through the Public Meeting 28/3/2009 to provide examples but has declined to do so.

Proximity

This huge development sited so close to the settlement boundary is totally inappropriate to our village and its people, it is also totally at odds with the published LDF bringing an industrial scale development right into the heart of the community.

Although it is not yet part of UK planning regulation policy it is widely accepted the siting distance of turbines to residences should be 2km minimum. This has already been adopted in many European countries and there is currently a petition to UK Prime Minister which is gathering pace to implement that policy here.

In this proposal all 16 turbines will be within 1-1.5km of the nearest residences and schools with 4 being less than 1km away.

This has to be totally unacceptable.

Landscape and Visual Impact

. The developer in Para 6 of the ES classifies their proposal as having a Major/Moderate Adverse effect on those residents within 2km and a moderately adverse effect for those over 2km. This is a totally arbitrary split, in truth the majority of the village will come into the major category the impact of which is to affect the outlook of everyone who resides there.

We are a rural village taking pride in our natural assets, the introduction of intrusive industrialised installations over 300ft high into our rural area will without doubt have a **significant adverse impact** on the historic landscape patterns that currently exist and destroy the visual environment for ever.

This is just not acceptable and in this respect alone the visual impact on the location would be as prominent and harmful to the view of the surrounding area as to outweigh any of those benefits proposed by the developer.

Noise

Is a major concern from both mechanical and low frequency perspectives? We understand the existing policies but they are some 13 yrs out of date and do not reflect the real impact on people. (Measure ETSU-R-97) However there is now a wealth of research in the public domain that must be taken account for example Infrasound's (low frequency) are a particularly intrusive and harmful consequence when generated in close proximity to a community culminating in a real risk to public health. We have some recorded data from the developers Coldham site which demonstrates this concern, a copy is included in section 4.

Safety

The area has several small airfields hosting private aircraft and micro- lights apart from the large MOD presence and the commercial airports of Luton and Stanstead. The risk of interruption to communication and directional radar operations must be a significant risk to the operators, pilots and those people over which they fly.

ROW and Bridleways cross the proposed site and walkers and riders will be subject to the risk of debris collision either through ice release in winter or blade fracture at any time. It is accepted the risk is difficult to quantify but is one that just should not be taken when the community is so near.

The Equine Agencies also recommend turbines placement to be + 400m away from bridleways, grazing sites to prevent distress to horses, sheep ect. There are several fields and stables adjoining the proposed site which would be well inside such a safety zone.

All of these issues have been ignored in the proposal.

Health

The impact from the variety of noise sources is covered above but this becomes a real health risk to those residents of a sensitive disposition resulting in insomnia and sleep loss.

There is now a considerable body of evidence to support concerns about the audible modulation of aerodynamic noise (swishing) on the health and welfare of those living within 2.4 km to the nearest turbine. In the U.K. the research findings of Dr. Amanda Barry on the adverse health effects and sleeplessness caused to many of her patients are now well known and we draw your attention to her findings "Wind Turbines, Noise and Health Feb 2007" relevant evidence was provided to the Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs on. "The Economics of Renewable Energy" in 2008. Furthermore in July 2008 there was a landmark legal decision in favour of Julian and Jane Davis from Deeping St Nicholas who had their Ctax reduced to band A as a direct result.

These are the consequences that have to be faced when poor decisions are made, they must not be made in the first instance.

Shadow Flicker caused by the sun shining through the blades will cause unease and concern to the more vulnerable residents possibly triggering disorientation ECT.

Our village primary school is within 1k of the site and our young and impressionable children will be subjected to both risks during their school life.

It is indefensible to expose people to any of these risks.

TV Reception

The BBC accepts this as a fact and has made available a tool to measure the impact of turbine placements. A reading taken from a middle site position indicates reception to over 4320 homes will be affected. Given the importance and reliance on television any deterioration has a direct impact on the resident's quality of life.

This aspect has not been covered at all by the developers.

Distraction

The A1 main trunk road runs along the top of the proposed site for some 4 miles, this is an undulating section of the highway carrying a high volume of traffic that requires constant driver concentration.

The proposed development will inevitably create driver distraction to a dangerous level increasing the risk of serious accident on a stretch of road already subject to significant safety risk.

Impact of Biodiversity and protected species

Local biodiversity will inevitably suffer due to the proposal; there are twelve country wildlife sites, one local nature reserve and a roadside nature reserve within the proximity of the site. Many of these will support fauna, many species of birds and the protected barbastelle bat. There is no doubt there will be an increase in kills when BIRDS AND BATS collide with the turbine when seeking insects drawn by the warmth of turbine operation.

This has not been fully defined in the ES.

Site Suitability

We are aware that under Key principle 1 of (v) of PPS 22 the local planning authority should not make assumptions about the technical or commercial feasibility of renewable energy proposals. We have carefully avoided doing so and have considered our opposition on site specific grounds.

We have noted the proposed development is in the 1km grid square 522 240 (TL 2240) which according to the governments wind speed database has a mean wind speed at a height of 45m above ground level of just 6.1m per second.

We have further noted that Oxford Research Associates (OXERA) were commissioned by the former Dept of Trade and Industry to look into the feasibility of wind energy developments existing without permanent subsidy and concluded that where mean wind speeds were below 8.5m at hub height permanent subsidy would be required.

At the site proposed and based on a hub height of 80m mean wind speeds would be less than 7 m per second.

The governments planning guidance PPS22 states in its Companion Guide page 165 the capacity factor should be used to determine the energy created.

Using the government database as a guide the capacity factor likely to be achieved at the **proposed location would be 25% efficient at best.**

The government guide also states that in the UK a capacity factor of 25% -30% is typical but Ofgem examination of those sites in operation on shore in England suggest 15% is more accurate. Comparing most unfavourably with those operating in coastal areas.

We are deeply concerned that if the present proposal were to be granted then the underperformance of wind energy developments in relation to what could be achieved by more effective siting would be exacerbated.

As electricity customers we heavily subsidise wind energy development. This

subsidy is of the order of £50 per kWh generated. Thus a 2.5mw turbine operating at 25% a capacity factor would extract a subsidy from us customers of £273.50 per turbine per year.

In these difficult times to extract subsidies at this level in a sub optimal location is totally perverse.

Impact on the well being of Langford Community

Every village requires some development in its dynamics to prosper and this is recognised in the medium term LDF which recommends limited small scale enhancement. It does not recommend huge industrial structures such as those being proposed being brought into the very heart of the community. Such a scheme will not only halt this village's planned growth but will reduce investment in our infrastructure and instead of attracting new residents will result in outward movements.

Already we have instances of house sales being reconsidered until this scheme is refused.

Impact on the well being of Langford home owners

We do understand that property prices are not usually part of the planning consideration, however given the force of the economic downturn and its impact on families we would be failing in our duty if we failed to bring this to your attention.

It is a fact the current housing market is extremely slow and will stay so for some time, those people lucky enough to secure funding to move house will be seriously disadvantaged in selling their current property should this proposal go ahead.

Without a shadow of doubt given a choice people will choose an environment without 300ft high industrial turbines in close proximity.

This creates a position of severe discrimination for anyone looking to move from the village, this is totally unfair and cannot be allowed to happen.

Section 4

Additional Material

- 1 Recent Press Material
- 2 Report to M.P on Developers showcase site
- 3 Report to Parish Council on visit to Developers showcase site