

**Isle of Wight AONB Partnership - Development Control & Planning Work Group**  
**Minutes of Meeting to discuss response to Wind Farm Application held on Thursday 23 June 2006**  
**10.00 p.m. Meeting Room, Innovation Centre**

**In Attendance**

Richard Grogan	IW AONB Steering Committee Nature Conservation Portfolio (Chair)
Denis Russell	IW AONB Steering Committee Vice-Chairman/Community & Parish Portfolio
David Court	IW AONB Steering Committee Coastal Portfolio
Vicky Basford	IW AONB Steering Committee Historic Environment Portfolio
Professor Dennis Russell	Chairman CPRE
Tony Tutton	IW AONB Steering Committee Chairman
Nicky Rogers	AONB Planning Officer
Carrie McDowell	AONB Assistant

**Remote Member**

Nicola Davies	Countryside Agency
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**Apologies**

David Groves	IW AONB Steering Committee Rural Business Portfolio
John Brownscombe	AONB Lead Officer

The Chairman opened the meeting by thanking members for their attendance to discuss the planning application for six wind turbines at Manor Farm, Wellow. The principle of wind power on the Island's AONB has already been established, with the extant application at Cheverton Down.

Your Energy Limited submitted the application on 30 May 2006, and comments are required by 21 July 2006. Our comment needs to cover potential benefits and adverse impacts of this scheme on the Island's AONB. As there is a possibility it may go to appeal and therefore be scrutinized by the Inspector, the AONB response should balance the merits and impacts of the scheme when providing our comments. The Isle of Wight Council have employed consultants Halcrow who have considerable expertise in this field, and also the manpower required to deal with this complex application.

It was agreed NR would give a brief overview of the application, and information requested under each section of the AONB Unit's previous comment on the scoping document.

The application is for six turbines - four at 100 metres and two at 109.5 metres, the latter being in a hollow to provide a uniform visual aspect. There will be 630 square metres of concrete hardstanding, with 3 kilometres of access tracks when the turbines are operational. There is no information in the application on details of the material to be used for these tracks. There will also be a switching station and an operating bay, together with a 59m mast, which has not been included in the photomontage. A 1200 square metre contractors' compound will be required, but it is intended to be only a temporary structure during construction.

No lighting will be required, and it is anticipated that construction will take six to nine months. The provision of access tracks will not require any hedge cutting or tree removal. No information has been provided on the grid connection, so it is not known if any pylons will be required. In any case, this kind of infrastructure will be the subject of a separate planning application.

### Policy Context

Your Energy Limited has addressed a lot of the issues previously raised. They have made reference to the AONB Management Plan and its policies, the Isle of Wight Biodiversity Action Plan, and the Supplementary Planning Guidance adopted by the Isle of Wight Council.

### Visual and Landscape Character Impact

Reference has been made to the Landscape Character Assessment for the West Wight, the Historic Landscape Characterisation completed by the Archaeology Unit, and the guidance document published by English Heritage relating to Wind Farms and the Historic Environment.

They have included viewpoints in general terms, but not each specific location highlighted on the map attached to our previous response. It was also advised that details of the latest open access land had been included in the document from Your Energy Limited, together with Rights of Way.

### Community and Social Effects

Clarification was requested regarding the educational value of the scheme, but this will only be addressed by the provision of some interpretation boards. Concern was also expressed about research and testing at the site, but it is intended that monitoring the performance of the wind farm is all that is proposed, so will only have a minor effect.

Regarding local employment and business operations factor, Your Energy Limited has only vaguely mentioned companies here on the Island. It was also pointed out that there is no way to enforce equipment purchases from local companies, or provide employment.

It was agreed that NR would draw up our comments based on the discussions, and these would be expressed as bullet points following the layout suggested by AA at his recent meeting with NR.

### Policy context

Your Energy Limited has selected the site carefully, within the criteria laid down by the Government, having no direct impact on designation or nature conservation. Local policy is to protect open countryside and ensure any development is within Government guidelines. The Supplementary Planning Guidance adopted by the Isle of Wight Council states that wind farms of a certain size are inappropriate, and must not have an impact on designated areas.

Comment - Your Energy Limited have stated that this wind farm will have adverse impact, which conflicts with what is laid down in the Supplementary Planning Guidance.

### Visual and landscape character impact

The meeting agreed there would be a significant adverse visual impact, as the site is situated in a valley in the most open part of the Island. It is also on a scale too large in relation to the surrounding countryside and the Island as a whole, and would have a significant adverse visual impact on the AONB. Concern was expressed about the cumulative effect with Cheverton and if this current application is allowed, it could create a precedent for other applications in the future. It was also pointed out that both Wellow and Cheverton were visible from certain viewpoints and if the landscape changes in the future, the site could be visible from other additional viewpoints.

- Comment - There is a significant adverse impact on the visual and landscape character, both to and from the AONB, and Your Energy Limited agree with this assessment in their document.
- There will be a significant adverse impact on the landscape character of the area, given the overall scale of the Island and the individual character of the West Wight. The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance uses the word "intimate" when describing the Island.
- The inclusion of the 59m mast will add to the overall impact of the wind farm.
- There will be moderate adverse impact on the AONB during the construction period in terms of noise, disturbance to residents and wildlife and loss of tranquillity.
- Your Energy Limited state that the visual impact from Mottistone and Brook is small, yet the site will be highly visible from Five Barrows, which is a misrepresentation of the facts.
- The cumulative impact of both Wellow and Cheverton will have a negative impact on the AONB.

### Community and Social Effects

One of the many reasons visitors come to the Island is to enjoy the countryside, views, wildlife, tranquillity and for quiet enjoyment. Concern was expressed that this application would be detrimental to our tourist industry, which could increase exponentially over a period of time. It will also have considerable impact on rights of way, which are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike for walking, cycling and horse riding, which is massively important as the Isle of Wight Council are award winners for their Rights of Way.

The West Wight has a unique landscape character, a large area of which will be degraded by this application. If approval is granted, there is a danger it might lead to other developments in the area because the land is seen as already degraded.

The point was made that if the application is refused and goes to appeal, the Local Authority will not be able to set the conditions. Approval allows conditions to be laid down locally, especially in terms of reassurances that mechanisms are in place to ensure monies are available to restore the site at the end of its 25 year lifespan.

- Comment - The interpretation board has no significant benefit in terms of education.
- The business operation factor has no beneficial effect on the rural economy or local employment, and is negligible in overall terms.
- The wind farm is not a tourist attraction, and could have an adverse affect on the Island tourism industry, both now and in the future.

The meeting closed at 1.45 p.m.  
cdm/06 July 2006