

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE (CENTRAL AND EAST DURHAM)

At a Meeting of **Area Planning Committee (Central and East Durham)** held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Tuesday 8 November 2011 at 1.00 pm**

Present:

Councillor C Walker (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors P Taylor (Vice-Chair), J Bailey, J Blakey, G Bleasdale, J Brown, P Charlton, J Moran, A Naylor (substitute for A Laing) and K Thompson

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Bell, S Iveson, A Laing and J Robinson

Also Present:

A Dobie – Principal Planning Officer (Easington Area)
J Taylor – Principal Planning Officer (Durham Area)
A Glenwright - Highways Officer
N Carter - Solicitor

1 Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 11 October 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2011 were confirmed as a correct record by the committee and signed by the Chair.

2 Declarations of Interest, if any

Councillor J Blakey declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in application PL/5/2011/0378 Beaconside, Station Road South, Murton on the basis that she was a Member of the General Licensing and Registration Committee which considered licensing and registration functions relating to hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.

With the agreement of the Committee the order of business on the Agenda was amended to allow those applications with registered speakers to be considered first.

3 Applications to be determined by the Area Planning Committee (Central and East Durham)

3a PL/5/2011/0305 Hallfield Farm, Easington Erection of a Single Wind Turbine

Consideration was given to the report of the Principal Planning Officer (Easington Area) which recommended approval of the application.

The Principal Planning Officer gave a detailed presentation on the main issues outlined in the report, which included photographs of the site. Members had visited the site that day and were familiar with the location and setting.

He advised that since the report had been prepared, advice had been received from the Legal Officer suggesting minor amendments to the wording of conditions numbered 4, 8, 9 and 10 and to the omission of condition 6.

In addition a further letter had been received from Easington Village Parish Council which reiterated their previous concerns as detailed in the Committee report. The letter also referred to an application for a wind turbine in respect of land north of Pesspool Lane which had been refused because of the cumulative impact of the wind turbine when viewed alongside operating turbines in the surrounding area. Due to the extent of the wind turbine development in the surrounding area the Parish Council considered that the proposed development would contribute to a significant and unacceptable visual impact on the locality.

Councillor D Boyes, Local Member considered that the proposal would affect the Conservation Areas of both Hawthorn and Easington Villages as the wind turbine would be clearly visible in both locations. The proposal would also constitute development in the countryside which was contrary to saved Easington District Local Plan policies.

He referred Members to a map which showed the number and location of turbines across the region and advised that a report produced by ANEC had concluded that the East Durham Plateau was now at capacity. The cumulative impact of wind turbines was having a real impact on the quality of life of local residents.

Mr J Ridgeon the applicant's agent stated that the ANEC report specifically related to wind farms and this application was for a single wind turbine to support the applicant's expanding business. An assessment of the landscape and visual impact had concluded that the area could accommodate a single wind turbine, and the Conservation Officer had stated that the scale and siting of the turbine would have no adverse impact on the setting of nearby listed buildings or Conservation Areas.

Mr Weightman, the applicant addressed the Committee and provided Members with a background to his local family business, details of which were set out in his statement in the report. He explained that in the last few years fuel prices had risen steeply and the wind turbine would help reduce energy costs, be sustainable and would also offset the carbon footprint of his business. The turbine would be sited as far as possible from all his neighbours to mitigate any visual impact.

Members discussed the application and the Principal Planning Officer responded to comments made. He advised that the majority of the power would be used by the farm business with the surplus electricity fed into the National Grid. A screening scheme would be difficult to implement and was not considered necessary because of the distance the wind turbine would be located from neighbouring properties.

Members were also advised that the saved District of Easington's Local Plan policies that related to development in the countryside were not specific to renewable energy proposals and the Planning Authority relied on National Planning Policy PPS 22.

RESOLVED

That the application be approved as detailed in the report, subject to the following:-

- (i) condition numbered 6 be omitted;
- (ii) delegated authority be granted to the Principal Planning Officer in consultation with the Legal Officer to make minor amendments to the wording of conditions numbered 4,8,9 and 10.

**3b PL/5/2011/0378 Beaconside, Station Road South, Murton
Retrospective Planning Permission for the Change of use of
Beaconside Farm from Mixed Use Residential/Equestrian and
Agriculture to Mixed Use Residential/Equestrian and Agriculture and
for the Parking of up to Three 4 Seater taxis and Two 8 Seater Taxis
used by Occupants of Beaconside Farm. Retention of Diesel Tank for
Refuelling of Occupants of Beaconside Farm's personal vehicles and
the 5 taxis proposed to be Parked at Beaconside Farm.**

Consideration was given to the report of the Principal Planning Officer (Easington Area) which recommended approval of the application.

The Principal Planning Officer gave a detailed presentation on the main issues outlined in the report, which included photographs of the site. Members had visited the site that day and were familiar with the location and setting.

In presenting his report, the Principal Planning Officer advised that on the site visit Members had expressed concern about the close proximity of the bridleway to the children's play area. Signage to protect users of the bridleway had been proposed but it was suggested that if Members were minded to approve the application, further traffic calming measures be included and condition numbered 4 be amended accordingly.

Mr Button, an objector addressed the Committee on behalf of local residents.

He advised that residents were concerned about the increase in vehicle movements and speed of traffic on the estate. Larger vehicles had difficulty manoeuvring in and out of the property and bridleway, and residents were concerned for the safety of children playing both on the estate and in the play area.

The movements of the taxis and tankers in and out of the estate, together with the environmental impact of the vehicles were having an adverse effect upon their residential amenity. The character of their housing estate was changing from residential to industrial and the access road was not adequate for commercial vehicles.

Mr Moss, the applicant's agent explained that negotiations had taken place since the last application and he considered that this re-submitted application now represented a pragmatic solution to the issues, without having a detrimental effect on the applicant's business.

As there were 9 members of the family occupying the property a number of vehicles travelling to and from the premises was to be expected. The business did not operate from Beaconside Farm but from a property in Woods Terrace, and the application only sought to allow parking and refuelling of their own vehicles.

A Glenwright, Highways Officer was asked to respond to the highways issues raised. The 33 existing properties on Broadoaks were served by a carriageway which was 4.8 metres wide, and could accommodate up to 100 properties. The existing traffic calming controlled speeds on the estate but together with signage, proposals for additional measures on the bridleway adjacent to the children's play area were deemed to be acceptable.

With regard to the suggestion for a speed limit to be imposed on the whole estate he advised that DCC had no policy for introducing 20mph speed limit zones within residential estates and that such a proposal would normally only be investigated following complaints from members of the public, and currently none had been received by the Area 1 Traffic Manager.

In determining the application Members expressed their concerns about the safety of children using the play area adjacent to the bridleway but acknowledged that this could be mitigated with signage and additional traffic calming measures.

Members also took into account that the business did not operate from the property and that taxis would only travel to and from Beaconside Farm at the start and end of a shift.

RESOLVED

That the application be approved subject to the conditions outlined in the report and to condition numbered 4 being amended to include additional traffic calming measures on the bridleway adjacent to the play area.

At this point Councillor K Thompson left the meeting.

**3c 4/11/00630 Taylormade Timber Ltd, Sherburn Hill, Durham
Extension of Sawmill Building, Extension of the Outside Storage Area,
New Road, Re-Siting of Log Grading Line and Bark Store and
Construction of Weighbridge**

Consideration was given to the report of the Principal Planning Officer (Durham Area) which recommended approval of the application.

The Principal Planning Officer gave a detailed presentation on the main issues outlined in the report, which included photographs of the site.

RESOLVED

That the application be approved subject to the conditions outlined in the report.

4 Appeal Update

**PLANNING REF: 11/00535/FPA
Site at Fernhill, Newcastle Road, Durham**

An appeal had been lodged against the Council's refusal for the erection of three dwellinghouses and would be dealt with via written representations.

**PLANNING REF: 11/00352/FPA
Site at Stoneacre, Sawmills Lane, Durham**

An appeal had been lodged on the grounds of non-determination for the change of use of land to sales and car parking associated with the car dealership.

The decision on the application would be made by the Planning Inspectorate.

RESOLVED

That the report, be noted.

5 PL/5/2010/0446 Easington Lea Farm West, Easington Colliery - Decision Update

A decision update was provided in relation to the planning application approved on 6 September 2011 for a plant machinery training centre at Easington Lea Farm West, Easington Colliery.

At the meeting the applicant had asked for extended operating hours and it was agreed that this would be investigated.

Following consideration, and having been advised by Planning Officers that there were likely to be some concerns about extended hours, the applicant had indicated that he wanted the application to be determined with the reported conditions attached.

RESOLVED

That the report, be noted.