

Gillingham, Silton

Application Type: Full Planning (Major)

Applicant: Next Generation Ltd.

Application No: 2/2008/0661

Case Officer: James Lytton-Trevers

Recommendation Summary: Approve

Location: Land Between West Bourton And Whistley Farm, B3081 (Gillingham To Wincanton), SILTON / GILLINGHAM

Proposal: Erect 6 No. 120m high wind turbine generators, construction pads, substation, temporary construction compound, information board and modify vehicular access. Application accompanied by an Environmental Statement as required by the Town and Country Planning [Environmental Impact Assessment (England and Wales)] Regulations 1999.

Plan Numbers: Fig 4.1,4.2,4.3,4.4,4.5

Constraints:

Regionally Important Geological Site
Blackmore Vale Landscape Area
Limestone Ridges Landscape Area
Outside Settlement Boundary
Agricultural Land Grade - Grade 3

<u>REASON FOR COMMITTEE DETERMINATION:</u> Major application

1.	Introduction	3
(a)	Statutory Duties (upon the LPA):	3
(b)	Site location and description	4
(c)	Relevant planning history	4
(d)	The proposed development	4
2.	Planning policy and guidance	6
(a)	The Development Plan	6
	• Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan	6
	• North Dorset Local Plan	7
	• <i>RPG10 'Regional Guidance for the South West'</i>	9
(b)	National policy guidance	11
	• <i>PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development'</i>	11
	• <i>PPS1 Supplement</i>	12
	• <i>PPS7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas'</i>	12
	• <i>PPG15 'Planning and the Historic Environment'</i>	13
	• <i>PPG 16 'Archaeology and Planning'</i>	13
	• <i>PPS22 'Renewable Energy'</i>	13
	• Companion Guide to PPS22	16
	• PPG24 on 'Noise'	16

(c)	Other guidance	16
	• <i>Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West</i> (October 2008)	17
	• <i>UK Energy White Paper</i>	18
	• <i>Energy Review Consultation Document and Statement of Need</i> (2006).....	19
	• <i>REnergy REview The Energy Challenge</i> (2006)	19
	• <i>Energy White Paper</i> (2007)	19
	• <i>Planning White Paper</i> (2007)	19
	• <i>REvision 2010- Empowering the region'</i> (June 2004)	19
	• <i>REvision 2020</i>	20
	• <i>Draft Deposit Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan</i> (2004)	20
	• <i>The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Management Plan 2004-2009</i>	22
	• <i>Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism</i>	22
3.	Consultations	22
	(a) Statutory consultees	23
	(b) Non- statutory consultees	24
	(c) Parish and District Councils	28
	(d) Interest groups	33
	(e) Individual representations	38
4.	Planning appraisal and the main issues.....	40
	(a) The adequacy of the Environmental Statement with respect to landscape, visual matters and site selection	40
	(b) The case for the development and policy compliance	45
	(c) Impact on the character and appearance of the landscape	50
	(d) Impact on the historic landscape and heritage.....	63
	(e) Noise.....	67
	(f) Impact on wildlife and ecology	72
	(g) Efficient operation of radar installations and aircraft safety.....	73
	(h) Flooding and pollution	74
	(i) Viability	74
	(j) Health effects	75
	(k) TV and radio Interference	76
	(l) Tourism.....	77
	(m) Access and highway safety.....	78
	(n) Shadow flicker.....	79
5.	The planning balance and conclusion.....	80
6.	Recommendation.....	83
7.	APPENDIX.....	105

1. Introduction

The report is divided into five sections. First, a description of the development and a brief resume of the benefits. The second section concerns the relevant policies including the development plan, national policy and background guidance. The third section deals with the responses of consultees and representations received. The fourth section of the report deals with the merits of the proposal. This commences with an analysis of the adequacy of the environmental statement. Next, the proposal is considered against the relevant current energy policy at local, regional and national level. What follows on from this is consideration of other main issues identified by the Officer. In the fifth section, there is a summary and conclusion.

(a) Statutory Duties (upon the LPA):

Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004:

Section 38(5): *If to any extent a policy contained in a development plan for an area conflicts with another policy in the development plan, the conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy which is contained in the last document to be adopted, approved or published (as the case may be).*

Section 38(6): *If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.*

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 as amended:

Section 66(1): *In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a Listed Building or its setting, the LPA shall have regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.*

Section 72(1) *In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a Conservation Area..... special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.*

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

Section 40 (1): *Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.*

Town and Country Planning Act 1990:

Section 197: *It shall be the duty of the local planning authority – (a) to ensure, whenever it is appropriate, that in granting planning permission for any development adequate provision is made, by the imposition of conditions, for the*

preservation or planting of trees; and (b) to make such orders under section 198 as appear to the authority to be necessary in connection with the grant of such permission, whether for giving effect to such conditions or otherwise.

Human Rights Act 1998:

Article 8, Right To Respect For Private And Family Life: 1. *Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.* 2. *There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, etc.*

The First Protocol, Article 1; Protection of Property: *Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions. No one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law. The preceding provisions shall not, however, in any way impair the right of a State to enforce such laws as it deems necessary to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest, etc.*

(b) Site location and description

The application site comprises land between Whistley farm in Silton and the Wincanton Road (B3081) approximately one kilometre south west of Silton. The site is predominantly laid to pasture comprising medium sized fields divided by trees and hedgerows. A track passes through the site joining the Wincanton Road with Manor Farm. There are no dwellings within the site but outside the site boundary there are several properties including Whistley Farm, Manor Farm and Slait Farm.

The topography of the site is relatively level with a very gentle slope with a northerly aspect. The minimum height on the southern and western sides ranges between 129m and 138m AOD.

(c) Relevant planning history

2/2008/0671	Erect 1 No. 50m high meteorological monitoring mast for a temporary period of 18 months	Approved and implemented November 2008.
-------------	---	---

(d) The proposed development

The proposed development is described fully in a document identified by the applicant as the Environmental Statement (ES) which was prepared in accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 in which the likely significant environmental effects of the Silton Renewable Energy Park ("Silton Wind Farm") are identified and assessed. Supplementary Environmental Information (SEI) has been provided at the request by the Council. The main points are as follows:

Six 'Enercon' wind turbines each consisting of a 79m high tower and 41m blade giving an overall height of 120m.

Each turbine would have a three blade rotor of 82m diameter with the turbines painted mid-grey and having a minimum reflective semi-matt finish coating. The turbine rotors would operate clockwise at between 6rpm and 19.5rpm;

Underground cables within the application site;

A control building;

Vehicular access at an existing gated entry point;

Construction

The construction programme would take approximately 18 weeks from starting on site and would entail the following:

- install the site accommodation and compound;
 - upgrade site entrance from B3041;
 - construct substation;
 - upgrade existing access tracks,
 - excavate wind turbine foundations and construct turbine bases. The foundations would be circular with a typical diameter around 16.7m and a depth of 2 metres. Depending on local ground conditions up to eight piles may be required.
 - excavate cable trenches and lay power and implementation cables buried in trenches located directly adjacent to the internal tracks.
 - install substation electrical equipment;
 - erect and commission wind turbines with two cranes;
 - erect monitoring mast; carry out re-instatement works, remove temporary accommodation and clear the site.
-
- The wind turbines proposed each have a maximum generating capacity of 2MW, thus the total installed wind capacity of the proposal would be 12MW, which would be sufficient to meet the annual electricity needs of approximately 8,330 typical UK households per annum. The Silton Wind Park would therefore be able to provide the electricity requirements of approximately 34% of households within the North Dorset District (These calculations are addressed by the Officer further in the report).
 - As the proposed wind turbines will produce approximately 27GWh per annum, it is expected it would displace fossil fuel power generation causing the emission of approximately ten thousand tonnes of CO₂ each year as well as significant quantities of SO₂ and NO_x released into the atmosphere.
 - During the construction phase the total number of vehicle movements would be approximately 1,102 movements.
 - Access routes would be agreed for abnormal loads.

- The expected productive lifetime of the turbines is estimated to be 25 years.

2. Planning policy and guidance

The following three sections (a - c) explain the policies relevant to the proposal. The first section identifies relevant development plan policies. The second section identifies national policy. The third section covers other planning policy, guidance and other material documents.

- (a) *The Development Plan*
- (b) *National Policy Guidance*
- (c) *Other Guidance*

(a) The Development Plan

- *The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan 2001*
- *The North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision) 2003*
- *RPG10 'Regional Guidance for the South West 2004*

The **Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan** (2001) is underpinned by the need to promote sustainable development. Paragraph 9.16 of the Explanatory Memorandum acknowledges that some of the energy potential from renewable sources will be exploited. It accepts that the exploitation of renewable sources of energy is an important element, locally, nationally and internationally, of the principle of sustainable development. Paragraph 9.17 states that local authorities in Dorset wish to encourage the generation of energy from renewable sources to reduce the dependence on traditionally generated power from fossil fuels.

To this end, Energy Policy A encourages the generation of energy from renewable resources. All proposals will be assessed against the environment policies of the plan. Paragraph 9.20 notes that a study undertaken by consultants on the capacity of the county to provide energy from renewable resources, suggests that waste materials and wind provide the greatest opportunities.

Relevant environment policies include:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Environment Policy A: | Proposals should not adversely affect important sites of nature conservation interest. |
| Environment Policy C: | Proposals which may adversely affect sites of nature conservation interest will only be allowed if the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the value of the site. |
| Environment Policy D: | Proposals which may result in harm to a specially protected species or its habitat will be allowed if there is no alternative solution or if there are overriding reasons in the public interest. |

- Environment Policy F: The policy concerns maintaining and enhancing the Dorset landscape by the conservation and enhancement of natural and manmade features, respect for the particular characteristics of the local landscape and the encouragement of good design in the built environment.
- Environment Policy Q: The architectural and historic heritage of the county should be safeguarded through the preservation of listed buildings and conservation areas and their settings.
- Environment Policy S: Proposals affecting locally important archaeological remains and their setting will be subject to special scrutiny.
- Implementation Policy A: Local planning authorities in determining applications will need to ensure that all proposals support the principle of sustainable development.
- Implementation Policy D: Local planning authorities should take into account the interests and amenity of local residents, visitors and neighbouring users in determining planning applications.
- Settlement Policy I: Development in the countryside should be permitted only where such a location is essential.

The settlement policies of the Structure Plan no longer form part of the Development Plan because they have not been 'saved' by the Secretary of State. However, it has been acknowledged in correspondence that the removal of these policies was an error. The policies therefore remain material considerations, which are relevant to this application, despite having not been saved.

The **North Dorset Local Plan** (2003) (saved policies) also acknowledges that development and growth must be sustainable. This issue is encapsulated within the aims underlying the plan's strategy.

- Policy 1.1 Development will be permitted in cases where the proposal is compatible with the aims of the Sustainable Development Strategy.
- Policy 1.6 Development in the countryside beyond defined settlement boundaries will not be permitted. However exceptions include energy development.
- Policy 1.8 The policy sets out criteria which will be used in determining planning applications. Considerations include impact on character, amenity, views of the countryside and noise.

- Policy 1.19 The policy seeks to minimise the impact of external lighting.
- Policy 1.20 The policy sets out criteria where it is anticipated that contamination may be present on or near a proposed development area or will lead to contamination or threaten the structural integrity of any building on or adjoining the site.
- Policy 1.23 The policy seeks to preserve the setting of a listed building and the contribution it makes to the local scene.
- Policy 1.24 The character and appearance of conservation areas should be preserved or enhanced.
- Policy 1.29 Wherever possible locally important archaeological remains should be preserved in situ unless the importance of the development outweighs their value.
- Policy 1.31 Development will not be permitted where it would adversely affect the character, interest or setting of a historic park or garden.
- Policy 1.33 The policy identifies various landscape character areas. The application site falls within the Blackmore Vale character area. Development should be situated and designed in order to integrate with the distinctive landscape character of the area.
- Policy 1.36 The policy seeks to protect local sites of nature conservation interest.
- Policy 1.38 The policy concerns development which would have an adverse impact on Protected Species and their Habitats.
- Policy 3.12 The policy introduces a balance to be struck between the benefits of proposals for the generation of energy from renewable sources against the effects of the proposal on the landscape. If there is overriding loss of landscape quality particularly that which is nationally protected/designated, permission will not be granted.
- With regard to wind turbines, noise emissions, shadow flicker and reflection should not affect the amenity of existing dwellings.

North Dorset District Council is currently working on the preparation of a Local Development Framework which will replace the Local Plan over time. To date however no draft version of a core strategy or any DPD has yet been published.

RPG10 'Regional Guidance for the South West'. This document was issued in 1994 and covers the period to 2011. It is to be treated as RSS pending final publication of the current draft RSS. It sets out the aims underlying the regional vision are set out in paragraph 2.1 of the RPG. These are:

- Protection of the environment
- Prosperity for communities and the regional and national economy
- Progress in meeting society's needs and aspirations
- Prudence in the use and management of resources.

This guidance similarly reflects the need to adopt a balancing exercise when dealing with the way in which development can meet some or all of these aims. Paragraph 2.3 advises that the aim is always to seek policies that help achieve "win-win-win" solutions.

RPG10 is in the process of being replaced with the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (see below).

Policy RE6 Energy Generation and Use

With regard to renewable energy, paragraph 9.32 records the Government's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 12.5% below 1990 levels over the period 2008-2012. A 20% reduction in CO₂ emissions is also sought below 1990 levels by 2010. It notes that the UK's climate change programme published in November 2000, sets out a broad range of policies and measures across all sectors of the economy. These targets relate to CO₂ emissions and the renewable electricity generating targets of 10% by 2010 are separately identified.

The RPG does not prescribe particular courses of action in the event that these targets are not met. The advice recognises that there may be a long lead in time for certain types of renewable energy development such as off-shore wind schemes. It would not be appropriate to sanction the development of certain types of renewable energy development which had harmful environmental impacts in order to attempt to meet the targets.

Paragraph 9.34 acknowledges that the infrastructure associated with energy transmission can have a significant visual impact. The GOSW funded report '*Renewable energy assessments and targets for the South West*' (April 2001) suggests that the region could secure between 11-15% of its electricity production from renewable sources by 2010, thereby exceeding the national target of 10%. No sub-regional targets have been established.

In developing renewable energy schemes, the RPG advises that they must be compatible with other environmental objectives (paragraph 9.35). The impact on the landscape is an issue. Policy RE6 encapsulates these objectives. It advises that development plans should specify criteria against which renewable energy

projects are assessed, balancing the benefits of more sustainable forms of energy generation against environmental impacts. The policy states that local authorities, energy suppliers and other agencies should:

- Support and encourage the region to meet the national targets for:
 - (i) a 12.5% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below 1990 levels by 2008-2012 and a 20% reduction (from 1990 levels) in carbon dioxide emissions by 2010;
 - (ii) a minimum of under 15% of electricity production to be from renewable resources by 2010. This is in excess of the national target of 10% by 2010.
- Encourage and promote the greater use of renewable energy sources, including community based projects, such as combined heat and power and community heating and their integration into more efficient new build or redevelopment proposals;
- Have full regard to the recommendations and detailed background information contained in the report “Renewable Energy Assessments and Targets for the South West (GOSW April 2001)

The target for new installed capacity of renewable generation in the South West by 2010, as recognised by RPG10, is between 207 and 545MW.

Policy EN1: Landscape and Biodiversity

The policy on the protection of Landscape and Biodiversity recognises that a key objective of the RPG is to safeguard and enhance the quality and diversity of, amongst other things, the natural environment.

It states that local authorities in their plans and policies should:

- Provide for the strong protection and enhancement of the region’s internationally and nationally important landscape areas and nature conservation sites;
- Draw up policies for the protection of nature conservation interests of regional and local significance;
- Have regard to the significant landscape joint character areas of the region set out in RPG10 and aim to conserve and enhance local character;
- Take measures to protect the character of the countryside and the environmental features that contribute towards that character.

Policy EN3 The Historic Environment

The policy concerns the built environment. Most references are not relevant to Wind Farm developments but there is the overall requirement to protect and enhance the historic and cultural heritage aspects of the development area.

Policy EC1 Economic Development

The policy addresses diversification of the rural economy. It requires local authorities and other agencies to support the sustainable development of the regional economy by positively promoting and encouraging new economic activity in the areas where it can bring the greatest economic and social benefits, and make the greatest contribution to reducing regional disparities in prosperity.

Policy SS19 Rural Areas

With regard to rural areas, policy SS 19 supports development which helps to maintain rural economic vitality. Policy EN 1 seeks to ensure that the character of the countryside and environmental features which contribute towards that character, are not adversely affected.

Policy TCS1 Tourism

Tourism is strongly supported, the RPG recognising that it forms one of the mainstays of the region's economy (paragraphs 6.1 and 6.2). Policy TCS1 seeks to improve the quality and range of attractions in the area. Paragraph 6.7 notes the Government's commitment towards improving the access for people to the countryside to have increased quiet enjoyment of such areas.

(b) National policy guidance

Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) set out the Government's national policies on different aspects of land use planning in England.

- *PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' 2005*
- *PPS1 Supplement 2007*
- *PPS7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas' 2004*
- *PPG15 'Planning and the Historic Environment'*
- *PPG 16 'Archaeology and Planning'*
- *PPS22 'Renewable Energy' 2004*
- *Companion Guide to PPS22 2004*
- *PPG24 on 'Noise'*

PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' sets out the overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system.

Paragraph 13 sets out the key principles where local planning authorities should ensure that development plans contribute to global sustainability by addressing the causes and potential impacts of climate change - through policies which promote the development of renewable energy resources, and take climate change impacts into account in the location and design of development.

Paragraph 20 refers to the need for mitigation of the effects of, and adaptation to, climate change through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the use of renewable energy; air quality and pollution;

Paragraph 22. Development plan policies should seek to minimise the need to consume new resources over the lifetime of the development by making more efficient use or reuse of existing resources, rather than making new demands on the environment; and should seek to promote and encourage, rather than restrict, the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy).

The **PPS1 Supplement** sets out how planning should help to reduce carbon emissions to halt climate change. It notes that all planning documents should seek to deliver the Governments Climate Change Programme and that policies regarding Climate Change should not be individual but rather included across the board. Planning Authorities should look for land within their area which is suitable for potential low carbon development. They should look favourably upon applications for renewable energy, even at locations not previously identified. Developers for renewable energy projects should not have to demonstrate the national need for renewable energy developments or justify why it is sited in a particular location.

PPS7 ‘Sustainable Development in Rural Areas’ (August 2004) states that many country towns and villages are of considerable historic and architectural value and make an important contribution to local countryside character. Planning authorities should ensure that development respects and where possible enhances, these particular qualities. In addition:

“Planning policies should provide a positive framework for facilitating sustainable development that supports traditional land-based activities and makes the most of new leisure and recreational opportunities that require a countryside location. Planning authorities should continue to ensure that the quality and character of the wider countryside is protected and, where possible, enhanced. They should have particular regard to any areas that have been statutorily designated for their landscape, wildlife or historic qualities where greater priority should be given to restraint of potentially damaging development”(paragraph 15) and *“when preparing policies for LDDs and determining planning applications for development in the countryside, local planning authorities should:*

- (i) support development that delivers diverse and sustainable farming enterprises;*
- (ii) support other countryside-based enterprises and activities which contribute to rural economies, and/or promote recreation in and the enjoyment of the countryside;*
- (iii) take account of the need to protect natural resources;*
- (iv) provide for the sensitive exploitation of renewable energy sources in accordance with the policies set out in PPS22; and*
- (v) conserve specific features and sites of landscape, wildlife and historic or architectural value, in accordance with statutory designations.”*

(Paragraph 16)

With regard to nationally designated areas, paragraph 21 advises that AsONB have the highest status of protection. Outside of nationally designated sites, the Government recognises that areas of landscape can be particularly highly valued

at a local level. Criteria based policies based on landscape character assessment should be sufficient to protect these areas without the need for rigid local designations.

PPG15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' provides guidance in respect of development which will affect the setting of listed buildings and conservation areas. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting. Section 72 of the Act requires that special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of conservation areas. The effect of a development on a registered park or garden is also a material consideration.

PPG 16 'Archaeology and Planning' advises that the desirability of preserving an ancient monument and its setting is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

PPS22 'Renewable Energy' (August 2004) sets out the key principles relevant to renewable energy. These are:

- (i) Renewable energy developments should be capable of being accommodated throughout England in locations where the technology is viable and environmental, economic, and social impacts can be addressed satisfactorily.
- (ii) Regional spatial strategies and local development documents should contain policies designed to promote and encourage, rather than restrict, the development of renewable energy resources. Regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should recognise the full range of renewable energy sources, their differing characteristics, locational requirements and the potential for exploiting them subject to appropriate environmental safeguards.
- (iii) At the local level, planning authorities should set out the criteria that will be applied in assessing applications for planning permission for renewable energy projects. Planning policies that rule out or place constraints on the development of all, or specific types of, renewable energy technologies should not be included in regional spatial strategies or local development documents without sufficient reasoned justification. The Government may intervene in the plan making process where it considers that the constraints being proposed by local authorities are too great or have been poorly justified.
- (iv) The wider environmental and economic benefits of all proposals for renewable energy projects, whatever their scale, are material considerations that should be given significant weight in determining whether proposals should be granted planning permission.
- (v) Regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should not make assumptions about the technical and commercial feasibility of renewable

energy projects (e.g. identifying generalised locations for development based on mean wind speeds). Technological change can mean that sites currently excluded as locations for particular types of renewable energy development may in future be suitable.

- (vi) Small-scale projects can provide a limited but valuable contribution to overall outputs of renewable energy and to meeting energy needs both locally and nationally. Planning authorities should not therefore reject planning applications simply because the level of output is small.
- (vii) Authorities, regional stakeholders and Local Strategic Partnerships should foster community involvement in renewable energy projects and seek to promote knowledge of and greater acceptance by the public of prospective renewable energy developments that are appropriately located. Developers of renewable energy projects should engage in active consultation and discussion with local communities at an early stage in the planning process, and before any planning application is formally submitted.
- (viii) Development proposals should demonstrate any environmental, economic and social benefits as well as how any environmental and social impacts have been minimised through careful consideration of location, scale, design and other measures.

For national designations:
(Paragraphs 11 and 12)

“In sites with nationally recognised designations (Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves, National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coasts, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Registered Historic Battlefields and Registered Parks and Gardens) planning permission for renewable energy projects should only be granted where it can be demonstrated that the objectives of designation of the area will not be compromised by the development, and any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by the environmental, social and economic benefits.”

Regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should set out in regional spatial strategies and local development documents the criteria based policies which set out the *circumstances in which particular types and sizes of renewable energy developments will be acceptable in nationally designated areas. Care should be taken to identify the scale of renewable energy developments that may be acceptable in particular areas. Small-scale developments should be permitted within areas such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coasts provided that there is no significant environmental detriment to the area concerned.*”

(Paragraph 14)

It further advises that “buffer zones” should not be created around international or nationally designated areas and policies to these zones that prevent the development of renewable energy projects. However the potential impact on designated areas of renewable energy projects close to their boundaries will be a material consideration to be taken into account in determining planning applications.

The PPS also provides advice on the landscape and visual effects of renewable energy developments:

“The landscape and visual effects of particular renewable energy developments will vary on a case by case basis according to the type of development, its location and the landscape setting of the proposed development. Some of these effects may be minimised through appropriate siting, design and landscaping schemes, depending on the size and type of development proposed. Proposed developments should be assessed using objective descriptive material and analysis wherever possible even though the final decision on the visual and landscape effects will be, to some extent, one made by professional judgement. Policies in local development documents should address the minimisation of visual effects (e.g. on the siting, layout, landscaping, design and colour of schemes).

Of all renewable technologies, wind turbines are likely to have the greatest visual and landscape effects. However, in assessing planning applications, local authorities should recognise that the impact of turbines on the landscape will vary according to the size and number of turbines and the type of landscape involved, and that these impacts may be temporary if conditions are attached to planning permissions which require the future decommissioning of turbines.”

(Paragraphs 19 & 20)

With regard to noise:

“Renewable technologies may generate small increases in noise levels (whether from machinery such as aerodynamic noise from wind turbines, or from associated sources - for example, traffic). Local planning authorities should ensure that renewable energy developments have been located and designed in such a way to minimise increases in ambient noise levels. Plans may include criteria that set out the minimum separation distances between different types of renewable energy projects and existing developments. The 1997 report by ETSU for the Department of Trade and Industry should be used to assess and rate noise from wind energy development.”

(Paragraph 22)

Specific advice on wind turbines states:

“Regional spatial strategies should not include specific policies relating to the impact of wind turbines on airport operation, radar and aircraft, and neither they nor local development documents should include policies in relation to separation distances from power lines, roads, and railways. It is the responsibility of developers to address any potential impacts, taking account of Civil Aviation Authority, Ministry of Defence and Department for Transport guidance in relation to radar and aviation, and the legislative requirements on separation distances, before planning applications are submitted. Local planning Authorities should satisfy themselves that such issues have been addressed before considering planning applications.”

(Paragraph 25)

The PPS also deals with regional targets for the production of energy from renewable sources. It advises that these should be set for 2010 and 2020 and should be revised upwards if they are met provided the region’s capacity and resources support this aim. Importantly reaching a target in itself should not be used as a basis for rejecting a particular proposal although this would be a material consideration.

Planning Policy Statement 22 (PPS22) and the **Companion Guide to PPS22** are intended to encourage the appropriate development of further renewable energy schemes, throughout England. In its introduction it states *“the sources of renewable energy ... are inexhaustible, indigenous and abundant, and their exploitation, properly managed, has the potential to enhance the long-term security of the United Kingdom’s energy supplies and to help us cut carbon dioxide emissions”*

The Companion Guide provides greater detail on how local planning authorities should plan and assess renewable energy schemes. It highlights the fact that if targets are to be met, a positive and innovative approach will be required. This may require a step change in provision although as with PPS22 there is no presumption in favour of renewable energy developments if targets are not met. It also identifies in Technical Annex 7 a range of issues raised by onshore wind energy developments.

PPG24 on ‘Noise’ at paragraph 2 states that noise can be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The planning system has the task of guiding development to the most appropriate locations. Development should not cause unacceptable levels of noise disturbance (Paragraph 10).

(c) Other guidance

The Government has agreed under its share of the EU’s reduction target under the **Kyoto Protocol (1997)**, to reduce emissions from a basket of six greenhouse

gases to 12.5% below 1990 levels in the period 2008-2012, additionally to reduce CO₂ emissions by 20% by 2010.

The government is committed to seeking to achieve 10% of the UK's electricity from renewable sources to 2010 and has an aspiration to double the figure to 2020.

- *Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (October 2008) (proposed changes stage)*
- *Energy White Paper 2003;*
- *Energy Review Consultation Document and Statement of Need 2006;*
- *REnergy REview The Energy Challenge 2006;*
- *Energy White Paper 2007;*
- *Planning White Paper 2007;*
- *REvision 2010;*
- *REvision 2020;*
- *Draft Deposit Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan;*
- *The Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole Renewable Energy Strategy & Action Plan;*
- *The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Management Plan.*
- *Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism*
- *Regional Economic Strategy for South West England*

Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (October 2008)

At the time of writing this report (May and early June 2009) the Draft Regional Strategy is at an advanced stage and therefore a material consideration. It carries considerable weight in determining planning applications.

The section entitled 'Enhancing Distinctive Environments and Cultural Life' sets out the region's approach to two critical aspects of 'quality of life' in the South West: cultural provision and environmental quality.

Policy SD1 indicates that the region's eco-footprint is not sustainable at current consumption levels and the region needs to promote a more resource efficient future. Policy SD2 refers to the region's contribution to climate change, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions at least in line with current national targets (i.e. by 30% by 2026 compared to 1990 levels).

Policy ENV1 'Protecting and Enhancing the Region's Natural and Historic Environment' concerns encouragement of the protection and enhancement of the quality, character, diversity and local distinctiveness of the natural and historic environment in the South West. Priority will be given to preserving and enhancing sites of international or national landscape, nature conservation, and geological, archaeological or historic importance.

Policy ENV2 'Landscape Character Areas'. The distinctive qualities and features of the South West's landscape character areas will be sustained and enhanced by local planning authorities undertaking assessments of landscape character at a strategic level.

Policy ENV3 'Protected Landscapes'. Identifies that particular care will be taken to ensure that no development is permitted outside an AONB which would damage its natural beauty, character and special qualities.

Policy ENV5 'Historic Environment'. The historic environment of the South West will be preserved and enhanced.

Paragraph 7.3.3. identifies "*Achieving the commitments set nationally within the 2003 'Energy White Paper' will require at least 40% of electricity to be generated from renewable sources by 2050. In the shorter term the Government is committed to the achievement of 10% renewable electricity by 2010 and is aiming for 20% by 2020. Although the South West has made a good start and has a range of renewable energy installations using wind, hydro, solar and biomass resources, in 2005 only about 3% of the region's electricity demand was met by these methods*".

It should be noted that as of 2008 this had increased to 8%.

Policy RE1 'Renewable Electricity Targets: 2010 and 2020' requires Local Development Documents to include positive policies to enable the achievement of the following targets:

For the southwest by 2010 a minimum target of 509 to 611 MW installed capacity, from a range of onshore renewable electricity technologies. In Dorset, 64-84MW.

By 2020 a minimum cumulative target of 850 MW installed capacity from a range of onshore renewable electricity technologies.

The combination of renewable energy resource distribution within the South West, and the scale and distribution of protected landscapes leads to the conclusion that the targets are likely to be met through a mixture of technologies dispersed throughout the region, rather than concentrated in any specific area.

Policy RE4 'Meeting the Targets Through Development of New Resources' requires local planning authorities to take into account the wider environmental, community and economic benefits of proposals for development of renewable energy facilities, whatever their scale, and should be mindful that schemes should not have a cumulative negative impact.

UK Energy White Paper-Our Energy Future: Creating a low carbon economy (February 2003)

The need to reduce CO₂ emissions is acknowledged. The paper highlights the Government's aspiration to double the 10% target for 2010 by 2020 including policies to achieve this. It also stresses the importance of regional targets. It advocated a 60% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 while still maintaining the reliability of energy supplies.

Energy Review Consultation Document and Statement of Need (2006)

The Energy Review Consultation document seeks to secure clean affordable energy for the UK for the long-term. It notes the benefit renewable generation offers from the point of view of security of supply as the energy resource is naturally occurring at the site of the plant, free and does not need to be imported and stresses the promotion of diverse sources and fuel types.

The Statement of Need makes reference to how the UK is facing serious problems in achieving its renewable energy goals. It realizes that renewable energy may not always appear to provide benefits for the local community, but it is crucial to fulfill a national agenda, and this should be given significant weight when determining planning applications.

REnergy REview - The Energy Challenge (2006)

Continues the government commitment to the development of renewable energy. It draws attention to the need for the timely delivery of energy infrastructure and the national benefits of new renewable energy projects. This links with key principle iv in PPS22 which states that:

“The wider environmental and economic benefits of all proposals for renewable energy projects, whatever their scale, are material considerations that should be given significant weight in determining whether proposals should be granted planning permission”.

Energy White Paper (2007)

The **2007 Energy White Paper** reiterates and states that:

“Applicants for renewable energy will no longer have to demonstrate the need for their project, either in general or in particular locations.”

Planning White Paper (2007)

The Planning for a Sustainable Future White Paper notes that with the expansion of renewable energy we can seek to provide ourselves with energy security, by reducing the dependence of imports in the case of rising demand together with meeting our energy targets. It acknowledges that wind parks, even small in scale are crucial to reach our emission reduction targets and increase our renewable energy output. It also asks local governments to look favourably upon renewable energy projects and deal with applications promptly.

It does not however downgrade environmental impacts and acknowledges a balance needs to be struck.

REvision 2010- Empowering the region’ (June 2004)

REvision 2010- Empowering the region was published by GOSW and the South West Regional Assembly. It sets out renewable electricity targets for the South

West and has been subject to consultation from a selection of stakeholders involved in renewable energy technologies. This includes RegenSW, the regional renewable energy agency.

REvision 2010 sets out preliminary and draft targets for renewable energy sources. The most recent figures were published in June 2004. These are under discussion and are likely to be subject to change. It identifies significant installations in Dorset to be the 6MW landfill gas plant at White's Pit, Poole, and the 3MW anaerobic digestion plant at a Wessex Water sewage treatment works. Together these met approximately 11 – 14% of the Dorset renewable capacity range set by Revision 2010. The report also identified several smaller installations of little significance to the overall target such as a 600W wind turbine at a National Trust visitors centre. The figures for the SW region and Dorset are contained in Appendix 1. The table shows the different types of sources of renewable energy and how few are represented in Dorset.

Revision 2010 notes that assuming an average wind turbine size of 1.3MW in clusters of turbines, the SW as a whole might need between 22-32 to make a reasonable contribution towards the regional target.

It is worth noting that as a consequence of the Revision 2010 project, the Joint Planning Committee of the three Dorset strategic planning authorities (Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole) proposed a joint target of 64-84MW of renewable electricity generating capacity to be on line by 2010.

REvision 2020

The REvision 2020 project extends the existing body of work by looking to establish targets for renewable electricity to 2020 and adding targets for renewable heat for 2010 and 2020 and a target for on-site generation within new development.

The outcomes of REvision 2020 have been incorporated within the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).

Proposed regional targets are as follows:

Renewable electricity to 2010
509-611MWe (onshore), 56MWe (offshore). These targets were established through the REvision 2010 project.

Renewable electricity to 2020
847MWe (onshore), 400MWe (offshore). Together, this capacity will generate approximately 20% of the region's electricity demand by 2020, assuming energy efficiency levels as per the government's Energy White Paper.

Draft Deposit Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan (2004)

In the light of the above the Draft Deposit Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan (2004) included revisions to the adopted renewable energy

policies. It should be noted that this document is no longer being pursued although it has not been formally withdrawn. The findings of this document have been fed into the RSS.

Draft Energy Policy A:

Proposals for the generation of energy from renewable resources from a range of technologies will be permitted subject to Energy Policy B. Particular encouragement will be given to proposals for which the generation of electricity from renewable resources which contribute to the regional target of 597MW and meet the local target of 64 to 84MW by 2010.

Draft Energy Policy B:

Proposals for the generation of energy from renewable resources should:

- (i) minimise the effects on the natural or built environment;
- (ii) not give rise to adverse cumulative effects upon the locality when sited near to existing or proposed energy installations;
- (iii) be located as close as practicable to the source used so as to achieve a significant net energy gain;
- (iv) seek to achieve wider benefits to the local community particularly diversification of the rural economy; and
- (v) not cause unacceptable levels of disturbance by virtue of glare, noise emissions or telecommunications interference.

In addition:

- (a) any such proposal should be assessed against the environment policies of this plan;
- (b) Local Plans should promote the use of renewable energy generation in new developments; and
- (c) Local planning authorities should prepare supplementary planning guidance for renewable energy development.

The Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole Renewable Energy Strategy & Action Plan (Final Version) was published in December 2005. The vision for the strategy is:

“The community of Dorset to play our part in mitigating climate change by reducing our energy use, and harnessing our renewable energy resources. We wish to maximise the local economic, environmental and community benefits that doing this can bring.”

The strategy has four aims, which are to:

- maximise the potential for local economic benefit and diversification
- facilitate renewable energy development that is appropriate to Dorset’s environment and communities
- encourage a high degree of community involvement, understanding and benefit from using energy more efficiently and developing Dorset’s renewable energy resources

- enable Dorset to play its part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in line with local, regional, national and international targets.

In order to deliver the aims the strategy advises that positive planning policies will need to be developed and the awareness and understanding of renewable energy increased.

The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Management Plan 2004 - 2009

The policies of the management plan are as follows:

NRE 3 Develop AONB Partnership position on renewable energy provision in the area;

NRE 4 Undertake regular liaison with local planning authorities to monitor number/type of applications relating to renewable energy proposals and input AONB position on larger-scale applications;

NRE 5 Local Authorities work consistently when addressing climate change and renewable energy issues and provision policy;

NRE 6 Local Authorities work together, in partnership where appropriate, on issues concerning natural resources, climate change and renewable energy provision;

Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism

This document provides national good practice guidance in relation to tourism. It provides no comment specifically in relation to wind turbines or generally whether wind farms have a positive or negative impact upon tourism

Regional Economic Strategy for South West England 2006-2015

Strategic Objective SO3 An effective and confident region promotes and enhances what is best about the region and builds on existing strengths to develop the southwest as the leading region for sustainable development. It proposes a sustainable energy supply for the region by: implementing the regional renewable energy strategy; developing regional sustainable energy strategy and supporting national efforts to maintain security of energy supplies at regional level.

3. Consultations

- (a) Statutory consultees*
- (b) Non- statutory consultees*
- (c) Parish and district councils*
- (d) Interest groups*
- (e) Individual representations*

(a) Statutory consultees

English Heritage No objection

- Support commitment to reduce global warming
- Provided that there is adequate remediation and restoration of the site after the wind farm has become redundant it would not be unacceptable in the historic environment
- Acknowledged was however some impact on Listed Buildings and Scheduled monuments.

Environment Agency No objection based on the Flood Risk Assessment

- The proposal would have shallow foundations above ground waters and will not affect the spring line in Cucklington. The water well in the village would also not be affected.
- Subject to conditions for details of Surface Water Drainage, contamination remediation as necessary, storage of oils and use of excavated material.

Environmental Health Officer No specific comments, but identifies two issues

- Shadow flicker
- Noise

Health and Safety Executive No comment

Highways Agency No objection

County Highways Officer No objection

- Subject to conditions specifying the access crossing, turning facilities and visibility splays.

Natural England No objection on landscape grounds

- Although clearly visible from the AONB the impact of the scheme on visual amenity will to some extent be mitigated by the relatively low quality of the landscape affected. For example, the views of the development from the AONB include the settlements of Gillingham and Mere, as well as the A303. This does not mean that there would be no impact or that the impact if any would be acceptable.
- The clear distinction between the designated and non designated landscapes in this locality will also help to reduce the overall impact on the experience of users of the AONB. But disagree with “*low magnitude in relation to change of views*” and “*Slight*” to “*Slight/Moderate*” effect on visual amenity of the AONB.
- The proposals are likely to have a *substantial/moderate* impact on views from the neighbouring AONB. A further consideration will be whether there are any alternative locations for the development which would have less impact on the landscape. However, the proposals represent a significant contribution to Dorset’s 2010 targets for renewable energy (20-30%) and therefore will in themselves provide a significant environmental benefit. Although the

proposals will have an adverse impact on the AONB, the scale and significance of those impacts in this locality are sufficient to clearly demonstrate that they do not outweigh the benefits of the scheme.

Comments in relation to biodiversity

- Concerned that no meaningful biodiversity mitigation or enhancement measures are provided.
- To minimise any potential impact on the wintering golden plover, the fields in proximity to the proposed turbines will be made unsuitable for foraging by maintaining a tall crop cover during September through to March. This loss of habitat should be made available elsewhere in the locality.
- The proposals have the potential to displace significant numbers of breeding birds (skylark, yellowhammer, song thrush and linnet). Habitat enhancement measures should be provided elsewhere on the holding that will specifically benefit farmland birds.

(b) Non- statutory consultees

Conservation Officer Objection

- Notable landscape features include Feltham Farmhouse, Silton village, St Nicholas Church, Silton House, and Manor Farm, Waterloo Lane and Waterloo Mill. A number of other buildings including Depley Farm, Church Farm Dairy, Bailey Hill Farm and Slait Farm as well as the ponds at Whistley Farm. There will be loss of views from Bourton. The Stour Valley Way also passes through the area.
- The visual impact will be on Silton, Silton House and Manor Farm which are not properly assessed in the ES as well as impacts on Grade II buildings. However, there is some assessment made of these aspects (in pages 6.95, 6.15, 6.17, 6.183 but '*not significant*' assessments are not considered to be correct, although assessments in paras 6.234 and 5.223 addresses this). Table 6.13 assessments of magnitude of change being '*low*' and the level of impact '*slight*' are not true reflections.
- In the section on cultural assessment, Milton on Stour should have separate study.
- The ES could have included more viewpoints.
- There are considered to be impacts on the following listed buildings: St George's Parish Church, Manor Farmhouse and barns, West Bourton Farmhouse, Silton House and the Parish Church of St Nicholas.
- There are considered to be no impacts on all other listed buildings within 5km of the proposal.

- It is considered there may be a degree of harm to the Milton on Stour Conservation Area.
- It is considered there would be no harm to all other conservation areas within 5km of the proposal.

Planning Policy Officer No objection

- The significance of the weight attached to meeting renewable energy targets should be balanced against whether the development adversely affects local landscape character.
- The principle of the proposed development is not contrary to policy. The proposed development could have the potential to contribute towards meeting renewable energy targets set by regional policy.

Technical Services No comment

Civic Aviation Authority No objection

- Aviation lighting may be required
- Turbine blades may need to be white

Defence Estates No objection

- Requirement for 25 candela fixed Omni directional red lighting on each turbine.

National Air Traffic Services No reply

OFCOM No reply

BT Wholesale No reply

Bournemouth Airport No reply

Bristol Airport No technical or safeguarding objection

Compton Abbas Airfield No reply

East Midlands Airport No safeguarding objection

Gatwick Airport No reply

Henstridge Airfield No objection

NATS No safeguarding objection

Westlands No objection

Dorset Wildlife Trust No reply

County Archaeologist No objection

- Subject to condition requiring archaeological investigation

County Ecologist In agreement with the ES except for the following:

- Recommend monitoring to provide data to gauge the collision rate of birds and bats.
- Recommend conversion of existing fields to herb rich grassland

County Landscape Officer No objection except for the following:

- Recommend additional architectural/archaeological input into the ES relating to Registered Parks and gardens, Listed Buildings and Scheduled monuments
- Movement of the turbines not appraised
- Alaska wind farm should be covered in cumulative Impacts
- Assessment of '*not significant*' (para 6.224) and impact on properties within 5km '*not significant*' para 6.227) questionable
- Impact on the AONB over simplifies owing to its proximity
- Magnitude of change assessment of '*low*' (para 6.247) should be '*medium*', effect during operation of '*slight/moderate*' should be '*moderate*' and therefore the impact on the AONB will be '*significant*' rather than '*not significant*'.
- '*Not significant*' in terms of the broader landscape (Para 6.289) would be 'of varied significance' and '*less significant*' beyond this.
- No consideration of LDF

County Renewable Energy Officer Support

- Makes progress toward the Dorset renewable energy targets to which all local authorities are signed up to. There is currently installed capacity of less than 13MG. The target for renewables in the county is 64-84MW.
- There are currently only a very few small turbines in Dorset with the largest being only 6kW. The county would need 2004 of these turbines to equal this proposal. Hence, in order to get anywhere near the target, large scale wind farms are needed.
- Dorset needs to take advantage of its natural resources.

AONB Partnership Objection

- There are inaccuracies in the ES (namely plan 6.1, fig 6.2 designates the site as *Clay Vales and the Limestone Ridges* but *Limestone Ridges* in Local Plan, fig 6.3 visibility factors, fig 6.4 boundary of the AONB not shown, ESA and Gillingham Royal Forest Project inclusion unclear and selective in its choice of views from affected dwellings). Question the methodology used in the ES and comparison with alternative, smaller schemes.

- Significant areas within the AONB to the north and east of the site will be influenced by views of the turbines (figs 6.5, 6.6 and 6.7 Zones of Theoretical Visibility).
- The turbines would be very substantial, vertical elements in a locality where there are no vertical elements (chapter 6).
- The ES under-estimates the ZTV. It omits the arc of the AONB extending from the west of Pen Selwood across to Mere and then to East Knoyle and to Shaftesbury.
- Views northward from Duncliffe Wood to the AONB would be interrupted and spoiled in the north westerly sector by the proposed wind turbines.
- Disagree the magnitude of change as '*not significant*' (para 6.179), the ES underestimates the impacts (table 6.11), disputes that the magnitude of change would be "*low*" (table 6.13) and the effect during operation "*not significant*", disputes '*not significantly encroach on the experience remoteness or tranquillity of the AONB*' (para 6.249), disputes where seen in conjunction with other developed punctuations such as Gillingham or the A303 as "*neutral*", disputes the assessments of the impacts at White Sheet Hill, parts of the AONB, footpaths and cycle ways as '*not significant*' (para 6.253), disputes assessments for landmarks Alfred's Tower, White Sheet Hill, Long Hill and Mere Castle as '*slight*' and '*not significant*' (para 6.287).
- The ES has not considered the cumulative effects and night time impacts.
- Contrary to RSS policy ENV 3, PPS7 (key principle paras 1 (vi), 21), PPS22 (key principle 1 I, viii, paras 14, 20), policies 1.33 and 3.12.
- Assessment of cultural heritage within only 2km is insufficient and has not therefore been properly assessed.
- Smoothing the Noise assessment over a 16 or 18 hour day makes the noise appear less.
- Cables could have implications for site drainage
- The night time lighting assessment underestimates the impact. Disagree that the impact on the AONB would be *not significant*.

South West Regional Development Agency Support

- Will deliver one of the key objectives (Strategic Objective SO3) of the Regional Economic Strategy 2006-2015, specifically in relation to promoting a sustainable energy supply for the south west.

South West Regional Assembly Support

The Regional Planning Body assesses consultations on proposals for development on how far they would impinge on the delivery of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). Under the Act the current RSS is RPG10 but the new RSS is also being produced. The evidence base behind the emerging RSS can be considered as a material consideration and must be taken into account when assessing planning applications.

Increased energy efficiency and producing energy more locally and from renewable sources will reduce the ecological footprint as well as providing economic benefits through creating jobs in the region.

The proposed development would clearly contribute towards achieving the targets for Dorset, and to that extent the development is in line with the targets and objectives set out in Policy RE1 of the draft and emerging RSS.

With regard to the possible environmental impact, the Environmental Impact Statement concludes that the proposed wind park at Silton would cause significant landscape and visual effects within 2km of the site boundary but effects would be contained within the Stour valley and it is considered that effects would be *not significant* in terms of the broader landscape.

Climate change is a key issue for the region and renewable energy should be encouraged and will be supported provided it is in an appropriate location and of an appropriate scale so as not to have unnecessary environmental or social implications.

Therefore, the objectives of the application are consistent with the policies and strategies of the current and emerging RSS and would aid their delivery.

(c) Parish and District Councils

Bourton Parish Council although support renewable energy, objection.

A test anemometer should be installed before the application is determined to demonstrate that there is sufficient wind resource.

- The companion guide to PPS22 best practice advises that there is adequate wind resource for the development.
- Contrary to policies 1.1, 1.8(i), 3.28 and 3.12.

The EA fails to consider landscape and visual impact adequately and the impact on Bourton and the setting of listed buildings

- The photomontages supplied by the applicant do not comply with best practice guidelines as many are shown with white or grey skies.
- The impact on Bourton (*not significant*) is incorrect.
- Contrary to Aims of the Sustainable Development Strategy 1,3,7, policies 1.1, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8i, iii, v, 1.9, 1.23, 1.24, 1.25, 1.26, 1.33, 1.34, 1.35, 1.36, 1.46, 1.47, 1.48, 1.49, 1.93, 1.94, 1.95, 1.98, 1.100, 1.134, 1.135, 3.28, 3.29, 3.30, 3.31, PPS1 (objectives 1,2,3,4,Aims 1,7, key principles 1ii,vi, protection and

enhancement of the environment 1,2,1, integrating sustainable development in development plans 3 vi), PPS7 (Key Principles 1i, vi, paras 2, design and the character of rural settlements 12, the Countryside 14, 15, 16, nationally designated areas 21, PPG15 (paras 1.1,1.2,2.1,2.16,3.6,6.2), PPS22 (Key Principles 1iv, v, vii, viii, national designations 11, buffer zones 14), PPS22 (buffer zones 4.17), Good practice Guide to Planning for Tourism (The Local Value of Tourism 2.6), RPG10 (paras 1.13, 1.22, 2.1, 3.61, 4.1, 4.4, 4.10, 9.35, Policies EN1, EN 3, SS20

Harmful to amenity (noise, shadow flicker and TV interference).

- A recent report by the University of Groningen found that wind farm noise is more annoying than the same level of road or air traffic noise.
- A paper entitled *Wind Turbines, Noise and Health* concludes '*from my discussions with people suffering from ill health who live near wind farms, it seems that the symptoms suffered can occur up to a mile from the wind farm*'.
- Mrs Davis of Lincolnshire whose house is 930m from a wind farm had her council tax reduced by the Valuation Tribunal due to the noise.
- Whistley Farm, Four Winds, West Bourton and Silton will suffer shadow flicker.
- The area has poor TV reception and 12 months to assess whether there will be interference is unacceptable.
- Contrary to policies 1.8 and 3.12, PPS22 (Economic Benefits 2.8, paras 22, 25, Technical Annex Wind 64), PPS7 (Objectives 1, Key Principles 1i), PPG24 (paras 1, 5, 6, 9, 11), RPG10 (para 2.1, Aims 2.1).

No economic or social benefits and harmful to tourism.

- During the construction period a small amount of materials may be sourced locally but there is no guarantee.
- The turbines would be brought from Germany.
- The turbines would be monitored remotely and would provide no local jobs.
- Three of the properties adjacent to the site are reliant on tourism to supplement their incomes through holiday homes (Whistley Farm), fishing lakes and B&B (Slait Farm).
- A study by Glasgow Caledonian University concluded "*the evidence is overwhelming that wind farms reduce the value of the scenery*".
- A report written for the Small Business Council concludes that "*visitors to our landscapes and countryside do not want to see industrial wind turbines*".
- The project will not engender community pride, does not include community ownership, provides no educational opportunities, will not power local houses.
- Turbines require back up and the carbon dioxide saving is questionable.
- Contrary to policies 1.8, 3.28, 3.29, 3.31 and 3.54., PPS22 (Economic Benefits 2.8, key principles 1viii, Social benefits 2.9), PPS7 (Farm diversification 30ii,31ii, tourism and Leisure 34i), PPS22 (Technical Annex Wind 32,37, Good practice Guide to Planning for Tourism (paras 1.1,2.1,2.2,2.3, The Local Value of Tourism 2.4,2.5,2.6, Tourism in Rural Areas 3.24) RPG10 (paras 1.17,1.19,1.21,2.1,5.4,6.2,6.3, Policy EC1, policy TCS1).

Impact on users of track passing through the site.

- The British Horse Society advises that wind turbines should be sited at least 200 metres away.
- Contrary to policy 1.8 viii and Transportation Objectives bullet point 1.

Distracting to road users (particularly B3081 & D30422).

- The section of road adjacent to the site is 41st out of 106 sections of roads ranked according to national collision rates.
- Contrary to policy 5.26.

Cucklington Parish meeting Objection

- Adverse Impact on the countryside which borders the AONB
- Test readings from the anemometer should be considered before the proposal is considered
- Power stations will need to be kept on standby owing to the unreliability of wind
- The subsidy to the applicant is paid for by the public
- Unacceptable noise
- Distracting to road users on B3081 and A303
- They should be on an industrial site
- Should be more than 2km from houses (as recommended on the continent)
- Foundations will affect ground water and sub strata and will cause subliminal tremor
- Waste disposal will disrupt traffic
- Transportation will damage roads and hedgerows
- Flicker effect
- Night lighting will be intrusive (there are no street lights in the village)
- Harm to wildlife, especially bats
- Harm to local tourist industry
- Affect civil aircraft including Air Ambulance
- Adverse effect on property values requiring compensation from the developer
- It is unlikely the fabric will endure 25 years and likely fail
- Change of use of the land from agricultural to industrial foundations for turbines might affect springs

Gillingham Town Council Objection

- Visual impact
- Noise, particularly at night
- Impact on Drove Road
- Detrimental to wildlife especially moles
- Distraction to users of the B3081
- Harmful to local tourism
- Clarification of parking provision for maintenance, “*significant*” with regard to noise, length of time B3081 will be closed, how shadow flicker can be overcome.
- May affect low flying aircraft

Mere Parish Council Objection

- Visual impact
- Manufacture of concrete foundations will add to CO2
- Wind power is intermittent
- Construction traffic using the A303 near Mere
- Distraction to road users on the A303
- No local employment

Pen Selwood Parish Council Objection

- Harmful to AONB
- Noise will be heard in Pen Selwood
- Distraction to users of the A303 and B3081
- Public subsidies could be better used elsewhere
- Light pollution

Silton Parish Council Objection

- The turbines will be too close to Drove Road and distract cars, cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians
- Distraction to users of the B3081
- Too close to dwellings
- Landscape impact
- Noise, shadow flicker and reflection
- Affect TV reception
- Impact on St Nicholas Church, Silton
- Impact on the Wyndham Oak adjacent to the church
- The developer and landowner are the only ones to benefit financially

Stoke Trister & Bayford Parish Council Objection

- Harmful to Blackmore Vale
- Construction traffic
- Inefficient
- Oil spray from turbine gear box
- Turbines do not work
- Impact on local villages

Zeals Parish Council Objection

- Visual impact on Blackmore Vale and AONB
- Too close to B3081, Drove road and houses
- Impact on tourism and businesses
- Noise
- Access to the site
- Aircraft safety

- Construction impact and wastes
- Shadow flicker
- Property devaluation
- TV Interference
- Wildlife

Salisbury District Council Objection

- It would have an adverse visual impact on the rural landscape within its District, including the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB, as well as at other locations, that would result from the erection of six tall, alien, intrusive and animated structures. Therefore contrary to PPS22.
- In terms of landscape restate extracts from the ES: the magnitude of change for users of the AONB “*low*”, the effect during construction “*slight*” and during operation “*slight/moderate and not significant*”, the impact on Zeals/Bourton area “*moderate*” (table 6.11), the magnitude of change of Mere ‘*low*’ and the level of impact during construction and operation “ *slight and not significant*”, there would be views from Stourton, Kilmington and Kilmington Common, the view tends to fluctuate between open and enclosed from the A303.
- In terms of Cultural heritage restate extracts from the ES: foliage would screen views from Stourhead and the turbines would be clearly visible within the broader view from Alfred’s Tower, views would be screened from Zeals House, some elevated views from St Martin’s Church, and Zeals village, lower floor views would be screened from Woodlands Manor, Mere.
- In terms of highway impact restate extracts from the ES that HGV/heavy vehicle flows using the A303 will be “*insignificant*”.
- Concern about night time lighting

South Somerset District Council Objection

- Due to the scale, number and location, there would be an adverse impact on Cranborne Chase and West Wilts Downs AONB and the area around Cucklington and Pen Selwood
- Lack of information and concern about ground and water impact

Somerset County Council No objection

- Recommend warning signs at the entrance

(d) Interest groups

Save Our Silton (SOS) Objection

SOS is a residents organisation with over 500 members mostly people living around the site. The representations comprise four sections.

Section 1 Overview Text reviewing the planning context, the ES and three independent reports commissioned by them.

Inadequate environmental information:

- Wind speed data at hub height has not been supplied and is necessary to assess the energy generation and emission savings and diurnal and seasonal variation to determine noise.
- The need for hub lighting
- The near proximity of a landfill site

The benefits of the proposal are outweighed by the negative impacts:

- The landscape visualisations underestimate the impact on nearby residents, Silton, other villages, the AONB, Stourhead and the wider area.
- There is no tourism impact study
- Noise impact
- Too near to Drove Road and B3081 and would compromise the safety of horses and users (the BHS recommend 4 x turbine height separation)
- Interference with low flying night time aircraft
- Disturbance of landfill site
- Shadow flicker will affect 1.5 mile area for ten minutes per day

The following policies are contravened:

Local Plan 1.1, 1.6, 1.8, 1.16, 1.19, 1.20, 1.23, 1.28, 1.31, 1.33, 1.36, 3.9, 3.12.

RPG10 VIS1, VIS2, SS1, SS19, SS20, EN1, EN3, EC1, TCS1, RE1, RE6.

Draft RSS SD1, SD3, Devt H, HE2, ENV1, ENV3, RE1, RE4, TO1, S12.

Structure Plan E.G, E.A, EN.M, EN.P, EN.Q.

Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Renewable Energy Strategy and Action Plan.

PPS7

PPS22

The Energy Challenge Annex D Statement of need

Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Management Plan

Benefits

- Not local benefits
- The output would be small (the annual output without justification is 7/100,000ths of UK electricity and 2/100,000ths of UK annual emissions)

The visualisations under represent the impact for the following reasons (based on report prepared by *Architech*):

- Make the landscape look further away than is reality
- Difficult to locate viewpoints from the map

- Landscape industry guidance is not followed correctly
- Use of a 26mm lens is unrepresentative (should be 50 or 35)
- Photos taken with grey skies
- Large foregrounds misdirect the eye
- Telegraph lines curve upwards suggesting inaccuracies
- Health warnings should be printed on the images as viewing distances for the photos are unclear

SOS commissioned landscape report by *landscape partnership*

- Alternative numbers and sizes of turbines not adequately assessed
- No off site planting proposals
- Incorrect landscape sensitivity measures
- Adverse and long-term impact
- Photos misrepresent the impact
- Impacts on situations averaged out
- Adverse impact on equestrians
- Impacts on AONB under represented
- Impacts on Milton on Stour Conservation area and grade I and II listed buildings under represented
- Night time lighting not assessed
- Contrary to policies cited above

With regard to assessments:

- Not in the *clay vale* landscape area, but the *Limestone* ridge area
- Impact on landscape character being *low* and therefore *slight* is disputed
- Impact on historic landscape *not significant* is disputed
- Conservation Areas are not *medium sensitivity*.
- Assessment of impact on AONB underplayed
- Dispute that at 2 and 5km the turbines would be *prominent* and *relatively prominent*
- Landmarks as *medium sensitivity* should be *high* and in terms of magnitude of change *slight* should be *moderate/high*
- Impact on Silton church (not assessed) should be *moderate/substantial*
- Impact on scarp slope *slight/moderate* should be *moderate*
- Dispute impact on viewpoints for Slaughtergate, Pen Selwood, Wincanton, Castle Hill Mere, Stourton car park, Whitesheet Hill, Alfred's Tower, Shaftesbury
- Additional viewpoints from Stour Valley, Broad Oak Farm, Kites Nest Lane and Peacemarsh with photomontages considered by them should all be at least *moderate/substantial* impact
- Additional viewpoints from Bowridge Hill, West of Cucklington, Duncliffe Wood, East Knoyle, above West Knoyle, Melbury Hill and Silton Church but without photomontages all considered by them to be at least *moderate/substantial*
- Impact on residents selected as being *significantly affected* is disputed and omits those affected

- Impact on settlements is misleading as taken collectively rather than individually the properties within them gives a misleading impression of the impact
- No consideration of views from the railway
- Dispute impact on AONB as *slight/moderate* and *not significant* and magnitude of change *low*.
- In the summary of effects on visual amenity does not include the full extent of locations and dispute 2km cut off for significance
- Duration of impact of 25 years is not temporary but of permanence
- Milton on Stour Conservation Area not assessed and some listed buildings
- Impact on Silton church *low/medium* resulting in *moderate* disputed
- Consider there to be impact on listed buildings Manor Farm, Feltham Farm and Silton House

SOS commissioned Acoustic report by *Mr D Bowdler*

- Prediction of downwind turbine noise correct but only calculated for a few residents
- Real wind shear on the site cannot be taken into account without raw data
- At night 5-9 residents will suffer noise in excess of 6dB
- Based on superseded WHO report
- Spacing of turbines such that excessive amplitude modulation is high

Other impacts

- Night time low flying aircraft
- Proximity to landfill site
- TV interference
- Shadow flicker

Section 2 Review of Photomontage images by *Architech*

- Important views omitted from AONB and East Knoyle
- Shaftesbury viewpoint inaccessible
- Trig point at White Sheet Hill not commonly used by the public
- Rowles Lane is not a public viewpoint and hard to find
- View from A303 from private land not the road
- Large foregrounds and objects
- Viewpoint map hard to decipher
- None have true characteristic of a 50mm lens as they consist of overlapped images
- Difficult for public to decipher

Architech have provided their own visualisations taken from the following viewpoints:

Comparable locations

- Manor Farm Silton
- Slaughtergate Gillingham
- White Sheet Hill
- Castle Hill Shaftesbury

- New viewpoints
- Stour Valley Way Whistley Farm
 - Broad Oak Farm near Cucklington
 - Kites Nest Lane Bourgeon
 - Peacemarsh Gillingham
- In addition (not as viewpoints)
- Silton church (a photograph of the *blimp*)
 - Night time lights (video representation)

Section 3 Landscape and visual critique by *The Landscape Partnership*

- Alternative configurations of turbines not considered
- The proposals would result in clashing blades and would have no landscape mitigation
- No specific consideration of the landscape capacity of the site to accommodate the wind farm
- Significant and long term adverse impact
- Photomontages underestimate impact
- Significant local visual impacts not addressed

Section 4 Noise report prepared by D Bowdler

Responses to SEI

By the Landscape Partnership.

Assessment of lighting of turbines should be set against a baseline in order to compare the apparent brightness and disagree with Conclusions on lighting impact. Impact on viewpoints should include the additional ones prepared by SOS. Impacts on viewpoint 3 should be *significant*, on 9, *significant* and 11, *not significant*.

In scheme development, alternatives were not properly covered and off site mitigation could be undertaken using vegetation for individual properties. The methodology for the determination of significance is not clearly explained. The additional montages in the SEI seem to underplay the impacts. Milton on Stour Conservation Area would have views of the proposal. All listed buildings, including grade II are of national value and would be affected by the proposal, including Silton church.

The objection is the same as above with the additional concern about the night time lighting.

By Architech

Maintain criticism of the methodology adopted as the montages do not use wireframes, viewing instructions are poor and locations not clearly shown. The additional montages over estimate the distance from the view point.

By *New Acoustics*

Wind shear is not adequately addressed, the ETSU limit will be exceeded, AM is likely, and the provision of raw data would help clarify this.

CPRE Dorset Objection

- Require back up means of energy
- Visual impact in AONB and setting of Silton church
- Blades rotate at 140mph and will kill birds and bats
- Foundations will require 1,000 tonnes of concrete
- Impact on local roads
- Noise
- Loss of value for dwellings
- Human health affected by ultrasound impact, sun reflecting strobe light and shadow flicker will affect epilepsy sufferers
- Harm to tourism
- The developer will profit

CPRE North Dorset Objection

- Inefficient
- Investment would be better spent elsewhere
- Visual impact on AONB
- Harmful to health and will lead to loss of sleep and nervous disorders
- Damage to wildlife
- Attractiveness of area reduced affecting human behaviour patterns and reducing property values
- Construction traffic will damage and disrupt roads

The National Trust Objection

- In view of the proximity of the proposal to Stourhead and visibility from White Sheet Hill (an area of Neolithic meeting places, Bronze Age burial mounds , cross ridge dykes, an Iron Age hill fort and Medieval pounds).
- Visible from Alfred's Tower
- Potential future visibility from the Stourhead landscape which is currently obscured by trees (referring to possibly some of the rides).

The British Horse Society No reply

RSPB Comment

- The mitigation for the scheme is inadequate and additional habitat enhancements could be developed as part of the scheme which would provide wider biodiversity benefits.

(e) Individual representations

Objections total 1,987 letters	Number of objections.
Negative visual effect on the landscape	977
Not in keeping with character of area	701
Dominate Grade 1 listed Silton Church/Listed Buildings	406
Detrimental Impact on views of Cranborne Chase AONB	465
Impact on Wildlife	554
Negative impact upon Tourism (B&B, holiday lets)	650
Distraction of drivers on nearby roads - B3081 & A303	552
Interference of TV/radio reception	575
Noise Disturbance	841
Shadow flicker	465
Reflection disturbance	362
Impact upon residential amenity	19
Negative impact on Stourhead and other historical parks	143
Unsuitable location - lack of wind, no raw wind data, etc	177
Inefficiency of wind turbines	459
Peace and tranquility lost	112
Too close to homes	165
Damage to foundations of Listed Buildings - vibrations	5
Cause unemployment/impact upon employment	81
Impact on local economy	57
Detriment to quality of life of local residents	97
Danger to life - falling/exploding etc	21
Danger of large construction vehicles on minor roads	44
Disturbance of school children	3
Hazard to aircraft	49
Drop in property value	88
Economically unviable	120
No benefit to local community	147
Off shore projects more effective	58
Health implications	97
Back up power required	68
Long-term detriment to environment – concrete bases.	49
Human rights taken away	11
Impact upon public ROW	47
Set a precedent for further applications	53
Security Issues - Terrorism	1

Inaccuracy of application	41
Affect rural setting	4
Against planning Policy	23
Lead to more CO2 emissions	16
Cause flooding - Large bases	3
One family making a fortune	39
Similar app. Refused on Cucklington ridge	27
Premature App - Await met obs.	5
Social Implications - Loss of community	7
Cause higher fuel bills	33
Cause higher council tax	19
Cause lower council tax	6
Risk to farm animals	8
Use water mills on Stour	5
Pollution of water table	2
Discourage people from booking village hall	1
Insufficient infrastructure	1
Light pollution from red lights	9
Light flicker from rugby club floodlights	1
Wrong colour	1
Possibility of class action against LPA	1
Cons outweigh the Pros	3
Only a temporary solution	4
Global warming is not happening	1

	Number of support
Support total 15 letters	
Save greenhouse gases	9
Avoid nuclear waste	2
Reduce demand on finite fossil fuels	3
Look graceful	6
Negligible noise	4
Concrete foundations nominal compared with most developments	1
Only for a limited period and reversible	1
Insignificant traffic	1
Wildlife is not affected	1
Not noisy	1
Promote tourism	4
Windmills are a British tradition	4
in line Government policy – 2,033 turbines in UK already	3
efficient	3
flicker effect exaggerated	1
Not Sure	1

Note: Five templates used. At least 350 of the representations received in this format.

4. Planning appraisal and the main issues

There have been a number of questions raised in the representations about the adequacy of the Environmental Statement and Supplementary Environmental Information. This is the first issue. Following this, there are four main issues which are clearly the most commonly referred to in the representations. These are the need for sustainable energy generation from this type of development in terms of policy, views of the landscape, the effect on the settings of historic features and the living conditions of nearby residents in terms of noise. There then follows a review of the remaining issues.

Therefore the main issues are considered to be as follows:

- (a) The adequacy of the Environmental Statement with respect to landscape, visual matters and site selection*
- (b) The case for the development and policy compliance*
- (c) Impact on the character and appearance of the landscape*
- (d) Impact on the historic landscape and heritage*
- (e) Noise*
- (f) Impact on wildlife and ecology*
- (g) Efficient operation of radar installations and aircraft safety*
- (h) Flooding and pollution*
- (i) Visibility*
- (j) Health effects*
- (k) TV and radio Interference*
- (l) Tourism and rights of way*
- (m) Access and highway safety*
- (n) Shadow flicker*

Each of these issues is discussed below.

(a) The adequacy of the Environmental Statement with respect to landscape, visual matters and site selection

The Environmental Statement and Supplementary Environmental Information have been evaluated on behalf of the Council by Peter Radmall Associates in relation to issues of landscape etc. In addition, the SOS submissions have been reviewed, namely the Landscape and Visual Critique (The Landscape Partnership, hereinafter referred to as LP September 2008) and the Review of Photomontage Visualisations (Architech, September 2008). A number of representations raising similar issues have been received from the AONB partnership, the county landscape Officer, the Bourton Parish Council, Salisbury District Council and some individuals.

This section therefore considers the methodology of the ES and SEI in the light of prevailing practice in the preparation of environmental statements in relation to these issues and the adequacy of the conclusions reached. In various respects the assessment below reviews the reports of Peter Radmall Associates .

The Environmental Statement and Supplementary Environmental Information

Scheme Development

Although there is no regulatory obligation to produce evidence of alternative layouts or configurations, without such appraisal a fully informed appraisal of the merits of the scheme against visual impact cannot be fully understood.

The ES does not present evidence for the landscape and visual assessment of alternative layouts or turbine size, a criticism raised by SOS in the LP critique. However, the SEI does make a comparison between the unscreened visibility of the proposal against turbines with a hub height of 60m. It concludes there is little difference between the pattern of visibility between the two layouts, owing to the topography of the area. While it is expected that smaller turbines would have less impact, they would also produce less energy. In the Officer's view, on the basis of the analysis in the SEI and the site and surroundings, it is considered reasonable to conclude that any realistic reduction in turbine size would not significantly alter the pattern of visibility.

Landscape Character

This concerns defining the type of landscape in which the proposal would be sited.

The Officer considers the proposal falls within the Limestone Ridges and Clay Vales character area (designations in the Local Plan). While SOS and the AONB partnership challenge the relationship of the site to the two local Landscape Character Types (Limestone Ridges and Clay Vales), the boundaries between LCTs are always matters of judgment. The landscape does not change at a defined boundary and therefore the proposal does not fall inside a specific landscape area. In the opinion of the Officer the ES adequately describes the local landscape.

Landscape Sensitivity

The landscape sensitivity and capacity of a landscape are considered in terms of the ability of a landscape to accept development. This concept envisages that all landscapes have a threshold to accommodate specific types of development without fundamental, adverse change to their character.

A concern has been raised by SOS that the ES misreports the findings of the REvision 2020 document (LUC, 2005) by undervaluing the sensitivity of the area, placing it at lower sensitivity than it should be. SOS believes a land use capacity study would have placed the landscape at greater sensitivity. Although the type of turbines proposed do not equate precisely to those on which the REvision study was based, in the Officer's view, it is not of overriding concern because generalisations of sensitivity at this relatively large scale are of limited relevance at a local level, and must be qualified by more detailed analysis, as has been carried out in this case.

SOS claims that the absence of a landscape capacity study is a significant failing. A capacity study is in the Officer's opinion of little use as it would confirm what is already known, i.e. that it is impossible to accommodate wind turbines of

this scale within a landscape of this type without having an impact on its character. Overall it is not considered that the absence of a capacity study is a failing of the ES.

The important point is that landscape sensitivity should be considered in the round, taking account of the visual influence of the development and the perceived relationship between different character areas. In this context, the definition adopted in the originally submitted ES is too narrow, and does not clearly address the indirect effect on the wider area (Zone of Theoretical Visibility). Further clarification of the methodology for the determination of significance has been provided in the SEI. In any case, the use of professional judgement is required to define the resulting significance of impact, and the Officer has done so in the following sections of this report.

Relevant Designations

The ES identifies a series of landscape and cultural heritage designations and the SEI provides analysis of Listed Buildings as well as the Milton on Stour Conservation Area. A number of representations have been received about several initial omissions, which have now been adequately addressed. These assessments have been considered in the subsequent section of this report.

Definition of Setting

The ES identifies a substantial number of landmarks, designated landscapes and cultural heritage features. The SEI addresses a number of inadequacies in the ES, for example with the inclusion of Silton Church. Its conclusions led to some of the listed buildings not being assessed (namely Grade II buildings between 2-5km). These have been assessed individually by the Officer. The assessment of the historic landscape and heritage which includes the Milton on Stour Conservation Area has been individually assessed by the Officer later in the report.

Visual Receptors

The ES identifies a range of visual receptors, which are considered to be appropriate. The ES identifies individual residential properties, but addresses properties within settlements as a group. As a result, the numbers of properties cited in the ES are an under-estimate. However, this is by no means unusual practice. It is important not to place too much weight on property counts; the key point is whether the relevant receptors have been identified and assessed within a reasonable margin of accuracy. The Officer believes the relevant receptors have been identified.

A few concerns have been raised that the ES does not consider the impacts on railway passengers. Sections of the railway fall within the Zones of Theoretical Visibility as defined in the ES. However, viewing opportunities from trains are likely to be limited, and having regard to the level of assessment that has been undertaken it is the officer's opinion that the effects on this receptor group would not be so significantly material as to necessitate assessment in its own right.

Viewpoints and Montages

Visual Influence

The potential visual influence of the development has been defined initially from computer-generated Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTVs). This is an appropriate approach and is consistent with prevailing guidance.

Viewpoint Selection

The ES and SEI provide a range of montages. Nine of the viewpoints are located at distances of more than 5km from the site. Three viewpoints are located between 2-5km from the site, and six viewpoints are located less than 2km from the site. SOS presents montages from four additional locations and seven viewpoints (without montages). It is the Officer's opinion that the selected viewpoints in the ES represent a satisfactory range of views of the proposal.

Technical Basis for the Montages

The montages comply with prevailing practice and provide a reasonably accurate illustration of the likely appearance of the turbines, within the variables imposed by the techniques available. However, there has been concern raised, principally by SOS, that the technical basis for the montages is flawed. Various procedural and presentational criticisms are made.

The main technical criticism made is that the use of panoramic photos, taken with a 50mm lens and reproduced at A3 size, substantially under-represents (by a factor of about three) the visual impact of the turbines. SOS presents a series of montages using different focal lengths, which are claimed to provide an accurate representation. These images achieve a higher degree of clarity than those in the ES and show the turbines to be larger, within a more restricted field of view. As a result, the overall impression is that their impact is greater.

The montages in the ES comply with the criteria relating to focal length, viewing distance and image height set out in the Landscape Institute and Scottish Natural Heritage guidance. The photos were taken with a 50mm lens, which the LI Advice Note "accepts and favours" for most situations; the viewing distance cited in this case (330mm) falls within the range of 300-500mm specified in the SNH guidance (but not the recommended range of 400-500mm); and the image height (130mm at A3) is at the lower end of the acceptable range specified in the SNH guidance (but below the recommended figure of approx. 200mm). The guidance advises that field of view should vary according to the character of each view; whilst a sweeping view from an elevated location would require a panoramic treatment, a framed view (e.g. through a field gate) would not. The field of view adopted for the ES montages (70o) is in the Officer's opinion a satisfactory representation of the range of views.

The SOS montages show a much more restricted field of view, which in most cases would seem to represent what is in effect one segment of a wider view. Clearly, the narrower the field of view, the greater the relative impact is likely to be and likely to over-represent the relative prominence of the turbines. This is reinforced by the use of photos taken with 70-80mm lenses, which is not

supported by the guidance. For the benefit of balance however, the Officer has considered the montages provided by SOS in a subsequent section of this report.

In summary, it is the Officer's view that the montages in the ES comply with guidance on viewing distance and image height and prevailing practice and are able to provide a reasonable basis for assessment.

Identification and Evaluation of Effects

Sources of Impact

The main sources of impact would be the construction phase and the form and movement of the operational turbines.

Defining Significance

The EA Regulations require an ES to identify the “*likely significant effects*” of a development. There are several examples of effects that might be expected to be *significant*, but which are not, and for which the underlying assumptions might therefore be questioned. The Officer has considered this in subsequent sections of this report.

Permanence of Effect

The turbines would have a life of a maximum of 25 years after which they would be removed and the land reinstated. PPS22 acknowledges the temporary nature of the development and thus its effect. The future policy context and viability of wind energy cannot be predicted with certainty and on this basis the proposal should be seen as a temporary one. However, recent experience suggests that wind farms are more likely to be re-powered to extend their initial design life, rather than removed.

Mitigation

The ES does not propose any additional measures to mitigate the likely significant effects. The testing of alternative layouts and turbine models during scheme development has been covered in the SEI. It concluded that there were no significant landscape benefits from reducing the size of the turbines. Off-site landscaping may be one means of mitigating the impact of the proposals from specific locations. In the Officer's view, and for reasons considered later in the report, such proposals can be difficult, if not impossible, to implement if these locations are not in the applicant's ownership and the relevant parties are uncooperative. In addition, it is unlikely that the effects on some locations could be mitigated. If it is deemed beneficial however, to mitigate the proposals in this way, a condition could be added to that effect but this has been suggested as part of the conditions identified.

Lighting

Assessing the visibility of lighting is problematic because of the many variables involved. Influences include weather conditions, the intensity and colour of the lighting, whether or not it flashes, its relative position in the landscape, the presence of obstructions, and ambient lighting levels (both around and behind the source being assessed, and in the vicinity of the observer). There is no UK guidance which relates lighting intensity to likely viewing distance under specific

conditions although there is guidance in “Lighting in the Countryside: Towards Good Practice” (DCLG, 1997). Assessments must therefore rely on observation and judgement.

The 6km radius adopted in the SEI is considered to be reasonable. The lighting would still be visible beyond this, but its impact is likely to be insignificant and therefore not worthy of detailed assessment. It is acknowledged that the lighting will be seen from darker (as well as lighter) areas. The Institute of Lighting Engineers (ILE) guidance (ILE, 2000) refers to the brightness of the area within which a light source is to be located; not the area from which it will be viewed. On this basis, the proposed lighting would comfortably comply with the ILE criteria.

SOS and a number of parish councils are concerned that night-time visualisations should have been provided. It is usual for night-time views to be provided only for developments where lighting is a major source of impact (e.g. airports, sports stadia), which is not the case here.

Lighting impacts are fully considered in the following section.

Conclusion on the adequacy of the ES and SEI

- The methodology in the ES and SEI generally complies with prevailing practice for the assessment of wind farms and is consistent with relevant guidance. Despite certain omissions and queries about evaluative criteria, the ES and SEI are collectively considered to be adequate for the purposes of assessing the impact of the proposals.

(b) The case for the development and policy compliance

Energy Policy

Section 38(6) requires the proposal must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan comprises the North Dorset Local Plan (First Revision), the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan and RPG10 (RSS). The relevant policies with respect to energy follow.

Local Plan policy 3.12 requires a balance to be struck between the benefits of renewable energy proposals and the landscape. Structure Plan Implementation policy A promotes proposals leading to sustainable development. RPG10 policy RE6 supports energy generation and use and is reinforced in the Draft RSS policies SD1 and SD2 which acknowledge the region is not sustainable and need to promote a more resource efficient future and the reduction of greenhouse gases at least in line with national targets (at least 30% by 2026). The current proposal which promotes renewable energy is considered to be in accordance with these policies

The 2003 energy wide paper 'Our Energy Future - Creating a low carbon economy' seeks to address the issues of climate change, the design of UK energy supplies and the need to update much of the UK energy infrastructure. It seeks to ensure carbon dioxide emissions are reduced some 60% by 2050 and maintaining the reliability of energy supply. The use of renewable energy and conservation energy will play an important role in achievement of these goals. There is an aspiration in the white paper of renewable energy supplying 20% of the UK electricity by 2020. The 2006 energy review 'The Energy Challenge' reaffirms this commitment. The energy papers are material considerations in determination of the planning application and reinforce the government guidance in PPS22.

The 2006 Energy Review 'The Energy Challenge' continues the commitment to renewable energy. It refers to the crucial national benefits of new renewable projects and those benefits in terms of reducing emissions and maintaining the supply of energy, are seen as significant to society and to the economy.

There is a clear aspiration of the Energy Review that achievement of the 2010 target would require a significant contribution from renewable energy schemes. The South West Region and the respective local authorities should look to seek their own targets through the development plan process. By 2008 only 8% of the region's electricity demand was being met from renewable sources. These targets do not have cut off points because as PPS22 states, when they are met they are revised upwards, subject to the Region's energy resource and the capacity for the environment. Furthermore, the potential to generate substantial amounts of renewable energy from off-shore projects should not be used as a justification to set lower targets for on-shore projects.

PPS22 is augmented by the PPS1 Supplement on Planning and Climate Change which refers to the need to ensure that the regional ambition for targets fully reflects opportunities in the region. Targets on renewable energy are an inherent part of Government Policy. The targets that have been set for the SW Region and the proposals for their achievement are an important material consideration.

In conclusion, this proposed development would be in line with the aims of Local, Regional and national policy in respect of renewable energy generation and the meeting of the targets for 2010 and 2020, towards which it would contribute were it built.

Targets for Dorset and the South West

The target for Dorset is 64-84MW of electricity production from land based renewable source by 2010. This is encapsulated in Energy Policy A of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan and policies 1.1 and 3.12 of the North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision). This line is further endorsed in the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Renewable Energy Strategy and Action Plan.

The up to date table of renewable energy projects for Dorset shows that there is currently installed capacity of less than 13MW. The target is 64-84MW. Policy

RE6 of RPG10 states that a minimum of between 11-15% of electricity production should be from renewable sources by 2010. The proposed development would have the capacity to generate up to 12MW, which would make a measurable contribution towards these targets. The draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the SW sets a minimum target of 850MW for land based developments in the south west region. Set against the target for 2010, there is clearly a large gap in renewable energy production. The proposal is supported by Dorset County Council and the Regional Planning Body for this reason.

The Area of search

The initial site selection stage involved identifying a number of constraints to wind energy across large parts of the UK and then smaller areas which are then assessed in sequence. One of the primary constraints is wind speed. The initial wind speed data originates from the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) which contains estimates of the annual wind speed for the UK. The average speed for Silton is 6.4m/s.

At each site the wind speed direction and data is used to influence the exact positioning of the turbines given specific site constraints. Wind speed data was obtained from the MET Office Yeovilton between 1988 and 2007. The average speed for the 20 years was 6.58 and from this a wind profile for Silton was calculated.

The ES considers alternative ways of meeting the Dorset target. The analysis identifies locations and then establishes as is usual practice whether the sites would be suitable in terms of wind resource, proximity of housing, access, existing land use and designations proximity to the national grid. A number of schemes were then evaluated using different numbers and heights of turbines. The different schemes comprised twelve, eight, six and two 120m turbines and six 89 metre turbines. Consideration is given to how landscape and visual elements of the proposal were addressed during scheme development. It is concluded that the pattern of visibility would not significantly alter were the turbines smaller.

It is expected that smaller turbines would generate less electricity and there are likely to be economies of scale with larger turbines and numbers. In addition the targets are more likely to be met than through a number of smaller schemes generating the same capacity.

Need

In PPS 22 the overall importance of securing renewable energy is reflected in the clear identification as part of government policy that:

“... Increased development of renewable energy resources is vital to facilitating the delivery of the government’s commitments on both climate change and renewable energy.”

There are a number of means of producing renewable energy. The table in Appendix 1 lists those found in Dorset. Clearly the contribution individually and also cumulatively is small. Landfill gas produces the highest contribution in Dorset (10MW) but the rest of the projects in some cases produce as little as 0.1MW. This proposal has the potential to produce 12MW which is clearly a considerably larger contribution than the other schemes. There are two other potential schemes emerging in Dorset, the Alaska Wind Farm near Wareham and an oil project in Portland. Although neither has planning permission, clearly were these built, there would be an additional contribution to renewable energy production in Dorset, assuming they were completed within the near future. However, in the current absence of these schemes and in view of the modest contribution that existing schemes are making at the current time, there is a clear need for a scheme in principle if the 2010 target is to be achieved. In any event, as already noted, renewable targets are not meant to be treated as maximums.

Benefits

The stated energy saving of the proposal contained within the ES have been reviewed by CLG Energy consultants on behalf of the Council. This assessment incorporates in part elements of that review.

A scheme of this scale would make a substantial contribution to the 82MW target for Dorset for renewable energy.

The estimates of electricity production considered in the ES have been calculated using assumed load factors. The load factor is the percentage of electricity generated in a year divided by the potential electricity generated in the year. The load factor (27.7%) in the ES was based on the average performance between 2002 and 2006 of UK onshore wind park performance deduced from BERR. Using a load factor where other data is absent or different to that suggested in the ES, the output of the proposal can be estimated to be 27.3 GWh per annum.

The average consumption of electricity in the UK in 2006 was 4457kWh per annum. With average domestic consumption in the South West somewhat higher at 4784kWh per annum. Both figures are higher than those given in the ES of 3300kWh per domestic customer.

In the opinion of Officers, the more relevant consumption figure for this scheme is the average figure for domestic use in North Dorset which was 5063kWh per annum in 2006. Electricity use in rural areas is higher due to the type of housing and availability of connection to the gas network. On this basis the proposal is estimated to meet the equivalent needs of 5392 local domestic customers per annum.

That said, the technical annex to PPS 22 suggests that turbines should be spaced at around six rotor diameters in the direction of the prevailing wind. This is to reduce energy loss associated with turbulence. The spacing between turbines 5 and 6 and 1 and 2 would fall below this threshold. This compressed spacing would lead to a loss of energy case which could impact on this estimated

benefit. Further, because production of electricity from wind farms is intermittent and unpredictable, customers would still be reliant on the main grid for their supplies.

There are no definitive methodologies for calculating the emissions saved by the installation of a wind farm as calculations vary over time and are dependent upon the assumptions made about the type and fuel of new powers stations, future fuel prices and competitive pressures in the electricity market. Over recent years the use of coal in electricity production has fallen dramatically and in the opinion of Officer's it is no longer valid to calculate emissions on the basis of coal displacement. In addition, the environmental performance of coal stations has improved with the fitting of FGD equipment and low NOx burners to most stations. There are three options for estimating emissions savings:

To calculate savings against new gas stations as they are the currently default plant type that will be built if there is a shortfall in renewables;

To calculate savings against a marginal system figure;

To calculate savings against the rolling average of current generation.

None of these options are ideal and emissions savings are higher as with each step. The ES calculates CO2 savings using the first method. Technically this method is misleading as SO2 and CO2 savings are made against coal stations and does not reflect the fact that new power plants will be cleaner than old stations, new nuclear and carbon capture and storage leading to an overstatement of the benefits. In the opinion of officers, for this reason it is more acceptable to assess savings against a rolling average of current generation which forms the basis of the last method. Thus in the opinion of Officers the following benefits that can be expected are savings of 15561 tonnes of CO2, 24.8 tonnes of SO2 and 25.9 tonnes of NOx per annum.

The estimates of electricity production stated in the ES are only fractionally higher than those suggested using the Officer method of calculation, and it would be realistic to assume that 27-28GWh of electricity would be produced per annum. However, the Officer estimates CO2 savings to be higher than those in the ES, being 15561tonnes per annum. There would be some savings too in SO2 and NOx, but no where near the amounts suggested in the ES.

Conclusions on energy policy compliance

In this respect it therefore considered that:

- the proposal would comply with the Development Plan, specifically Local Plan policy 3.12, Structure Plan Implementation Policy A, RPG10 Policy RE6 and also with emerging policy as reflected in Draft RSS Policies SD1 and SD2;
- the proposal would be in line with national, regional and local policies for energy and it would make a significant contribution towards meeting the 82MW target for Dorset to 2010;

- the site is considered to be a suitable site for wind energy production and would serve electricity for most of the time estimated to meet the need of 5,392 domestic households per annum; and
- it would secure significant savings in CO₂ emissions in the order of 15,000 tonnes per annum, as well as savings in NO_x and SO₂.

(c) Impact on the character and appearance of the landscape

The proposed turbines are large scale industrial structures having the characteristic of movement which draws the eye. It is a matter of fact that the introduction of large wind turbines 120m in height will have a noticeable impact upon the character of the landscape. However, the planning issue is whether the impact would be demonstrably harmful taking into account the location of the site within an immediate area which has no national landscape designation and the extent of any harm caused. The wider area includes the AONB. Structure Plan Environment Policy F is concerned with maintaining landscape character and local distinctiveness and the conservation of natural and manmade features which contribute to that character. It also acknowledges, particularly in relation to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape. Local Plan Policies 1.8 and 1.33 flow from this policy and are policies exercising general control over development in the countryside with the aim of avoiding unacceptable harm to distinctive landscape character.

The site lies within the Clay Vale and Limestone Ridges character area. The Limestone Ridges are low rounded ridges consisting of a fairly open landscape with some enclosed valleys and numerous scattered villages and farms. The Clay Vale is a broad gently undulating landscape drained by the River Stour and its dense network of tributaries. It has a fine-grain mosaic of pastures, scattered villages and small woodlands. Woodlands and fields form an irregular patchwork defined by dense hedgerows dotted with distinct and mature trees. It is a domestic, farmland landscape with a dense network of narrow twisting lanes. It forms part of the Clay Vale bowl around Gillingham. This large bowl is enclosed by hills on nearly all sides. Relative to the rest of the surrounding landscape, the site itself is located on a slightly elevated part.

The applicant's Landscape and Visual Assessment indicates that visibility across the study area is governed by a combination of topography and the distribution of screening elements such as tree belts and hedges in combination with the pattern of human use. Thus, the sharp contrasts in land form across the area tend to result in a well-defined pattern of visibility ranging from distant and panoramic to localised and enclosed. The Planning Officer would agree with this assessment of the general visibility of this landscape. Thus, within the Clay Vale clear views towards the site are restricted to a relatively small area up to 2-3 kilometres around the site. The areas of highest visibility are at the tops of the Limestone Ridges and Chalk Downs situated around the Clay Vale. The views from these places are panoramic and uninterrupted and possible over some 30 kilometres. There are some notable viewpoints at Castle Hill Shaftesbury, Castle Hill Mere, East Knoyle, Alfred's Tower as well as White Sheet Hill, Melbury Hill and Fontmell Down.

The Viewpoints

The council selected a number of viewpoints from which photo montages were produced. SOS has also produced photo montages from corresponding viewpoints as well as additional ones. The additional ones include sites nearer to the proposal. The list of viewpoints is not exhaustive and is intended to provide a representative sample of views from different locations and distances. The two sets of montages in the ES and supplied by SOS are useful for comparison because they reflect different weather conditions as well as seasons (with and without leaf cover). The SOS information also provides additional viewpoints for consideration. The Officer has considered all of these and the level of impact on each.

The viewpoints are individually assessed using criteria which first assess the *landscape sensitivity*, then the *magnitude of change* arising as a consequence of the proposal and finally the *impact*. These criteria are defined as follows:

Landscape Sensitivity	
<i>High</i>	Users of outdoor recreational facilities including strategic recreational footpaths, cycle routes or rights of way, whose attention may be focused on the landscape; views including important landscape features with physical, cultural or historic attributes; views which would not easily absorb development; and the principal views from residential buildings, beauty spots, viewpoints and picnic areas.
<i>Medium</i>	Other footpaths; secondary views from residential buildings; people travelling through or past the landscape on roads, trains or other transport routes; views which would have moderate capacity to absorb development; and views from low-flying airplanes.
<i>Low</i>	People engaged in outdoor sports or recreation (other than appreciation of the landscape), commercial buildings, or commercially engaged pedestrians, whose attention may be focused on their work or activity rather than the wider landscape; and views which could easily absorb development.

Magnitude of change	
<i>High</i>	Fundamental change
<i>Medium</i>	Material but not fundamental
<i>Low</i>	Discernable but non-material
<i>None</i>	No change
Impact	
	<i>Substantial</i>
	<i>Substantial/moderate</i>
	<i>Moderate</i>
	<i>Slight/moderate</i>
	<i>Slight or no change</i>

The following assessment is based on professional judgement.

Within 5 kilometres

- View Point 1, Manor Farm, Silton

This is not a specially designated landscape but Manor Farm is a Grade II listed building and this view forms its main outlook. The lane emerges from a sunken section to a green lined with the buildings of Manor Farm separated from the adjoining fields by a stone wall. The views from this section of lane toward the site are open.

All six turbines would be visible, four of which including the bases. Two would have clashing blades, dependent on the direction of the wind. The magnitude of change due to the near proximity of the site will be *high* and the impact *substantial*. The Officer, ES and objectors are in agreement.

- View Point 2, Rowles Lane, Cucklington

Rowles Lane is at the top of the scarp above the main village where principal views are to the west toward Wincanton rather than toward the proposal, where views are mainly limited to glimpses in breaks in the hedgerows.

Six turbines would be visible across fields and with a backdrop of distant hills. Two would have clashing blades. They would appear at different heights and randomly spaced and views would be unhindered. The turbines would break the skyline and would therefore have an impact on this view. The applicant suggests that the magnitude of change would be *medium* and the impact *moderate*. The nearest receptors (local residents, walkers, etc) would be more sensitive to this view and in the Officer's opinion the *sensitivity* would be greater than that stated in the ES. However, the impact would remain *moderate*. The Officer, ES and objectors are in agreement regarding impact

- Viewpoint 3, Slaughtergate, Gillingham

Slaughtergate is on the western edge of Gillingham where a number of houses have an open outlook towards the proposal (although the view is a wider one of which this forms only a part). There is also a public footpath across the fields. The landscape contains houses and agricultural buildings.

The turbines would be visible although broken by trees. The tree cover varies if the viewer travels a few hundred metres along the public footpath. The nearest receptors, (walkers and residents) would be highly sensitive but the overall impact in view of the trees means that in the Officer's view the impact is *moderate* (the ES judged the impact to be *slight/moderate* and SOS *moderate*).

- Viewpoint 4, A303 Westbound

The A303 is a dual carriageway which passes north of the proposal. It is the main route from London to the West Country. Parts of the road pass through cuttings, others above ground or nearly level with it. As most receptors are travelling, only glimpses toward the site are possible rather than static views. The sensitivity of receptors using a road to travel through the area rather than within it is therefore lower than, for example, residents.

Six turbines would be visible and skyline, but glimpsed and from a fast-moving trunk road. The AONB partnership disputes the level of impact but in the Officer's view, the impact would be *slight* (the ES and SOS agree).

- Viewpoint 5, Pen Selwood

Pen Selwood is a mainly wooded hilltop area north of Bourton and in the AONB. The Monarch's Way long-distance footpath passes through it. While the viewpoint offers restricted views of the proposal, there are less restricted views from nearer the escarpment edge.

The impact at SOS's montage (17) taken from a different position would be *moderate/high* and the turbines would be readily apparent as prominent tall elements located in the arable lowlands. However, the nearest receptors would be walkers and residents whose sensitivity is high. Overall, in the Officer's opinion the impact would be *slight/moderate* as only tips of the blades would be visible above the rising hill, trees and hedgerows (the ES and SOS agree although SOS consider the impact to be *moderate/high* on footpaths in different locations from the viewpoint).

Between 5-10 kilometres

- Viewpoint 6, Wincanton

From the north-east edge of Wincanton, only the blades would be visible above the skyline and seen across a large arable landscape with Stoke Trister in the middle ground. The Monarch's Way also passes near the viewpoint.

In view of the distance and apparent size of the turbines to the eye, the turbines would only occupy a small part of the overall view. They would not interfere with Stoke Trister church which is a feature of the middle ground and quite distinct from the proposal which would be further away.

Although objectors, including SOS, consider the impact would be *moderate/substantial* owing to the impact on the church at Stoke Trister, the Officer considers the impact would be *slight/moderate* (the ES also identifies *slight/moderate*).

- Viewpoint 7, Castle Hill, Mere

Castle Hill is a monument and viewpoint in the centre of the town. It is accessed by a steep climb and therefore commands extensive views in all directions. Although it is not in the AONB, it has views to the north across the AONB. To the south, the views are wide and panoramic across the clay vale. In the southerly views toward the site, in the foreground is urban development around Mere, and in the distance, Gillingham. Further afield can be seen Win Green, Shaftesbury, Duncliffe and Bulbarrow.

The turbines would be visible as individual, tall, man-made elements, but would occupy a small part of the view and at such a distance, appear relatively small to the eye as well as within a view that incorporates other non-rural elements such as the town of Gillingham.

Whilst it is accepted that the viewpoint is a well known landmark and commands exceptional views, the presence of the turbines, whilst apparent, would occupy a small part of that view. SOS considers the turbines would dominate the view and the impact would be *moderate/substantial*, as does the AONB partnership. However, they would not dominate the entire view and in the opinion of the Officer the impact would be *moderate* (the ES also considers impact to be *moderate*).

- Viewpoint 8, Stourton Car Park

Stourton car park is set apart from the village of Stourton, the mansion and the famous Capability Brown landscape park. However, it is within the AONB and the registered park and garden. It occupies relatively open land with views across arable land.

Mainly the blades of the wind turbines would be readily noticeable as prominent man-made elements located in the arable lowlands. The receptors using the car park are likely to be more sensitive to landscape on a visit to the countryside to see the garden and house. Within the wide panoramic view from the car park, the turbines would be in the middle of that view. However, it needs to be understood that the actual garden and house would not be affected at all. Therefore, the impact would be *slight*, with which the Officer, ES and objectors are in agreement.

- Viewpoint 9, White Sheet Hill

Whitesheet Hill is in the AONB and commands exceptional views across the open chalk downs. The landscape is relatively unspoilt. In the foreground it consists of rough grazing land and in the distance agricultural. The viewpoint is taken from the trig point.

The turbines would be seen as entire structures, two very close together. However, they would occupy part of a much wider view and with only the blades breaking the skyline. Natural England and SOS consider the impact would be *moderate/substantial* because the turbines would be a major focus of attention. For similar reasons the AONB partnership take this view. However, the Officer considers the impact would be *moderate*.

- Viewpoint 10, Alfred's Tower, Stour Head

Alfred's Tower is a famous folly and viewpoint falling within the Stourhead registered park and garden as well as being within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is a listed brick tower with public access to a viewing platform on the top. The applicant montage indicates that the turbines would be seen as entire structures but they would be 7 kilometres distant. The area is particularly sensitive given its AONB status and the large-scale views from the top of the tower which can be obtained through 360 degrees. So extensive is the view that it contains many hundreds of square miles of the landscape. All six turbines would be visible as entire structures, albeit at a considerable distance away, as relatively small structures. The turbines would occupy a relatively small segment of the entire view and would be at a point of transition from the unspoilt landscape of the AONB to the developed landscape containing Gillingham, Wincanton and other settlements. The turbines would not affect the setting of the tower, which can be seen from great distances; the two are so distinct from one another in terms of their positions in the landscape. The same would apply to the setting of the park.

Natural England considers the impact to be *moderate/substantial*. The coincidence of designations, a registered park and garden and AONB, together with the role of the tower as a landmark, serves to increase the sensitivity of the location as a publicly accessible viewpoint used by receptors whose sole purpose is to enjoy the view. Overall, the Officer considers the impact would be *moderate* rather than *slight/moderate* in the ES (SOS consider the impact to be *moderate*).

- Viewpoint 11, South Cheriton

South Cheriton is between Wincanton and Stalbridge and forms part of the edge of the clay vale. The views toward the site are across a wooded arable landscape with only the blades visible on the horizon and some 8 kilometres distant. Each of two pairs of the turbines would be seen together slightly reducing the apparent total to the eye.

The impact would therefore be *slight*, with which the Officer, ES and SOS are in agreement.

- Viewpoint 12, Castle Hill, Shaftesbury

Castle Hill is a well-known viewpoint in the town from which there are panoramic views towards Gillingham with the backdrop of hills in the distance. Although the main viewpoint is from an area with benches and a viewing table, the ES viewpoint is taken from the old castle. SOS has used the former viewpoint.

The view is extensive and in the foreground consists of the development on the outskirts of the town and the remainder is mainly arable land. In the far distance the town of Gillingham can be clearly made out. However, there are a number of other features in this view (mainly in the far distance) including Duncliffe Hill, Quantock Hills, Glastonbury Tor, Alfred's Tower, Mere and Kingsettle Hill. This also serves to illustrate that in such a large area the features could be considered individually as more important in their own right than in some respects than their setting.

SOS considers the impact would be *moderate/substantial* because the turbines would catch the eye by reason of the movement. However, only the tops of the turbines would be visible but being nearly 10 kilometres distant and within a wide panorama containing a large number of individual elements in the Officer's opinion would have a *slight/moderate* impact. (the ES considers impact to be *neutral/slight*).

Between 10-15 kilometres

- Viewpoint 13, Stalbridge

In some respects similar to the landscape around South Cheriton, Stalbridge is a small town in the vale. The views toward the site are across a partially wooded arable landscape and the turbines would be visible, but at this range, nearly 11 km away, not readily apparent to the eye. In the officer opinion the impact would be *slight* (ES assess impact as *neutral/slight*, SOS did not assess)

- Viewpoint 14, Wessex Ridgeway

The Wessex Ridgeway is designated as an AONB and is favoured by walkers. Wilderness views are principally inward looking in the AONB, but are also possible in the direction of the proposal. The turbines would appear as a group of tall elements located in the clay vale and be visible from some 12 kilometres away. At this distance only the movement of the blades would be sufficient to make the observer notice them. They would appear as a very small and almost imperceptible feature in the far distance.

The impact is predicted by Officers to be *slight* (ES assess impact as *neutral/slight*, SOS did not assess).

Additional viewpoints provided by SOS and SEI (0-3 Kilometres)

Note: Viewpoints 15-18 and the night-time simulation were commissioned by SOS and SEI 1-4 by the applicant.

- Viewpoint 15, from Stour Valley Way (< 1km)

The Stour Valley Way follows the River Stour and covers almost all of the 65 miles of river, with a few gaps and discontinuities. This section of the footpath route passes by the site of the proposal and connects Bourton to Gillingham. It is a relatively enclosed landscape being within the vale and long distance or panoramic views are therefore limited. It is mainly agricultural with small woodlands. The turbines would be seen in their entirety although some of the bases would not be visible due to tree cover. Most of the turbines would have clashing blades. The impact would be *substantial*. The Officer, ES (montage SEI 2) and the objectors are in agreement.

While the impact on this small section of the Stour Valley Way would be *substantial*, taking the Stour Valley Way as a whole, which passes through many different types of landscape, good and bad, the impact would clearly be considerably less.

- Viewpoint 16, Broad Oak Farm (< 1km)

Broad Oak Farm is near to the proposal separated from it by the B3081 and a small woodland. A minor lane passes by the farm from which the montage is taken. All six of the turbines would be visible across woodland and two pairs of blades would clash. However, the number of receptors is small and the impact is only on the immediate area.

In the Officer's opinion it would have a *moderate/substantial* impact (SOS is in agreement).

- Viewpoint 17, Bourton Footpath from Kites Nest Lane (2-3 km)

See 5 above.

- Viewpoint 18, Peacemarsh (2-3 km)

Like Slaughtergate, Peacemarsh is on the western edge of Gillingham, but further away. There is a play area and a number of houses on the edge of the housing estate. The view from the play area is across small fields surrounded by hedgerows and trees. Three of the turbines would be visible, although the bases would be partially obscured by trees. The other three would be entirely screened in summer and the outline broken in winter.

SOS considers this to be a *moderate/substantial* impact owing to the public access to the site. The Officer considers this to be a *moderate* impact as only a few of the turbines would be visible and a distance away.

- Viewpoint SEI 1 Permissive Path Silton (500m)

The viewpoint is located on a minor path which joins Silton with the B3081. At this close range the turbines would be seen in their entirety and in the opinion of the Officer the impact would be *substantial* (SEI *significant*).

- Viewpoint SEI 2

See 15 above.

- Viewpoint SEI 3 Longbury Long Barrow (<2km)

Longbury Barrow is a scheduled ancient monument and lies adjacent to the minor lane. The views are across agricultural land and the rugby posts of the club also appear. The monument is not a well visited attraction in its own right and the lane is not well used as it only serves a few small farms. Four of the turbines would be partially obscured by trees, although as a group they would be readily apparent. For these reasons the Officer considers the impact to be *slight/moderate* (SEI *not significant*).

- Viewpoint SEI 4 B3081 (300m)

The B3081 passes alongside the proposal, being the main route from Gillingham to Wincanton. The predominant receptors would be drivers travelling past the site and the impact would be *substantial* at such close proximity. However, taking the B3081 as a whole, the impact would be substantially less (SEI *not significant*).

- Night simulation Bourton footpath Kites Nest Lane

A simulation provided by SOS which is based on 200 candela red lamps attached to the tops of the turbine nacelles, shows that all 6 turbines would be visible at night. The impact would be significant and therefore *substantial* at this range.

The SEI also predicts *significant* effects due to lighting based on 200 candela red lamps being attached in relation to the following:

- Eight isolated properties
- Silton and its setting
- West Bourton and its setting
- Cucklington
- Recreational routes within 3km, the B3081, Pierston Fields, the Drove Road and the Stour Valley Way
- Parts of the Cale Valley.

The SEI identifies a number of other illuminated structures are visible in the landscape within 6km of the proposal which from different vantage points could be seen together with it:

Towns: Pale yellow and white lights from houses and vehicles, orange street lights accompanied by sky glow at Gillingham, Mere, Wincanton, Zeals and Bourton.

Villages: Pale yellow and white lights from houses and vehicles, but few have street lighting except for Bourton.

Factories: Bright, orange lights at Mere and Gillingham.

Other: Bright, white lighting used periodically at a rugby ground, Gillingham Leisure Centre, Colesbrook pitches, vehicles, rural street lights, isolated houses, lit spire at Milton on Stour, lit flag pole at Castle Hill and the church at Mere.

Beyond 6km:

Shaftesbury, Yeovil and Sherborne are visible as well as Bath, Bristol and the Mendip TV transmitter.

There are large tracts which contain very little lighting.

The use of 25 candela lamps, which would be acceptable to the MOD, would be much less visible. The SEI suggests that the majority of effects would cease to be *significant* if the lights are reduced to 25 candelas.

Having regard to the above the Officer considers that based on the use of 25 candela lamps the impact would be *neutral*.

Consideration of Landscape impact

The Officer has had regard to the applicant's visual assessments, as well as those provided by Consultees and representations.

It is evident that within 1 km and less than 2km, the turbines would be a dominant feature. From around 10 isolated households, the hamlets of Silton and West Bourton, the B3081 and the Stour Valley Way footpath, there is little doubt that the turbines would dominate the view. However, a small number of close-range views like this would only be of interest to those who are interested in the turbines themselves and those passing through the area either along the B3081 or the Stour Valley Way, as these are not particularly well frequented beauty spots in their own right. In fact, at such close quarters nothing could screen or hide the turbines.

Overall, the proposal is therefore considered to have an adverse impact on views of the landscape at this range. As such in this respect the proposal would be contrary to Local Plan policies 1.8 and 3.12 and Structure Plan Environment Policy F.

At 2 kilometres, already the turbines would become less obtrusive and trees and hedgerows within the landscape serve to break up the outline. In some parts of Bourton however views remain unobstructed. Bourton High Street occupies a continuous and long area of slightly higher ground with many dwellings having views towards the open countryside containing the proposal.

Across the arable landscape from Cucklington the turbines would still be distinct, but not from the village itself which is screened by an escarpment. A few isolated

households would also have in some cases uninterrupted views of the turbines. However, in the round, even where the turbines would be visible, this would only be apparent for the static viewer from occasional viewpoints and in most cases the turbines would either not be seen or would be seen only as a glimpse as they would be screened by trees, hedgerows and topography. At these distances, expansive views of the rest of the countryside would still be enjoyed. The turbines would only impact on a small part of that view.

At 2 kilometres, it is therefore considered that the only impact which would be sufficient to amount to a conflict with policy are those views of the proposal from Bourton which are unobstructed. To this extent therefore in relation to those views the proposal is considered to be contrary to Local Plan policies 1.8 and 3.12 and Structure Plan Environment Policy F.

Between 2-5 kilometres the size of the turbines is less apparent, although they are still visible mainly in views above the skyline when seen from within the Clay Vale as well as from Pen Selwood, Zeals, isolated houses between Milton on Stour and Zeals, part of the A303 and the outskirts of Gillingham.

At Pen Selwood, where the terrain rises and falls dramatically, visibility is confined to the top-most points such as near to the church. Stoke Trister (which is situated on a hill), Buckhorn Weston and all the isolated households in that area are screened by the NW- SE ridge that runs for several kilometres and includes Cucklington. Milton on Stour sits across a gently undulating landscape and only the fringes of the settlement would encounter views of the turbines, the remainder being screened by other buildings or topography. Gillingham would not have views of the proposal as there is very little inter-visibility owing to the topography and other buildings. The main views would only be from the western edge of the town at Slaughtergate and Peacemarsh where there are houses and the rugby pitches. At most vantage points the turbines would be lost behind buildings and trees.

Overall it is not considered that the proposal would have an adverse impact at this range. From this distance therefore the proposal is considered to comply with Local Plan policies 1.8 and 3.12 and Structure Plan Environment Policy F.

At greater distances of between 5-10 kilometres the turbines would be seen from some distance and clearly their apparent size is much reduced and they would be apparent only in most views as occupying a very small part of a very wide panorama. In addition, at this range they would also be seen within a landscape which contains a considerable number of man-made interventions. Most of the views including those from Castle Hill, Mere and Shaftesbury have views across large panoramas which contain a number of natural and unnatural elements. For example, the settlements of Bourton, Zeals, Gillingham, Mere and the A303 are prominent features in their own right. The proposal would be taller but no more prominent comparatively. The turbines would only be seen as occupying a small part and would only introduce another small element into that landscape.

On this basis it is the Officer's opinion the turbines would not significantly harm the landscape at these distances and in this respect, the proposal would comply

with Local Plan policies 1.8 and 3.12 and Structure Plan Environment Policy F.

At distances in excess of 10 kilometres the turbines would become as small to the human eye as to be practically invisible except on very clear days and as such would be of a size which is not in itself considered significant in the wider landscape. The visual effects of the wind farm would become *not significant* and progressively diminish with increasing distance. It is only through the movement of the blades that they would be at all discernable and even then with some difficulty. Once again, the turbines would be a long way off, set out below the horizon and occupying a very small proportion of what are exceptionally broad panoramas.

Overall, at this distance, it is considered that the proposal would comply with Local Plan policies 1.8 and 3.12 and Structure Plan Environment Policy F.

The provision of night-time static lighting would clearly result in the tops of the turbines being visible at night. The lights are designed to be identified rather than to illuminate the surroundings and would not illuminate the blades or the turbines themselves. There would be some direct views to red lights and light spill onto the central sections of the turbine blades and sky glow in misty or wet conditions. The lights may appear to blink when interrupted by the turning blades at a distance at 5km, although it is unlikely that red light spills onto the surrounding blades or surrounding glow would be visible at this distance. The intensity of illumination of 25 candelas and red colour allows identification within closer distances and would not be visible from 10 kilometres. The 25 candela lights would be adequate for identification as well as there being other mitigating options available, such as partial shielding to prevent lights being visible from ground level. There is little opportunity for off site mitigation although there is the possibility of individual properties being screened using vegetation.

Even though the illumination would be noticeable at night, such is the limited size and brightness of the lights themselves it is unlikely that there would be undue impact. There are a number of other illuminated structures, most with greater intensity and with white illumination within this landscape. It is worth noting that the single lamp attached to the temporary anemometer has a brightness of 32 candelas and those attached to the Mendip TV mast 2000 candelas each. The additional lighting for the turbines within such a landscape is not considered to cause unacceptable harm.

It is therefore considered that in this respect the proposal would comply with Local Plan policies 1.8 and 3.12 and Structure Plan Environment Policy F.

Cumulative impacts are those where two or more wind farms are visible from one position. The ES adequately addresses this issue and the Officer concurs that there would be no cumulative impacts. There has been a proposal for the Alaska wind farm in Purbeck, now withdrawn, but likely to be resubmitted. Clearly this proposal has neither planning permission nor has it been erected. However, even were it the case that this went ahead, the Officer considers the topography and distance between the Alaska wind farm and Siltan would not give rise to cumulative impacts.

In this respect therefore the proposal is considered to comply with Local Plan policies 1.8 and 3.12 and Structure Plan Environment Policy F.

AONB

The site is some 2km from the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB. The AONB follows an approximate line at least 2km north of the site including part of Pen Selwood and then following the edge of the A303 as far as to the north of Mere. There are a few notable viewpoints from within the AONB looking south and southwest toward the site of the proposal, most notably Alfred's Tower and Castle Hill, Mere. There are also more distant viewpoints at Whitesheet Hill, East Knoyle and Beacon Hill.

One of the most noticeable viewpoints is from Alfred's Tower, which is well known for its 360 degree views as well as its association with the Stour Head landscape garden and rides situated in the AONB and a registered park and garden, and will clearly be affected by this proposal.

However, the turbines would occupy only a small proportion of the overall sweep of view and would not impinge directly into the view toward the AONB. The turbines would be in that part of the view where the transition is made from rolling Downland to the Clay Vale - a natural break in the scenery. There is a clear distinction between the designated and non-designated landscapes. Whilst it is appreciated that people may go to the AONB to experience wilderness, that experience in the main derives from inward views within and across the AONB as a whole. Clearly if one goes to an elevated position to look at a view it is to appreciate panoramas in their entirety. It does not follow that everyone would regard the very far off presence of the wind turbines at such a distance where the turbines individually or collectively would be barely perceivable, to be disruptive and harmful to that landscape.

It is unlikely if not impossible for views from the folly to have remained exactly the same since it was erected. The landscape is an evolving one and even the views across the park have changed. Unlike the planned views within the park, the views were not planned. Therefore it would be reasonable to say that this viewpoint is concerned with the wider picture because it includes views of countryside beyond the park over an evolving landscape.

Overall, it is the Officer opinion, the proposal would not have an effect sufficient to conflict with Local Plan policies 1.8 and 3.12 and Structure Plan Environment Policy F.

Emerging Policy ENV3 of the draft RSS addresses development outside AONBs and seeks to control any such development which would damage their natural beauty, character, special qualities or purposes. Having regard to the observations made above, the Officer does not consider that the proposal would conflict with this emerging policy.

Conclusions on landscape Impact and policy compliance

The conclusions on landscape impact derive from the effects identified above. The consideration here is whether those effects are adverse and conflict with the relevant policies.

In terms of the Clay Vales and Landscape Ridges character area, which includes a number of settlements, isolated houses and public rights of way, in which most of the viewpoints considered fall, it is considered that although dependent on the elevation of the land and intervisibility, there would be significant effects on the landscape within the locality of the application site and up to and including 2km of the application site boundary. It is therefore considered that the proposal within this distance would be in conflict with Local Plan policies 1.8 and 3.12 and Structure Plan Environment Policy F.

In terms of the AONB, in relation to Alfred's Tower, it is the opinion of the Officer the proposal would not be contrary to Local Plan Policies 1.8 and 3.12 and Structure Plan Environment Policy F.

Such is the nature of the topography and characteristics of this particular landscape, that the turbines would be seen clearly up to 2 kilometres and from very far away between 5-10 kilometres. It would be an unrealistic expectation for turbines of the scale and number proposed to be anything other than conspicuous in many views, whether in this particular landscape or indeed any other part of Dorset. Most of the viewpoints fall within the Clay Vales and Limestone Ridges character area.

In summary, there would be adverse landscape effects of sufficient degree as to amount to a conflict of policy in respect of the following only:

- The Clay Vales and Limestone Ridges landscape character area up to and including 2km from the application site contrary to Local Plan policies 1.8 and 3.12 and Structure Plan Environment Policy F.

In relation to the AONB and the remainder of the Clay Vales and Limestone Ridges character area:

- The proposal would comply with Local Plan policies 1.8 and 3.12 and Structure Plan Environment Policies F .

(d) Impact on the historic landscape and heritage

The Officer has considered the main components which comprise the historic landscape of the area. Structure Plan Environment Policy Q requires the quality of the historic environment to be conserved and enhanced. Policies 1.23, 1.24, 1.29 and 1.31 are concerned with preserving the setting of listed buildings, the character and appearance of Conservation Areas, preservation of locally important archaeological sites and the character, interest or setting of a historic park and garden respectively. There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Archaeological remains directly affected by the turbines at the site itself. There

are a number of features outside the site including Longbarrow, Longhill Bowlbarrow, Orchard Castle, Kings Court Palace and Mere Castle. However, none of these would be seen in relationship to the Proposal except for Longbury Long Barrow, which although within near proximity, would not have its setting harmed.

It is not therefore considered that the proposal would be contrary to Local Plan Policy 1.29 in this respect

Listed Buildings

The proposal would affect the setting of two listed buildings. There are clearly a number of other Grade I and Grade II listed buildings further away. All the Grade I, II* and II buildings within 5km of the proposal have been assessed by the Officer. With respect in particular to those that have been specifically raised in the representations or have been identified by the Officer, the comments are set out below.

In terms of those buildings nearest the site, Manor Farm, which would be within 1 kilometre of the proposal, consists of an attractive group of buildings stretched along a grassed open common separated from the countryside by a robust stone wall. Manor Farmhouse and the barn are listed separately (both grade II). Whilst views from the buildings of the turbines would be significant, the setting of the buildings is defined by their relationship with the stone wall, the common, the countryside reaching up to them and the backdrop of trees. This particular setting would be affected by the proposal, even though it would be some distance away in the bordering fields. Furthermore, in views from the rear of Manor Farm the turbines would be visible and there would therefore be *significant* harm to the setting of the listed buildings.

In the opinion of the Officer the setting of these buildings would not be preserved.

In the case of St Nicholas Church Silton (grade I), the principal views from the church grounds are clearly defined and stretch toward the east across attractive countryside. Clearly the proposal would not impinge on these views. There are some views over the churchyard wall which might be affected by the proposal, but these would be merely glimpses of blade tips through trees. The church itself occupies a high point and views of it are mainly viewed from the southeast. Although, that is not to say it cannot be seen from other directions, the wind farm would not dominate this principal view.

On balance, having regard to the comments above it is considered that the setting of this building would be preserved notwithstanding the proposal.

Silton House (grade II) would not share views with the wind farm as, once again, the wind farm would be within the agricultural land on the opposite side of the lane and a distance away. There would be a possibility that when viewed from within the curtilage the turbines would be partly visible.

Notwithstanding the existence of such views in the opinion of the Officer the setting of this building would be preserved

At West Bourton, the Farmhouse (grade II) would be affected by the proposal. It occupies a sloping site and views of the house with the wind turbines in its background would be possible. It is considered that the historic interest is to a degree dependant upon the wider landscape setting which relates to its former use and agricultural activities. Whilst viewed from the lane the main listed house would not be notably affected by the proposal, the attached outbuildings could be seen within the same view as the turbines from one particular position. However, such is the degree of separation by fields the agrarian setting would remain and the Officer does not consider the overall setting would be harmed.

The setting of the remainder of listed buildings within 1 km would be preserved.

With regard to listed buildings beyond 1 kilometre and up to 5km (including grade I, II* and II), it is not considered that with such separation and therefore reduction on the visual prominence of the turbines, that the settings of any listed buildings would be adversely affected with one exception.

In the case of St George's Church Bourton (grade II), which occupies sloping land, the views of the wind farm with the church in front would also encompass garages and bungalows which in themselves already affect the setting of the church.

In the opinion of the Officer the setting of this building is preserved.

In relation to the setting of all other listed buildings including those in isolated locations and the settlements of Bourton, Zeals, Milton on Stour, Gillingham, Pen Selwood, Stoke Trister and Buckhorn Weston it is considered that the settings would be preserved.

Conservation Areas

There are a few Conservation areas within 5 kilometres of the proposal. However, the only one which would be likely to be affected is that at Milton-on Stour. Although a Conservation Area appraisal has not been carried out by the Council for this village, English Heritage has published advice on the subject in *Wind Energy and Historic Environment (2005)* and *Seeing The History In View: Assessing Heritage Significance Within Views (2008)*. The former advances six particular factors to be taken into account considering the impact of turbines on the setting of historic sites. The first says that turbines might be inappropriate where an historic feature such as a monument, church spire or a plantation belonging to a desired landscape is the most visually dominant feature in the surrounding landscape. The second relates to scale. The third requires that turbines respect intervisibility between certain archaeological or historic landscape features that would be intended to be seen from one another. The fourth concerns designed landscapes such as that at Stourhead. The fifth relates to noise and overshadowing and the sixth relates to the unaltered setting of Ancient sites.

The Conservation Area in Milton-on Stour consists of large buildings in spacious grounds. The sense of the area is that views are relatively enclosed within the landscape and with views between buildings. There are also a number of outlying houses on the edge of the village but few of these, although enjoying a setting within the broader landscape beyond the edge of the village, would share a landscape with the proposals. The Conservation Area would remain the dominant feature and would not be harmed by the presence of the wind turbines some distance away. When the Conservation Area is viewed from outside, there is the possibility that the turbines will be viewed within the general context of the Conservation Area. However, in the Officer's opinion there is sufficient separation as well as self containment of the Conservation Area from the proposal for there not to be demonstrable harm to be caused to the setting of it. Thus the English Heritage criteria are met.

Historic Parks and Gardens

Stourhead Historic Park and Garden is situated to the north of the proposal. Although the main garden is set within a small valley and is totally enclosed and therefore would not have views towards the proposal, the remainder of the Capability Brown landscape consists of rides in the immediate area surrounding the park and the mansion. Most of the rides are inaccessible to the public. However, those that are enjoy views both within and beyond the immediate landscape. Most of these views are overgrown and have not been reinstated. Unlike the main garden, there are few 'planned' views from the rides, apart from Alfred's Tower. The impact of the turbines is not considered to unacceptably detract from these secondary views from the rides.

The views from Alfred's Tower would be affected. Consideration has already been given in terms of views from Alfred's Tower and the AONB and those conclusions are the same.

Overall, it is the Officer opinion, the proposal would not have an effect sufficient to conflict with Local Plan policy 1.31.

Conclusions on Heritage Impact and Policy Compliance

The conclusions on landscape impact derive from the effects identified above.

In summary, it is considered that the proposal:

- would not preserve the setting of two Grade II Listed buildings within 1km of the site and to this extent only would be contrary to Local Plan policy 1.23 and Structure Plan Environment Policy Q and would conflict with the relevant statutory test;
- would not impact upon Stourhead historic park and garden and in this respect would comply with Local Plan polices 1.31 and 3.12 and Structure Plan Environment Policy Q.

- in relation to sites of archaeological importance would in this respect comply with Local Plan policies 1.8, 1.29 and 3.12 and Structure Plan Environment Policy S;
- would preserve the setting of all listed buildings save for the two identified above; and
- would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas including Milton on Stour and in this respect therefore would comply with Local Plan policies 1.24 and 3.12 and Structure Plan Environment Policy Q and not conflict with the relevant statutory test

(e) Noise

Noise is an issue raised in a large number of representations, in particular from those living closest to the site. The Council has commissioned reports from Robert Davis Associates to assess the noise impact assessment submitted by the applicant as well as that provided by SOS. This section in part therefore reviews the conclusions of those reports.

The companion guide to PPS22 states that wind turbines are not inherently noisy machines and as the accompanying guide to PPS22 advises, under most operating conditions it is likely that turbine noise will be completely masked by the sound of the wind. The type of noise associated with these wind turbines is aerodynamic noise from the passage of the blades through the air.

There are a number of groups of houses and individual houses within 1 km of the proposal: Church Farm, Slait Farm, Whistley Farm, Valhalla, Old Farm, Woodhouse Cross, Bainley Hill Farm, Depley Farm and Manor Farm. Of these the nearest are Valhalla, Woodhouse Cross, Slait Farm and Whistley Farm. Noise levels at the nearest noise sensitive properties, resulting from the operation of the wind turbines have been predicted in the ES and SEI.

Impact on dwellings

Predicted noise levels are compared with criteria in the form of numerical limits. It is standard practice for these numerical limits to be derived using the procedure in ETSU-R-97 (ETSU-R-97. The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms, ETSU for the Department of Trade and Industry, 1996). The ETSU noise limits are set at a level 5dB higher than the pre-existing background noise level, subject to a lower 'fixed' level which is set at 35-40dB during the daytime and 43 dB at night. All noise levels are expressed in terms of the L_{A90} index (L_{A90} is the level exceeded for 90% of the time during the period of measurements). To determine the background noise levels, noise surveys ('baseline surveys') are carried out at selected locations over an extended period. The use of ETSU-R-97 to assess and rate noise from wind farms is endorsed in PPS22. If the predicted noise levels are shown to be lower than the ETSU limits, noise levels are judged to be acceptable.

In this respect it should however be noted that the ETSU noise limits are set at the upper bounds of acceptability and as such even if there was compliance with ETSU limits, noise from the proposed wind farm would on occasions be audible at dwellings in the vicinity.

Noise levels have been predicted at 7 receptor locations as follows: Valhalla, Whistley Farm, Slait Farm, Church Farm Dairy, Old Farm West Bourton, Bainley Hill Farm, Depley Farm. The Officer believes that the noise predictions have been carried out in accordance with the stated procedure.

The noise assessment relies to a significant extent on a comparison between predicted wind turbine noise levels, at receptors, and the existing background noise levels at these locations. It is therefore essential that the measurements of existing background noise level are carried out correctly and at representative locations. In the opinion of the Officer who has undertaken various site inspections of the application site, the selected monitoring locations are adequate. External factors such as rainfall have been taken into account. The survey period included a reasonable range of wind speeds and directions.

Overall, the Officer considers that, subject to the comments below, the noise assessment has been carried out in a manner that is sufficient to enable a reasonable view to be reached regarding noise impact.

Use of guarantee

The noise levels produced by the wind turbines are based on a guarantee provided by the manufacturer that warrants Sound Power Levels for the turbines will not be exceeded.

The guarantee provided by the applicant relates to the Enercon E82 which is currently the turbine that the applicant anticipates will be used on this site. The applicant however has declined to confirm in writing that this model will definitely be the model that is ultimately used. In such a situation elsewhere it has been normal practice to include a condition on any permission to address this situation to secure that the turbine to which the guarantee relates is used or another like it (with the same noise profile and guarantee).

PPS22 Companion Guide provides guidance and information on the spacing of wind turbines stating that turbines need to be spaced at around 3-10 rotor diameters, having regard to the prevailing wind direction. In the case of the current proposal two sets of turbines (T1 and T2 and T5 and T6) would be spaced either closer than the minimum or at the margin of minimum acceptability (210m and 248m apart against a 3 rotor minimum separation of 246m (82 x 3). The PPS recognises that this spacing represents a compromise between compactness which minimises capital costs and the need for adequate separation to lessen energy loss through wind shadowing from upstream machines.

Although the guidance on separation in PPS22 is primarily concerned with ensuring that the efficiency of the turbines is not seriously impaired by 'wind

shadowing' effects, the noise generated by a wind turbine can also be affected by the turbulent air from another turbine upwind of it. Despite repeated requests, the applicant has not provided any convincing information that the warranted noise levels provided by the manufacturer remain applicable in all conditions when turbines are as closely-spaced as is proposed here.

Overall, this adds a degree of undesirable uncertainty to the assessment. The implications of this issue are considered below.

Wind shear

Wind Shear is a phenomenon whereby wind speed is higher at the hub of the turbine than on the ground because the wind at ground level is slowed down by friction with the ground, etc. The noise levels produced by the wind turbines depends on the wind speed at hub height, whereas the background noise level at dwellings (against which the turbine noise is compared) generally depends on the wind speed close to the ground, since the main source of background noise in rural areas is the disturbance of trees and vegetation by wind. The degree of wind shear varies from site to site and with atmospheric conditions. At times when wind shear is enhanced, relative to 'average' conditions, turbine noise levels will be higher, relative to background noise levels, than levels predicted for average wind shear conditions.

Enhanced wind shear is most likely to occur during the evening and at night. The result is that the turbine noise at a given wind speed (as measured close to the ground at a height of 10 metres) would be higher than predicted.

The noise predictions in the ES did not originally take account of site-specific wind shear effects, since no information on wind shear at the site was available. Data has been now been provided from an anemometer mast erected on the application site since November 2008. The data comes from three different heights up to 50m and represents the winter period and not the whole year. It represents both night and day. This data has been used to seek to 'correct' the original noise predictions to take account of wind shear effects.

The wind shear data used to correct the noise predictions however relates only to the winter months (November-February). Although there is no evidence to show that wind shear at the application site would be subject to large seasonal variations data for whole year is not available. In order to try and address this, the Applicant has produced annual wind shear data for a site in Devon which, in so far as it could be applied to the application site, indicates little seasonal variation.

Overall, the application of a retrospective correction for wind shear and the use of non site specific data, as has been carried out in this case, is not ideal and again adds a degree of uncertainty into the process of comparing predicted noise levels with the derived noise limits. The implications are considered further below.

Amplitude Modulation

In some circumstances wind turbines can generate noise with a rhythmic 'swish' or 'thump', termed 'amplitude modulation' or 'AM'. However, the causes of AM are not understood, and the possibility that it might occur on a particular wind turbine installation cannot be predicted. There is no robust technical basis for constructing a condition that would have the effect of limiting amplitude modulation, since there is no established methodology for measuring amplitude modulation or for assessing the acceptability of a noise which exhibits the characteristic.

In the case of the application site, there is no reason to believe that it is particularly prone to AM effects by virtue of its location or topography, however there is an additional complication in that this effect can be made worse by the close spacing of the turbines.

Overall, although the risk of AM occurring at a level that would be detectable at any dwelling is statistically small the likelihood of it occurring at a level at the application site that would cause enhanced disturbance to local residents cannot be accurately predicted. The consequence of this are considered below.

Conditions

A number of noise conditions have emerged from public inquiries in relation to wind farms. These include numerical values of noise limits close to dwellings and a procedure to ascertain whether limits are being met, including the undertaking of investigations in response to complaints being received.

It is the officer's opinion that subject to the comments below, such conditions are technically sound and would be sufficient to ensure that over time any noise from the wind turbines would be constrained within acceptable limits.

The applicant has identified a condition to address concerns regarding Amplitude Modulation (AM). Whilst the Officer is not aware of any better condition to seek to address this issue, it is understood that this condition has not been validated for assessing AM and therefore there is a degree of doubt as to its adequacy.

Furthermore, the procedure used in the conditions for establishing whether noise limits comply with the stated limits is necessarily time consuming and elaborate. This has been the subject of criticism at some recent inquiries as being cumbersome, to the extent where doubts in relation to them have arguably been a factor leading to a refusal. As a result, it is possible that one or more residents might continue to experience noise problems whilst any potential breach of condition was being investigated. Such criticism does therefore raise the question as to whether such conditions meeting the relevant legal and planning tests as to their adequacy.

To a certain extent part of any delay that might arise in relation to such conditions could be attributed to the time it would take for the Council to adequately respond to issues arising in relation to them. As this is a key consideration of relevance to

the adequacy of this approach, it is considered reasonable for the developer to cover the costs of the Council in undertaking such investigation. In the absence of adequate in house resource, this could for example include the use by the Council of external consultants. This could be procured by way of a planning obligation.

Overall, it is considered that with the exception of a condition to address AM, other conditions to address noise concerns are technically sound and would be sufficient to control noise levels from the wind turbines. Although it has to be accepted that there might be a hiatus period between the identification of a problem and the securing of a solution this would be limited particularly having regard to the overall anticipated lifetime of the proposal and on balance is not considered to be such as to render such conditions unacceptable. Furthermore, any such delay could in part be mitigated by the developer funding the Council's costs to seek to ensure prompt investigation.

With regard to the AM condition, although there is not evidence sufficient to demonstrate conclusively that this condition would address the problem, equally there is no evidence to demonstrate that it would not. This must also be weighed against the small chance of such a problem occurring in the first place.

Overall View

Based on the noise assessment provided by the applicant, the margin between predicted noise levels and the noise levels at the most affected property (Slait Farm) is approximately 1 dB.

In carrying out its assessment, the predications of the applicant are considered to have been slightly conservative (predicted noise levels are slightly over stated) and as such do include some inherent 'safety margin'.

Nevertheless, balanced against this is the uncertainties that arise from the issues identified above, namely:

- a guarantee that may not prove to be reliable due to the close proximity of certain turbines;
- the absence of comprehensive data for the application site; and
- the possibility of AM occurring on site, the likelihood of which may have increased due to the close proximity of certain turbines.

On balance, the Officer view is that it is considered that on some occasions, turbine noise would be audible above the existing background noise at up to about 50 dwellings in the vicinity (although not all would be affected at the same time, since noise propagation is strongly influenced by wind direction) and at the nearest dwellings the increase in background noise level in some conditions during the night could be around 5 dB LA90, or up to 10 dB LA90 in the presence of enhanced wind shear.

The overall consequence of this is that there is a risk that noise levels arising from the proposal could exceed the ETSU noise limits.

Furthermore, there is also a risk that AM could occur in some wind conditions and that this could result in enhanced disturbance to local residents.

There are however balancing factors to this view.

Whilst accepting that there is a risk that certain noise problems may arise, nevertheless, it is considered that the risk is small, notwithstanding the uncertainties identified.

Additionally, although it is possible that the ETSU limits may be exceeded it is considered that such exceedence would be small.

With the exception of the AM condition, it is considered that there is no doubt that conditions could adequately address any noise issue that arose. Furthermore any such condition, whilst perhaps somewhat cumbersome, is not considered to be such as to render it unacceptable in planning terms particularly if this is in part mitigated by the developer meeting any costs incurred by the Council in relation to any investigations that need to be undertaken.

In respect of AM, the view is taken that overall the risk of occurrence is of sufficiently low probability (even allowing for the close proximity of the turbines) to mean that on balance whilst this is a factor, it could not justify a reason for refusal. Whilst there is a degree of uncertainty as to the adequacy of the proposed condition, there is no evidence to demonstrate that the condition would not be suitable. As the risk of AM is so small, it is not considered that such uncertainty would justify a different view being reached.

Conclusion on noise impact

- In conclusion, whilst perhaps finely balanced, the view is taken that with the appropriate imposition of conditions and a planning obligation regarding investigation, any issue on noise is not sufficient to warrant a refusal and to render the proposal contrary to policies 1.8 and 3.12 and Structure Plan Implementation Policy D.

(f) Impact on wildlife and ecology

Structure Plan Environment Policy A seeks to protect important sites of Nature Conservation interest and Environment Policy D seeks to protect species and habitat. Similar aims are pursued in Local Plan Policy 1.38. PPG9 on nature conservation gives advice about the inter-relationship between nature conservation and development control.

In general compliance with these Policies, the Environmental Statement includes an Ecological Assessment of the site including a Schedule of existing habitat types and a record of species of wildlife present. The proposal is near a site of nature conservation interest and an ancient woodland.

Natural England and the County Ecologist have no objections to the proposal subject to suitable conditions being imposed. The conditions suggested require

conversion of existing fields in the immediate vicinity to herb rich grassland and provision for habitat enhancement measures to specifically benefit farmland birds. It is also suggested that bird and bat collision rates are monitored although PPS22 indicates that the evidence of the risk of collision between moving turbine blades and birds is minimal for both migrating birds and for local habitats.

With the incorporation of these conditions it is considered that there can be no basis for refusal of the scheme based upon the likely impact upon local wildlife and ecological sites.

Conclusion on wildlife and ecological impact

- In conclusion, there would be no adverse effects on wildlife and ecology and the proposal would comply with Local Plan policies 1.8, 1.36 and 1.38 and Structure Plan Environment Policies C and D.

(g) Efficient operation of radar installations and aircraft safety

The supplement to PPS22 identifies that if an objection is raised by either a civil aviation or defence estates consultee the onus will be on the applicant to prove the proposal would have no adverse affects.

Thirteen individual consultees including civil aviation authorities and Defence Estates were consulted and no safeguarding objections were raised by any of the bodies who replied although some individual representations were received.

The Defence Estates have stipulated a requirement for 25 candela fixed on the directional red lights on each turbine. The lights would be attached to the nacelles to ensure visibility at night. (This issue is considered under the section on landscape.)

With the provision of a condition to secure such lighting it is considered that the scheme would not undermine the safety of aircrafts in compliance with advice in Circular 1/2003 Safeguarding Aerodromes, Technical sites and Military Explosive Storage Areas.

Furthermore, it is not considered that any compelling evidence has been provided to suggest that the proposal would interfere with the safe operation of radar.

Conclusion on airborne impacts

- In conclusion, there would be no adverse effects on radar and aircraft and the proposal would comply with Local Plan policy 1.8 and Structure Plan Implementation Policy D.

(h) Flooding and pollution

The Environment Agency has raised no objection to the scheme following receipt of a Flood Risk Assessment from the applicant. The site is not within a groundwater source protection area.

The Officer is aware of local concerns regarding a former landfill site 60 metres from the nearest turbine. There will be no construction activities within proximity of the landfill site which was licensed by Dorset County Council under the control of the Pollution Act 1974 and regularly monitored by the Environment Agency. The waste deposited in the site was non-hazardous arising from construction, demolition, repair or improvement of a building or structure. A second licence granted in 1992 included the addition of paper, cardboard and green waste.

The Environment Agency has recommended various conditions one of which specifically would include a condition specifically addressing the issues of the landfill.

With the incorporation of the conditions suggested by the Environment Agency it is considered the scheme would neither increase the risk or extent of flooding in the area nor lead to pollution of ground waters.

Conclusion on flooding and pollution

- In conclusion, with the use of appropriate conditions it is considered that there would be no adverse effects on ground water and the proposal would comply with Local Plan policy 1.8.

(i) Viability

A number of representations have been received claiming that the Silton site would have insufficient wind and that the test anemometer should have been placed on the site before the application was made. The argument being that if the site has insufficient wind resource the development cannot go ahead.

The supplement to PPS1 identifies that it is not expected that developers should have to demonstrate the national need for renewable energy developments or justify why it is sited in a particular location.

The mean wind speed at hub height determines the energy captured at a site.

The speed of the wind at the application site was originally assessed by the applicant in the ES using Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) standards and computer models of wind speed and direction maps.

Whilst actual wind speed data was not known at the time of the production of the applicant's original ES, subsequently wind speed data from the anemometer, which was erected in November, has been made available.

At the application site wind speed data was obtained from the meteorological office Yeovilton for the period 1988 to 2007 inclusive. The average wind speed at Yeovilton for this 20 years period is 6.58m/s. This data broken down into direction, speed and time period was used to extrapolate a wind profile for Silton. The output was also used to influence a site specific layout to minimise generation losses. The average wind speed for Silton was calculated to be 6.4m/s.

It is understood that this is a relatively low figure compared to other wind farms in the South West and as such generation levels could be lower than the historic average despite the use of larger and more modern turbines.

The PPS 22 companion guide also recognises that the simplest way to expressing the energy captured at a site is by use of the Capacity Factor. Capacity factors in the UK can generally fall between 0.2 and 0.5, with 0.3 being typical in the UK.

The Capacity Factor at the application site is recorded in the ES to be 0.277

On the basis of this information and in the absence of any compelling evidence to the contrary it is considered that proposal would be viable.

Conclusion on viability

- In conclusion, in terms of viability it is considered that the proposal would comply with Local Plan policy 1.1 and Structure Plan Implementation Policy A.

(j) Health effects

A number of representations have raised the issue of potential adverse health affects associated with low frequency and subsonic emissions.

In relation to low frequency and subsonic emissions it is claimed that the emissions can cause headaches, nervousness, stress, nausea and sleep deprivation.

The companion guide to PPS22 states that there is no evidence that ground transmitted low frequency noise is at a sufficient level to be harmful to human health. Having regard to this advice and in the absence of any conclusive contrary evidence, the Officer does not consider refusal of the scheme on this ground to be justified.

Concern has also been expressed with regard to mechanical failure and shedding ice.

Any mechanical engineered structure is potentially liable to failure if it is not properly maintained and with regard to ice forming on the blade and then being shed, whilst not impossible is unlikely to cause any problem to health here especially so at the distance from homes, settlements and schools concerned in

this case. The companion guide to PPS22 indicates that properly designed and maintained wind turbines are a safe technology.

A number of representations raise concern regarding potential harm should a wind turbine fall over. It is accepted that this is a theoretical risk and the companion guide to PPS22 recognises that whilst there is no statutory separation between a wind turbine and public right of way, often fall over distance is considered an acceptable separation and the minimum distance is often taken to be that the turbine blades should not oversail a right of way. In the case of the proposal no turbine would oversail a public right of way and generally the Officer is not aware of any example of injury to a member of the public by a wind turbine.

The companion guide to PPS 22 identifies that the build up of ice is unlikely to present problems in England as for ice to build up particular weather conditions are required which occur for less than one day a year. In those areas where icing does occur, turbines are fitted with vibration sensors which can identify any imbalance in which case operation is inhibited.

One representation concerns the proposal becoming a target for terrorist attacks. The Officer is not aware of any evidence that identifies wind turbines as being the subject of any particular terrorist threat and indeed, this seems unlikely in the absence of any reports of terrorist action at wind farms globally.

Eight representations concern the risk to farm animals. The land would continue to be used for agriculture and it is currently cultivated. The Officer is not aware of any reports of farm animals losing their life or being disturbed by turbines such as to prevent them from being able to continue grazing around the turbines without distraction.

Conclusion on health effects

- In conclusion, in the absence of any conclusive evidence to the contrary it is not considered that the proposal would give rise adverse effects on health and the proposal in this respect would comply with Local Plan policy 1.8 and Structure Plan Implementation Policy D.

(k) TV and radio Interference

A number of representations have raised concerns about electromagnetic interference with radio and television reception and the applicant has suggested that alleviation of any electromagnetic interference to television and radio reception caused by the operation of the wind turbines would be carried out.

The companion guide to PPS22 recognises that wind turbines can potentially affect electromagnetic transmissions in two ways: by blocking or deflecting line of sight radio or microwave links, or by the scattering of transmission signals.

There are 3 terrestrial television and radio transmitters that transmit signals that may be received in the locality. However, most of the local TV reception is from the Mendip mast. The wind turbines would not sit between Gillingham and the Mendip mast. The wind turbines would be in line of sight of the mast for very few properties. Whilst the presence of wind turbines may reflect signals causing a

double reception such as shadowing, it is only likely to occur where the wind turbines are between residential properties and the transmitter. This effect is only pronounced for analogue TV signals. The service will change to digital in 2010 by which time if approved the wind turbines would likely only just be commissioned.

In the event that there was any interference, a condition could be used to require the applicant to mitigate the affected individuals normally by using a booster, digital receiver, satellite antenna or modification of a local repeater station.

A condition relating to TV and radio interference has been included. It is not considered that there can be any grounds for refusal with the use of an appropriate condition.

Conclusion on radio and TV reception

- In conclusion, although there is evidence to suggest that wind turbines can interfere with TV and radio reception, in relation to this proposal there is no evidence available to suggest that any such interference would occur or be significant. In any event, it is considered that any problem that did occur could adequately be addressed by way of the incorporation of a condition and consequently in the Officer opinion there would be no adverse effects on TV and radio reception and the proposal would comply with Local Plan policy 1.8 and Structure Plan Implementation Policy D.

(I) Tourism

Dorset is well known for tourism. While Siltan is not so well known as a tourist destination in its own right, clearly there are a number of local residents on whom tourism is their main income. For example, there are three local businesses (Whistley Farm, Whistley Waters and Slait farm) within close proximity to the proposal offering B&B accommodation, cabins, and fishing. The fear is that the presence of wind turbines might deter visitors and even if only in small numbers that the resulting damage to local businesses would be severe. A number of representation have been received from the respective businesses and past users of the holiday accommodation raising objection, but also in one case, support. A village hall also fears that it will have fewer bookings. Some believe it will lead to unemployment.

Evidence submitted in relation to this application, has included letters from specific visitors to existing tourist destinations identifying that they would not return if a wind farm was erected. Much of the evidence however, including a letter from South West Tourism provided by SOS, is based on perception rather than factual evidence.

Various surveys and similar evidence have been produced in relation to other wind turbine applications seeking to demonstrate the consequences that the provision of a wind farm may have on tourism. For example, at the comparatively recent inquiry at Fullabrook in North Devon, which was for a much larger scheme, parties produced a variety of evidence relating to impact on

tourism including a survey by UWE. The inspector's conclusion on that occasion in relation to business in general including tourism based business was that in overall terms, tourism numbers would be likely to be maintained and for small businesses near the site, while a proportion of their regular visitors might be less inclined to return, there would be potential new markets to exploit.

Overall, Officers are not aware of any evidence that demonstrates conclusively whether or not the overall impact of a wind farm would be detrimental to tourism. In any event, the most significant tourist trails and attractions in the area are those at Stourhead and the Monarch's Way some distance away and unaffected by this proposal. Whilst it is appreciated there are users of the Drove Road and the Stour Valley Way passing through and near to the site, in the opinion of the Officer the presence of the turbines is unlikely to deter them if they need to use that route.

Conclusion on tourism

- In conclusion, the Officer is not aware of any conclusive evidence to demonstrate that the current proposal would have an adverse effect on tourism and consequently in this respect the proposal is considered to comply with Local Plan policy 1.8 and Structure Plan Implementation Policy D.

(m) Access and highway safety

Neither the Highways Agency nor Dorset County Council (Highways) have objections to the proposed access nor to the proposed routing of abnormal loads. Both these consultees have had regard to unclassified, classified roads and trunk roads including the A303. The proposal would not require any improvement to public highways other than minor work on the internal access road through the site. During construction, all of the construction traffic will be able to use local roads.

Indeed, in relation to concern about distraction for users of the A303, B3081 and local lanes near to the site, there are now a large number of wind turbines adjoining or close to road networks and despite making enquiries, the Officer is not aware of any history of accidents at any of them that could be attributable to the existence of the wind turbines.

The companion guide to PPS22 advises that drivers are faced with a number of varied and competing distractions over any normal journey, including advertising hoardings, which are deliberately designed to attract attention. At all times drivers are required to take reasonable care to ensure their own and other's safety. Wind turbines should not therefore be treated any differently from any other distractions a driver might face.

Subject to suitable conditions, the Officer concludes that there will be no adverse impact on highway safety.

SOS have suggested that the British Horse Society 200 metre exclusion zone around bridleways should be adhered to, to avoid wind turbines frightening

horses. The companion guide to PPS22 states that this is not a statutory requirement (as well as their being no statutory separation from a public right of way). Although the Drove Road would be approximately 50 metres from the nearest wind turbine, the closest footpath or other public Right of Way is approximately 550 metres from the nearest wind turbine and the nearest Bridleway is approximately 1 kilometre. Even were horse riders to be using the Drove Road which passes 50 metres from the turbines the approach from both directions is open and is in the opinion of the Officer unlikely to give rise to sudden or anticipated surprise to horses.

Conclusion on highway safety

- In conclusion, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions it is not considered that the proposal would give rise to any adverse effects on highway safety and the proposal would comply with Local Plan policy 1.8 and Structure Plan Implementation Policy D.

(n) Shadow flicker

A large number of representations have been received on this matter, although shadow flicker normally only affects a radius of around 400m. The accompanying guide to PPS22 explains the term shadow flicker. It is the stroboscopic effect of the shade cast by rotating blades in certain circumstances through some window openings. It is a rare occurrence likely to be experienced, if at all, only at certain periods of the day and particular periods of the year.

It only occurs inside buildings where the flicker appears through a narrow window opening. The seasonal duration of this effect can be calculated from the geometry of the machine and the latitude of the site. A single window in a single building is likely to be affected for a few minutes at certain times of the day during short periods of the year. The likelihood of this occurring and the duration of such an effect depend upon:

- the direction of the residence relative to the turbine(s);
- the distance from the turbine(s);
- the turbine hub-height and rotor diameter;
- the time of year;
- the proportion of day-light hours in which the turbines operate;
- the frequency of bright sunshine and cloudless skies (particularly at low elevations above the horizon); and,
- the prevailing wind direction.

The effect is not significant if the distance is greater than 10 rotor diameters from the turbines. Only properties within 130 degrees either side of north, relative to the turbines can be affected at these latitudes in the UK - turbines do not cast long shadows on their southern side. The further the observer is from the turbine the less pronounced the effect will be.

There is no guidance within the Scottish or English planning system on what criteria should be used to determine the need for mitigation of shadow flicker.

European practice, however, is codified in “Wind Energy Development Guidelines, 2006” published by the Ireland Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The relevant paragraph (5.12) states:

“It is recommended that shadow flicker at neighbouring offices and dwellings within 500m should not exceed 30 hours per year or 30 minutes per day”.

The Environmental Statement has modelled the likelihood of shadow flicker occurring and given worst case scenarios and mitigation measures. This issue has been raised at a number of appeals and in one unusual case there was found to be significant risk of a boy suffering from autism becoming obsessed with the turning of blades such as to constitute a material consideration to be weighed in the balance.

Six residential dwellings within proximity of the proposal could experience over 30 hours of shadow flicker per annum in total. However, the likelihood of the effect occurring can be calculated mathematically in advance and the turbines programmed to stop rotating when lighting conditions make the occurrence likely. A condition can be used to this effect. No evidence has been produced to suggest any of the occupants of these properties would be particularly susceptible to the effects of shadow flicker.

Overall therefore, subject to the imposition of a suitable condition, the Officer considers there is no sustainable ground for refusal for this reason.

Conclusion on shadow flicker

- In conclusion, subject to the incorporation of an appropriate condition it is considered that there would be no adverse effects on amenity as a result of shadow flicker and in this respect the proposal would comply with Local Plan policy 1.8 and Structure Plan Implementation Policy D.

5. The planning balance and conclusion

The development plan contains several policies which cover renewable energy, these being Policy RE6 of the RPG10, Energy Policy A of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan and policy 3.12 of the North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision). They provide for renewable energy developments in the context of targets set at regional and sub-regional levels, subject to a consideration of their environmental and other impacts.

The 2003 Energy White Paper, the 2007 Energy White Paper, PPS22 and PPS1 supplement set out the broader picture. The government policy makes it clear that the wider environmental and economic benefits of renewable energy proposals and the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to maintain the reliability of energy supply are material considerations and should be given significant weight in determining proposals for planning permission. In addition, the sequential cascade of targets for reducing emissions from the national to the local is also a material consideration.

The case against the development

In summary the adverse effects of the proposal are:

- the impact of the proposal on the Clay Vales and Limestone Ridges landscape character area up to and including 2km from the application site contrary to Local Plan policies 1.8 and 3.12 and Structure Plan Environment Policy F; and
- that the proposal would not preserve the setting of two Grade II Listed buildings within 1km of the site and to this extent only would be contrary to Local Plan policy 1.23 and Structure Plan Environment Policy Q and would conflict with the relevant statutory test;

The case for the development

In summary, the case for the development and the benefits that would accrue are as follows:

- the proposal would comply with the Development Plan, specifically Local Plan policy 3.12, Structure Plan Implementation Policy A, RPG10 Policy RE6 and also with emerging policy as reflected in Draft RSS Policies SD1 and SD2;
- the proposal would be in line with national, regional and local policies for energy and it would make a significant contribution towards meeting the 82MW target for Dorset to 2010;
- the site is considered to be a suitable site for wind energy production and would serve electricity for most of the time estimated to meet the need of 5,392 domestic households per annum; and
- it would secure significant savings in CO2 emissions in the order of 15,000 tonnes per annum, as well as savings in NOx and SO2.

Furthermore, where appropriate with the imposition of appropriate conditions, the proposal is considered to comply with policy in respect to the following:

- in relation to the AONB and the remainder of the Clay Vales and Limestone Ridges character area other than those areas identified above with Local Plan policies 1.8 and 3.12 and Structure Plan Environment Policies F;
- in relation to impact upon Stourhead historic park and garden with Local Plan policies 1.31 and 3.12 and Structure Plan Environment Policy Q.
- in relation to sites of archaeological importance with Local Plan policies 1.8, 1.29 and 1.32 and Structure Plan Environment Policy S;
- it would preserve the setting of all listed buildings save for the two identified above;

- it would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas including Milton on Stour and in this respect therefore would comply with Local Plan policies 1.24 and 3.12 and Structure Plan Environment Policy Q and not conflict with the relevant statutory test;
- in relation to wildlife and ecology with Local Plan policies 1.8, 1.36 and 1.38 and Structure Plan Environment Policies C and D;
- in relation to radar and aircraft and the proposal with Local Plan policy 1.8 and Structure Plan Implementation Policy D;
- on ground water and the proposal would comply with Local Plan policy 1.8;
- in terms of viability with Local Plan policy 1.1 and Structure Plan Implementation Policy A;
- in relation to health with Local Plan policy 1.8 and Structure Plan Implementation Policy D;
- in relation to TV and radio reception with Local Plan policy 1.8 and Structure Plan Implementation Policy D;
- in relation to tourism with Local Plan policy 1.8 and Structure Plan Implementation Policy D;
- in relation to highway safety with Local Plan policy 1.8 and Structure Plan Implementation Policy D; and
- in relation to shadow flicker with Local Plan policy 1.8 and Structure Plan Implementation Policy D.
- Finally in relation to noise, although perhaps finely balanced the view is taken that with the appropriate imposition of conditions and a planning obligation regarding investigation, any issue on noise is not sufficient to warrant a refusal and to render the proposal contrary to policies 1.8 and 3.12 and Structure Plan Implementation Policy D.

Although some adverse effects have therefore been identified, these need to be considered in context with the type of development proposed, which would have an impact wherever it were located. On balance it is the Officer view that it would not directly affect landscapes with special designation and would not affect to a significant extent a large number of other principal views from within the landscape and beyond.

The contribution the scheme would make towards meeting regional and draft countywide targets for renewable energy production is a material consideration, which should be weighed in the balance. The proposal has the potential to contribute significantly to renewable energy targets for the South West and

Dorset and hence to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and climate change. This should be set against the adverse effects on the landscape and heritage listed above. In addition, the nature of this proposal is temporary and after its useful life it would be removed and the land restored to its former condition and any adverse impacts removed in their entirety.

On balance therefore, although there would be some impact on the landscape and heritage the scale and significance of that impact in this locality is not considered by the Officer to outweigh the substantial benefits of the scheme. The need for renewable energy outweighs the impact on the landscape and heritage of the proposal.

6. Recommendation: APPROVE subject to the following conditions and a planning obligation to address the local planning authority's costs in relation to the investigation of noise issues:

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: This condition is required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. With respect to any condition that requires approval of details to be obtained in writing from the Local Planning Authority the works and details thereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with that approval unless subsequently otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the development or work proceeds in accordance with agreed details in accordance with Implementation Policies A and D of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan.

3. (a) Other than in respect of the temporary construction compound hereby permitted, the permission hereby granted is for the development to be retained for a period of not more than 25 calendar years commencing on the date any electricity from the development is first applied to the grid, this date to be notified, in writing, to the Local Planning Authority, prior to this event first occurring.

(b) By no later than the expiry of that 25 calendar year period ('the Decommissioning Date'):

- (i) all the turbines forming part of the development hereby permitted shall permanently cease to apply electricity to the grid; and
- (ii) those turbines together with all above ground structures approved as part of this permission shall be removed from the application site.

(c) No later than six calendar months before the Decommissioning Date a scheme for the restoration of the application site shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval, in writing. The scheme shall in particular make provision:

- (i) for the removal of the turbines and all the above ground structures forming part of this permission;
- (ii) for the removal of at least 1 metre of each turbine base below

- ground;
- (iii) for the removal of any other equipment that can be associated with the development hereby permitted;
 - (iv) the restoration of the application site to its previous condition; and
 - (v) for the phasing of such restoration.
- (d) Upon approval, the scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved phasing details, provided that notwithstanding anything contained within the approved scheme the turbines and above ground structures approved as part of this permission shall in any event be removed no later than the Decommissioning Date.
- (e) In the event that no restoration scheme has been agreed by the local planning authority by the De-Commissioning Date then:
- (i) the turbines and other above ground structures hereby permitted shall in any event have been removed from the application site by the Decommissioning Date; and
 - (ii) at least the first metre of each turbine base below ground level shall be removed from the application site, the equipment associated with the development hereby permitted shall be removed from the application site and the application site restored to its former condition all in such a manner and within such a phased time frame as the local planning authority shall at any time by writing thereafter specify to the then owner of the land.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area in accordance with North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision) Policy 1.8 and Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan Environment Policy F.

4. The temporary construction compound hereby permitted shall be removed within 5 calendar years commencing on the date of this permission and the ground upon which it was situated restored to its previous condition within 6 calendar months of such removal.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area in accordance with North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision) Policy 1.8 and Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan Environment Policy F.

5. (a) If any one or more turbines hereby permitted ceases to be operational for a continuous period of 12 calendar months or such other period of time as may be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority ('the Cessation Date'):
- (i) within one calendar month of the Cessation Date a scheme for the restoration of that part of the application site shall be submitted in writing to the local planning authority, the scheme shall in particular make provision:
 - (A) for the removal of the turbine/s that has ceased to so operate;
 - (B) for the removal of at least 1 metre of the base below ground level of each of those turbines;
 - (C) for the restoration of that part of the application site to its previous condition; and
 - (D) for the phasing of such restoration.
 - (ii) Upon approval, the scheme shall be implemented in accordance

with the approved phasing details.

(iii) In the event that no restoration scheme has been agreed by the local planning authority within four calendar months of the Cessation Date:

(A) the turbine/s that have ceased to operate shall be removed from the application site within one calendar month thereafter; and

(B) at least the first metre of each turbine base forming part of the turbine/s that has ceased to operate shall be removed from the application site and the application site restored to its former condition all in such a manner and within such a phased time frame as the local planning authority shall at any time thereafter by writing specify to the then owner of the land.

(b) Arrangements shall at all times be made to ensure that the Council receives notification in writing:

(i) of the cessation of the operation of any one or more turbines hereby permitted;

(ii) of the re-commencement of the operation of any turbine that has ceased to operate; and

(iii) that any one or more turbines has cease to operate for a continuous period of 12 calendar months or such other period as has been agreed in writing by the local planning authority;

in each case within 7 calendar days of the event referred to occurring.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area in accordance with North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision) Policy 1.8 and Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan Environment Policy F.

6. Prior to the commencement of any part of the development hereby permitted a construction method statement which shall include details relevant to:

(a) the formation of the construction compound;

(b) the construction of the crane pads;

(c) the carrying out of foundation work;

(d) ensuring that any damage to on site archaeological remains (whether above or below ground) that are to remain in situ is avoided;

(e) the construction of the sub-station and control building hereby permitted;

(f) the cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway;

(g) the formation of the access tracks and any areas of hard standing;

(h) the safe disposal of surface material; and

(i) the provision of temporary site illumination,

shall be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the local planning authority. The development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved statement.

Reason: In the interest of amenity in accordance with North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision) Policy 1.8 and Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan Implementation Policies B, C and D.

7. Prior to the commencement of any part of the development hereby permitted details of the external finish and colour of the turbines hereby permitted

shall have been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details and there shall be no subsequent change to the finish or colouration of the turbines without the prior approval from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area in accordance with North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision) Policy 1.8 and Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan Environment Policy F.

8. Prior to the commencement of any building work relating to the sub-station hereby permitted samples of materials to be used in the construction and finish of the cladding of the roof and walls of the sub-station shall have been submitted to approved in writing by Local Planning Authority. The sub-station shall only be constructed in accordance with the approved sample materials.

Reason: To safeguard the character of the locality in accordance with Environment Policy F of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan and Policy 1.8 of the North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision).

9. All of the turbines' blades shall rotate in the same direction.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area in accordance with North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision) Policy 1.8 and Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan Environment Policy F.

10. Prior to the commencement of any part of the development hereby permitted a scheme shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to provide for archaeological observation and recording to take place during the development process, including (where appropriate) the observation and recording of any structure on the land which may be demolished (completely or in part) in the course of the development. The development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: The area is one of archaeological potential and it is important that any archaeological features and finds are properly recorded in accordance with Environment Policy S and Implementation Policy A of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan and Policy 1.29 of the North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision).

11. Prior to the commencement of any part of the development hereby permitted a scheme showing precise details for the provision and future maintenance arrangements of run off limitation measures (including the provision of balancing tanks, balancing ponds, infiltration basins, swales and any other similar measures that are proposed). ('The Run Off Limitation Measures') shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Run off Limitation Measures shall have all been completed in accordance with the approved scheme prior to the commencement of any other building works on the application site and thereafter the approved maintenance arrangements shall be followed at all times.

Reason: To minimise flooding and in the interests of the amenity of the area in accordance with Environment Policy M and Implementation Policies C and D of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan and Policy 1.8 of the North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision).

12. Prior to the commencement of any part of the development hereby permitted a scheme to deal with any potential contamination of the application site which shall in particular make provision to secure the following:

- (a) that the preparation of all reports and actions that may be required in relation to the scheme are undertaken by a consultant previously approved in writing by the local planning authority ('the Approved Consultant');
- (b) the production of a Site History Report by the Approved Consultant which shall, by reference to site layout drawings of a scale agreed by the Local Planning Authority prior to submission, include a history of the application site, past land uses, current and historical maps, site plans, locations of any known spillages or pollution incidents and the location and condition of old tanks, pits, fuel or chemical storage areas;
- (c) the submission to and approval by the local planning authority of a Site Investigation Report (based on the information contained in the Site History Report) by the Approved Consultant, in the event that either:
 - (i) the Appointed Consultant is of the opinion that contamination may be present in, on or near the proposed development area; or
 - (ii) the local planning authority provide written notification requiring the production of a Site Investigation Report, such Site Investigation Report to characterise and identify the extent of contamination, identify hazard sources, pathways and receptors and develop a conceptual model of the application site for purposes of risk assessment;
- (d) that prior to the commencement of any part of the development hereby permitted either:
 - (i) written notification has been received from the local planning authority confirming that no remedial works are required to be undertaken prior to such commencement; or
 - (ii) in the event that remedial works are required in relation to the application site, the Approved Consultant has submitted to and had approved in writing by the local planning authority a Sampling Strategy;
- (e) the provision to the local planning authority as soon as possible after it becomes available of all information that may be relevant to the determination as to whether, or the identification of any, contamination on the application site, including identification of any contamination that is found;
- (f) where contamination is found which in the opinion of the local planning authority, requires remediation the submission to and approval by the local planning authority of, a detailed Remediation Statement prepared by the Approved Consultant; such Statement to include the application of the approved Sampling Strategy and measures to prevent risk to future and neighbouring occupiers, the water environment and any other sensitive receptors when the application site is developed;
- (g) that no development occurs on the application site until:
 - (i) the local planning authority has confirmed in writing that it is satisfied that there is no contamination on the application site that requires

- remediation prior to the commencement of the development; or
 - (ii) all applicable measure(s) in the approved Remediation Statement have been implemented and the local planning authority has confirmed in writing that it is satisfied that all necessary remediation measures have been completed; and
- (h) that:
- (i) during the implementation of works relating to the provision of the development hereby permitted, on-going monitoring of the application site continues to identify any contamination in accordance with details submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to the commencement of any work on site; and
 - (ii) if, during work on the application site, contamination is encountered, then:
 - (A) such additional contamination is assessed by the Approved Consultant;
 - (B) a Remediation Scheme is submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; and
 - (C) no further work is undertaken on the application site until the local planning authority has confirmed that it is satisfied that all necessary remediation measures have been completed in accordance with the approved Remediation Scheme;
 - (iii) that within seven calendar days of completion of all works detailed in any approved Remediation Statement or Remediation Scheme a Remediation Completion Report has been submitted to the local planning authority by the Approved Consultant confirming that the Approved Consultant has supervised all the agreed remediation actions; and
 - (j) a timetable for the provision (as necessary) of the above steps,, shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development hereby permitted shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To safeguard the living conditions of future and neighbouring occupiers and to protect the water environment and other sensitive receptors in accordance with Environment Policy M and Implementation Policy C of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan and Policies 1.16 and 1.20 of the North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision).

13. Prior to the commencement of any part of the development hereby permitted, a scheme of a farmland bird habitat enhancement scheme to in particular include provision for:
- (a) skylark plots,
 - (b) the sowing of wild bird mixture on set aside farmland,
 - (c) conservation headlands and uncultivated margins to arable land
 - (d) measure(s) to secure the future retention of such provisions; and
 - (e) the time frames for such provision,
- shall have been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The development hereby permitted shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme and once provided those parts of the

approved scheme securing future retention shall thereafter be followed at all times.

Reason: To safeguard protected species in accordance with North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision) Policy 1.38 and Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan Environmental Policy D.

14. Prior to the commencement of any part of the development hereby permitted other than the Run Off Limitation Measures the first 17.5 metres of access crossing, measured from the nearside edge of the carriageway, shall be laid out, constructed, hardened and surfaced, to a specification previously agreed in writing with Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Transport Policies A, E and V, Environment Policies F and H and Implementation Policies A, D and E of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan and Policies 1.1, 1.8, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.7, 5.8, 5.11, 5.12 and 5.14 of the North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision).

15. Prior to the commencement of any part of the development hereby permitted a scheme showing the provision of a temporary vehicle parking area for site operatives, visitors, construction and delivery traffic that includes details of the works to reinstate the land upon substantial completion of the development hereby permitted shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The temporary vehicle parking area shall be constructed in accordance with the approved scheme at the same time as the first 17.5 metres of access crossing and reinstatement works shall be completed in accordance with the approved scheme within 3 calendar months of the substantial completion of the development.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Transport Policies A, E, F, G, H and V, Environment Policies F and H and Implementation Policies A, D and E of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan and Policies 1.1, 1.8, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.11, 5.14 and 5.17 of the North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision).

16. Before any part of the development hereby permitted is occupied or is brought into use and notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order) (with or without modification), the land shown for visibility purposes on Figure 12.5 of the ES shall be lowered to a height of not more than 0.600 metres above the level of the adjacent carriageway. Thereafter the area(s) specified shall be maintained and kept free from obstructions so that anything placed, built, planted or grown on it shall not be more than 0.600 metres above the level of the adjacent carriageway.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Transport Policies A, E and V, Environment Policies F and H and Implementation Policies A, D and E of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan and Policies 1.1, 1.8, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.11 and 5.14 of the North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision).

17. Prior to the commencement of any part of the development hereby permitted a scheme to avoid the instance of shadow flicker at the properties listed as being potentially exposed to such an effect from one or more of the turbines hereby permitted in Table 14.2 of the Environmental Statement (submitted as part of the application relating to the development hereby permitted) shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall in particular include details of:

- (i) the siting of photo cells and measures to control, reorientate or shut down any turbine(s) concerned;
- (ii) any additional planting proposed for the purpose of avoiding shadow flicker;
- (iii) details to secure the future maintenance including any necessary replacement of anything provided pursuant to sub-paragraphs (i) and (ii) above; and
- (iv) or any turbine producing shadow flicker effects at any dwelling to be shut down and its blades to remain stationary until the conditions causing such effects have passed, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority in relation to any specific occurrence.

All works identified within the approved scheme shall be completed prior to any part of the development hereby permitted being put into use and thereafter the development shall at all times be operated and maintained only in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of the occupants of residential properties in accordance with North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision) Policy 1.8 and Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Implementation Policy D.

18. Prior to the commencement of any part of the development hereby permitted a scheme that secures the prompt investigation and removal of any electromagnetic or other interference to television and radio reception, caused by the operation of the wind turbines or any other part of the development hereby permitted, shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The procedures set out in the approved scheme shall thereafter be followed at all times.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of the occupants of residential properties in accordance with North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision) Policy 1.8 and Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Implementation Policy D.

19. (a) Prior to the commencement of any part of the development hereby permitted, a scheme showing precise details of all external lighting, such scheme to in particular include:

- (i) the provision of 25 candela red lamps attached to the tops of the nacelle of each turbine hereby permitted;
- (ii) the appearance and details of supporting columns, siting, technical details, power, intensity, orientation and screening of the external lighting;
- (iii) details as to the timing of their provision; and
- (iv) details to secure the future maintenance including any necessary replacement; shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the

Local Planning Authority. The development shall only be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme and once provided the external lighting shall at all times thereafter be maintained only in accordance with the approved scheme.

(b) No additional external lighting other than that forming part of the approved external lighting scheme shall be installed on the application site

Reason: In the interest of the amenity of the area and public safety in accordance with Implementation Policies C and D of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan and Policies 1.8 and 1.19 of the North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision).

20. Prior to the commencement of any part of the development hereby permitted a detailed construction management scheme for off site highway works shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall in particular include:

(a) a traffic management plan for the routing of construction traffic to and from the application site, addressing in particular the movement of extraordinary loads,

(b) the arrangement to be made for any Highways Act Agreement that may be required; and

(c) the identification and provision for reinstatement of off site works not needed to be retained after the construction phase.

The development shall thereafter only be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Transport Policies A, E and V, Environment Policies F and H and Implementation Policies A, D and E of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan and Policies 1.1, 1.8, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.7, 5.8, 5.11, 5.12 and 5.14 of the North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision).

21. (a) Prior to the commencement of any part of the development hereby permitted details of the turbines to which this permission relates shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall in particular include:

(i) the manufacturer's warranted operational specifications of the turbine model to be used,

(ii) the overall height of the turbine to blade tip,

(iii) the height of the nacelle, and

(iv) the dimensions of the blade and details of the turbine foundations.

Subject to sub-paragraph (b) below, every turbine provided on the application site pursuant to this permission shall at all times accord with the approved details

(b) Notwithstanding anything contained in the approved turbine details pursuant to sub-paragraph (a) above, all the turbines to which this permission relates shall: be of a three bladed configuration, shall not exceed 120 metres high from base to blade tip, shall be of a semi-matt finish and shall not display any prominent name, sign, symbol

or logo on any external surfaces.

Reason: In the interest of amenity and to safeguard the character and appearance of the area in accordance with North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision) Policy 1.8 and Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan Environment Policy F.

22. Measurements and assessments according to condition 25 shall include measurement and assessment of Amplitude Modulation (AM) from the combined effect of the turbines in accordance with the procedures described in DIN 45645-1:1996, Determining noise rating levels from measured data, section 4.2.1 Impulse Adjustment. In case of specific complaints the measurement programme shall include periods that include the conditions causing AM as reported by the complainants. The time interval T shall be 10 min. The maximums levels, LF(t) shall be measured over 5 second intervals and all values averaged over the time interval T of 10 min. giving the value LFTeq as specified in the standard. The value Leq shall be measured over the time period T. If the difference LFTeq minus Leq is more than 2 dB the difference should be added to the LA90-level measured for the same 10 min period. LA90 shall be measured according to the guidance note. The results including all registrations and measurement conditions shall be provided to the local planning authority. Impulse adjustment according to this condition and any penalty for tonal noise shall both be added to the measured LA90-levels before comparing with the noise limits in condition 24. If the noise limits are exceeded actions shall be taken according to condition 25.

Reason: In the interest of amenity in accordance with North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision) Policy 1.8 and Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan Implementation Policy D.

23. (a) Construction and all other work relating to or necessary to facilitate the development hereby permitted, which is or might be audible from the boundary of any noise sensitive receptor, shall only take place between the hours of 07:00 - 19:00 on Monday to Friday inclusive, 09:00- 13:00 hours on Saturdays with no such working on a Sunday or any local or national public holiday ('the Construction Hours')
- (b) Outside the Construction Hours, work at the application site shall be limited to erection of the turbines hereby permitted, maintenance, emergency works, dust suppression and the testing of plant and equipment, or construction or other work that is not audible from any noise-sensitive property outside the application site.
- (c) The receipt of any materials or equipment for use in connection with any construction or other work on the application site, other than turbine blades, nacelles, and towers, is not allowed outside the Construction Hours, unless previously approved in writing by the local planning authority having been given a minimum of five working days notice prior to the occurrence of the proposed event.

Reason: In the interest of amenity in accordance with North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision) Policy 1.8 and Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan Implementation Policy D.

24. The rating level of noise imissions whether from the single or combined effects of the wind turbine generators forming part of the development hereby permitted when measured and calculated in accordance with the Informative Notes (which follow these conditions) annexed to this decision shall not exceed the values set out below. Where there is more than one property at a location the noise limits apply to all properties at that location.

‘Rating Level’ means noise level (LA90, 10m in dB) as measured in accordance with the attached Informative Notes plus any applicable penalty for tonal noise determined in accordance with the Informative Notes plus any applicable penalty for Amplitude Modulation determined in accordance with Condition 22.

Standardised wind speed at 10m height has the meaning defined in Condition 26.

Between the night hours of 23:00-07:00 hours (inclusive):

Location	Standardised Wind Speed at 10m height (m/s)								
	<=45	6	7	8	9	10	11	>=12	
Whistley Farm	43	43	43	44	47	51	54	57	57
Valhalla	43	43	43	44	46	49	53	56	56
Slait Farm	43	43	43	44	48	51	55	58	58
Old Farm West Bourton	43	43	43	43	44	47	50	52	52
Church Farm Dairy	43	43	43	43	43	44	46	49	49
Depley Farm	43	43	43	43	43	44	46	49	49
Bainley Hill Farm	43	43	43	43	43	44	46	49	49
All Other Locations	43	43	43	43	43	44	46	49	49

At all other times:

Location	Standardised Wind Speed at 10m height (m/s)								
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	>=12
Whistley Farm	38	40	43	45	48	50	53	55	55
Valhalla	38	40	42	46	48	51	53	55	55
Slait Farm	38	41	43	46	49	51	54	56	56
Old Farm West Bourton	40	41	43	46	48	50	52	53	53
Church Farm Dairy	37	38	39	41	42	44	46	48	48
Depley Farm	37	38	39	41	42	44	46	48	48
Bainley Hill Farm	37	38	39	41	42	44	46	48	48
All Other Locations*	37	38	39	41	42	44	46	48	48

*Refers to residential properties lawfully existing at the date of this consent.

Reason: In the interest of amenity in accordance with North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision) Policy 1.8 and Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan Implementation Policy D.

25. Upon either receipt of a request by the local planning authority or following any complaint relating to noise from any one or more of the wind turbines hereby permitted being received by the operator of the development hereby permitted, the operator shall, at its expense:

- (a) employ an independent consultant approved by the local planning authority to measure and assess the level of noise emissions from the wind turbine generators ('the Noise Consultant');
- (b) arrange for the Noise Consultant to provide in writing to the local planning authority for approval details of the measurement(s) and assessment(s) that it is intended will be undertaken, such details to accord with the procedures described in the Informative Notes included as part of this permission ;
- (c) carry out the measurement(s) and assessment(s) in accordance with the details that have been approved; and
- (d) report to the local planning authority the outcome of the measurement(s) and assessment(s) within eight calendar weeks of such a request being made or complaint being made or such other period as the local planning authority agrees in writing (as the case may be); such report to include full details as to the process followed in undertaking the assessment(s) and measurement(s) and an unedited copy of all data obtained, provided that if a consultant cannot be agreed or details approved within the time period contained in sub-paragraph (d) above, then after the expiry of that period, the operator shall in any event arrange at its expense for such measurement(s) and assessment(s) to be carried out in such a way and by such a person(s) and with such a time(s) as the local planning authority may specify in writing.

Reason: In the interest of amenity in accordance with North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision) Policy 1.8 and Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan Implementation Policy D.

26. The wind farm operator shall store wind speed and direction data, in 10 minute averaging periods, and provide such data to the local planning authority without any unreasonable delay upon receipt of a request by the Local Planning Authority such data to be provided in such a form as the local planning may specify. Wind speed and direction shall be taken from the nacelle anemometers, appropriately corrected for the presence of the turbine blades, and averaged over all turbines and converted to standardised 10m height assuming a ground roughness $z_0 = 0.05$. Upon receipt of a request from the Local Planning Authority the wind farm operator shall without any unreasonable delay provide a list of ten minute periods during which any one or more of the turbines hereby permitted was not in normal operation. 'Normal operation' is defined in the Informative Notes included as part of this permission.

Reason: In the interest of amenity in accordance with North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision) Policy 1.8 and Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan Implementation Policy D.

27. (a) No wind turbine hereby permitted shall be operated on the application site until a scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local

planning authority for monitoring noise levels at up to five selected residential locations (or at any other representative locations close to those properties that is agreed by the local planning authority), such scheme to secure that such monitoring takes place during at least a six calendar month period, such a period commencing with the earlier of:

(ii) the connection of any part of the development hereby permitted to the electricity grid; or

(iii) full operation of all the turbines hereby permitted on the application site, and not expiring until at least six calendar months commencing with the latest of those events ('the Monitoring Expiry Date').

(b) The duration of the monitoring referred to in sub-paragraph (a) above shall accord with details incorporated within the approved scheme unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority and be sufficient to provide comprehensive information on noise levels in a representative range of wind speeds and wind directions with all wind turbines hereby permitted operating,

(c) The monitoring referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) and (b) above shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved monitoring scheme and the results provided to the local planning authority in writing within four calendar months of the Monitoring Expiry Date, or such other period(s) as the Local Planning Authority otherwise requires in writing.

Reason: In the interest of amenity in accordance with North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision) Policy 1.8 and Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan Implementation Policy D.

NOTE 1: The applicant is advised that notwithstanding this consent Section 184 of the Highways Act 1980 requires the proper construction of vehicle crossings over kerbed footways, verges or other highway land. Before commencement of any works on the public highway Dorset County Council's Area Highways Manager (East) should be consulted to agree on the detailed specification. He can be contacted at the Area Office (East), Stour Park, Blandford St Mary, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 9LQ (Tel: 01258 450048).

NOTE 2: Any facilities for the storage of oils, fuels or chemicals shall be sited on an impervious base and surrounded by impervious bund walls. The volume of bunded compounds should be at least equivalent to the capacity of the tank plus 10%. If there is multiple tankage, the compound should be at least equivalent to the capacity of the largest tank or the combined capacity of interconnected tanks plus 10%. All filling points, vents gauges and sight glasses must be located within the bund. The drainage system of the bund shall be sealed with no discharge to any water course, land or underground charter. Associated pipe works should be located above ground and protected from accidental damage. All filling points and tank overflow pipe outlets should be detailed to discharge downwards into the bund.

NOTE 3: For the range of annual flow rate probabilities up to and including peak (or critical) 1% annual exceedence probability event, including the appropriate allowance for climate change (i.e. 30% uplift in peak flows), the developed rate and volume of runoff into any existing watercourse, or other receiving water

body, should be no greater than the existing (pre-development) rate and volume of runoff for the same event. The site layout and surface water drainage systems should be designed to cope with events that exceed the design capacity of the system, so that excess water can be safely stored on or conveyed from the site without adverse effects.

The intention to employ the use of Sustainable Drainage System (SuDs) options for surface water disposal from this site, in order to reduce the rate of run-off and to reduce pollution risks, is welcomed by the Environment Agency.

There must be no interruption to the surface water and/or land drainage system of the surrounding land as a result of the operations on site. Provisions must be made to ensure that all existing drainage systems continue to operate effectively.

NOTE 4: Under the terms of the Land Drainage Act 1991, the prior written Flood Defence Consent of the Environment Agency is required for any works (permanent or temporary) that could cause impediment to flow of an 'ordinary' watercourse. The need for Flood Defence Consent is over and above the need for planning permission. The applicant is advised to contact the Environment Agency on 01258 4833384 for further guidance.

Furthermore, in the event that any new surface water discharges will be made direct to a watercourse, the sewer/pipe should terminate in a properly constructed outfall for which the separate prior written consent of the environment Agency may be required.

NOTE 5: Materials described as 'uncontaminated excavated natural materials' are those which are incapable of being a source of water pollution. Materials to be excluded are biodegradable or putrescible materials including paper, cardboard, timber, plasterboard or related products, and any potentially polluting materials.

It is believed that the old Silton landfill contains non-inert materials, including large quantities of plasterboard and asbestos. For further information on the history of the site please contact Mr M Cape (Environment Officer) on 01258 483458.

Pollution Prevention During Construction

Safeguards should be implemented during the construction phase to minimise the risks of pollution and detrimental effects to the water interests in and around the site. Such safeguards should cover the following:

- Pumps used for pumping out water from excavations should be sited well away from watercourses and surrounded by absorbent material to contain oil spillages and leaks.
- Discharge of silty or discoloured water from excavations should be irrigated over grassland or a settlement lagoon be provided to remove

gross solids. The Environment Agency must be advised if a discharge to a watercourse is proposed.

- Storage of fuels for machines and pumps should be sited well away from any watercourses. The tanks should be bunded or surrounded by oil absorbent material (regularly replaced when contaminated) to control spillage and leakage.

NOTE 6: Nothing other than uncontaminated excavated natural material shall be tipped on the application site.

NOTE 7: The current status of the land can be seen from documentation in the ES.

NOTE 8: This Guidance Note is to be read with conditions 23-27 It further explains the conditions and specify the methods to be deployed in the assessment of complaints about noise emissions from the wind farm.

Part 1

(a) Values of the LA90,10min noise statistic should be measured at the property, using a sound level meter of IEC 651 Type 1, or BS EN 61672 Class 1, standard (or the equivalent relevant UK adopted standard in force at the time of the measurements) set to measure using a fast time weighted response. This should be calibrated in accordance with the procedure specified in BS 4142: 1997 (or the equivalent relevant UK adopted standard in force at the time of the measurements).

(b) The microphone should be mounted at 1.2 - 1.5 m above ground level, fitted with a two layer windshield or suitable equivalent approved by the local authority, and placed outside the property. Measurements should be made in 'free-field' conditions, so that the microphone should be placed at least 3.5 m but no further than 5 m away from the building facade or any reflecting surface except the ground. Measurements should not be taken from a location where noise from the turbine(s) generators might be reduced by the building in relation to which the measurements are being taken. Only where physical constraints render this not possible, measurement can be made within 3.5 m of reflecting surfaces, but these should still be as far as is practically feasible from reflecting surfaces. Any such deviations from standard practice shall be fully reported and the possible effects accounted for.

(c) The LA90,10min measurements should be synchronised with measurements of the 10-minute arithmetic average wind speed and with operational data from the turbine control systems of the wind farm or farms.

(d) The wind farm operator shall log average wind speed and wind direction data in 10 minute periods from the nacelle anemometers of each turbine, duly corrected for the presence of the rotating blades, to enable compliance with the conditions to be evaluated. Wind speed shall be averaged over the data from all turbines and 'standardised' to a reference height of 10 metres as described in ETSU-R-97 at page 120 using a reference roughness length of 0.05 metres. Any 10 minute period when one or more of the turbines was not operating normally should also be recorded. Normal operation should be taken to mean any period when the turbine power output is not significantly different from the reference

power curve, or power curve for noise reduced operation as appropriate. No information is required to be provided for individual turbines or on the nature of any abnormality or for any period during which noise monitoring is not taking place.

Part 2

(a) Noise measurements should be made over a period of time to provide not less than 100 valid data points as defined in sub paragraph (b) below. Measurements should also provide valid data points throughout a range of wind speeds that have previously been specified by the Local Planning Authority. In so specifying wind speeds the Local Planning Authority will have regard to those wind speeds which were most likely to have prevailed during times when any complainant alleges there was disturbance due to noise.

(b) Valid data points are those that remain after the following data have been excluded:

- (i) All periods during rainfall;
- (ii) All periods during which the measurement position is not within 45 degrees of being downwind of any wind turbine;
- (iii) All periods during which turbine operation was not normal (as defined in Part 1 paragraph (d)).

(c) A least squares, 'best fit' curve of a maximum 3rd order should be fitted to the data points and define the rating level at each integer speed.

Part 3

(a) Where, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority noise emissions at the location or locations where assessment measurements are being undertaken contain a tonal component, the following rating procedure should be used.

(b) For each 10-minute interval for which LA_{90,10min} data have been obtained as provided for in Part 1 a tonal assessment is performed on noise emissions during 2 minutes of each 10 minute period. The 2 minute periods should be regularly spaced at 10 minute intervals provided that uninterrupted clean data are available. Where clean data are not available, the first available uninterrupted clean 2 minute period out of the affected overall 10 minute period shall be selected. Any such deviations from standard procedure shall be reported.

(c) For each of the 2-minute samples the margin above or below the audibility criterion of the tone level difference, ΔL_{tm} , should be calculated by comparison with the audibility criterion given in Section 2.1 on pages 104-109 of ETSU-R-97.

(d) The margin above audibility is plotted against wind speed for each of the 2-minute samples. For samples for which the tones were below the audibility criterion or no tone was identified, substitute a value of zero audibility.

(e) A linear regression should then be performed to establish the margin above audibility at the assessed wind speed for each integer wind speed. If there is no apparent trend with wind speed then a simple arithmetic average shall be used.

(f) The tonal penalty is derived from the margin above audibility of the tone according to the figure below. The rating level at each wind speed is the arithmetic sum of the wind farm noise level, as determined from the best fit curve described in Part 2, and the penalty for tonal noise.

Part 4.

If the rating level is above the limit set out in the conditions, measurements of the influence of background noise should be made to determine whether or not there is a breach of condition. This may be achieved by repeating the steps in Part 2, with the wind farm switched off, and determining the background noise at the assessed wind speed, L3. The wind farm noise at this speed, L1, is then calculated as follows where L2 is the measured level with turbines running but without the addition of any tonal penalty: the rating level is re-calculated by adding the tonal penalty (if any) to the derived wind farm noise L1. If the rating level lies at or below the values set out in the conditions then no further action is necessary. If the rating level exceeds the values set out in the conditions then the development fails to comply with the conditions.

REASONS FOR DECISION / POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

N.B. These reasons and policy considerations may be modified to reflect the deliberations and conclusions reached by members of the development control committee.

1. In assessing the scheme, consideration was given to the environmental information provided in relation to it and to the adequacy of the documentation that made up the environmental statement.

In respect of criticisms made in representations concerning various issues relevant to the environmental information including the suitability of certain methodologies that were used (for example in relation to the acceptability of the approach to montages), perceived omissions (for example the absence of landscape capacity study and the identification of certain mitigation measures) and the accuracy and conclusions reached in respect of various assessments, in part, such criticisms were addressed by the provision of subsequent information. In so far as any purported issues were not specifically addressed in this manner it is considered that the information that made up the Environmental Statement was adequate having regard to the relevant legislative requirements in this respect.

2. The scheme has the potential to make a significant contribution towards renewable energy production for which there is a currently a clear need as reflected in existing and emerging energy policy (for example REvision 2010 - Empowering the region and Revision 2020), as well as resulting in substantial reductions in CO₂, SO₂ and NO_x emissions. It would also assist in meeting national, regional, local and emerging targets for the provision of renewable energy (e.g. policy RE1 of the emerging RSS reflects targets contained in Revision 2010 identifying that by 2010 the minimum onshore renewable energy target for Dorset to be 64-84 (MWe).

The scheme is therefore considered to comply with:

RPG10: policy RE6: support and encourage meeting national targets for: reduction in greenhouse gases (12.5% reduction below 1990 levels 2008 - 2012;

20% reduction from 1990 levels in CO2 emissions by 2010), 11-15% electricity production from renewable energy by 2010; encourage and promote greater use of renewable energy sources; have full regard to report recommendations 'Renewable energy assessments and targets in the SW');

Structure Plan policy: Implementation Policy A - schemes to support the principles of sustainable development; Energy Policy A - encouragement towards renewable energy schemes; to be assessed against environmental policies and the need to locate schemes as close as practicable to the resource to be used; Local Plan policy: policy 3.12 - the need to balance benefits of renewable energy against landscape impact and amenity issues (noise, shadow flicker and reflection); permission not being granted where there is overriding loss of landscape quality / overriding harm a site of acknowledged importance;

3. In respect of landscape and visual impacts, in terms of the Clay Vales and Landscape Ridges character area, the scheme would have significant impacts on the landscape from various viewpoints up to and including 2 km of the application site boundary (including various views from Bourton) such as to conflict with Development Plan policy:

Structure Plan policy: Environment Policy F - concerns maintaining and enhancing the Dorset landscape by the conservation and enhancement of natural and manmade features, respect for the particular characteristics of the local landscape and the encouragement of good design in the built environment.

Local Plan policy: 3.12: 1.8 - sets out criteria which will be used in determining planning applications. Considerations include impact on character, amenity, views of the countryside and noise.

Other than in those respects, it is however considered that in landscape/visual terms the scheme would comply with relevant policy (Environment Policy F, 1.8 and 3.12). In respect of lighting, with the incorporation of an appropriate condition, the impact is not considered to be unacceptable.

4. Assessed against the historic landscape and heritage it is considered that the scheme would not preserve the setting of two Grade II listed buildings within 1km of the application site having regard to their relationship with the surroundings (Manor Farmhouse and barn) and to this extent would be contrary to Development Plan policy, reflecting the relevant statutory duty:

Structure Plan: - Environment Policy Q - the architectural and historic heritage of the county should be safeguarded through the preservation of listed buildings and conservation areas and their settings;

Local Plan: - 1.23 - seeks to preserve the setting of a listed building and the contribution it makes to the local scene.

In all other respects (other listed buildings, historic parks and gardens, sites of archaeological importance and impact on Conservation Areas), it is however considered that notwithstanding any impact that might exist, the scheme would be acceptable and comply with Development Plan policy which reflect relevant statutory requirements:

Structure Plan: Environment Policy Q; S - schemes affecting locally important archaeological remains and their setting will be subject to special scrutiny.

Local Plan: 1.8, 1.23, 1.24 - the character and appearance of conservation areas should be preserved or enhanced; 1.29 - wherever possible locally important

archaeological remains should be preserved in situ unless the importance of the development outweighs their value; 1.31 - development will not be permitted where it would adversely affect the character, interest or setting of a historic park or garden, 3.12.

5. In respect of noise, the assessment is finely balanced. Whilst a number of uncertainties exist (particularly arising due to the close proximity of some of the proposed turbines and the extent of measurements undertaken), overall it is considered that the risk of any exceedence of ETSU limits would be likely to be small and limited and could adequately be addressed by way of conditions which would on balance be considered acceptable having regard to the risks.

Specifically with regard to Amplitude Modulation, the uncertainties that exist (in respect of its possible occurrence), would be sufficiently small to mean that it is considered that the scheme would not conflict with relevant Development Plan policy:

Structure Plan policy: Implementation Policy D - Local planning authorities should take into account the interests and amenity of local residents, visitors and neighbouring users in determining planning applications;

Local Plan policy: 1.8; 3.12.

6. In relation to any impact on local wildlife and ecological sites, having regard to relevant statutory requirements relating to biodiversity and all other relevant matters including national statements on evidence relating to collisions by bats and birds, it is considered that any impact that might arise could be adequately mitigated by way of suitable conditions and the scheme would in this respect therefore comply with relevant Development Plan policy:

Structure Plan policy: Environment Policy C - schemes which may adversely affect sites of nature conservation interest will only be allowed if the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the value of the site; D - schemes which may result in harm to a specially protected species or its habitat will be allowed if there is no alternative solution or if there are overriding reasons in the public interest.

Local Plan policy: 1.8; 1.36 - seeks to protect local sites of nature conservation interest; 1.38 - concerns development which would have an adverse impact on Protected Species and their habitats.

7. It is considered that there is no conclusive evidence to demonstrate that the scheme would interfere with the safe operation of radar and with the incorporation of a suitable condition to secure the provision of the minimum necessary lighting, would not undermine the safety of aircrafts and in this respect the scheme would accordingly comply with Structure Plan policy: Implementation Policy D and Local Plan policy: 1.8.

8. In relation to flooding and pollution, whilst recognising concerns regarding the proximity of a nearby landfill, with the use of suitable conditions, it is considered that the scheme would not increase the risk or extent of flooding in the area and would not lead to pollution of ground waters, and as such it is considered that it would comply with Local Plan policy 1.8.

9. In terms of viability, although the scheme would be on a site with a relatively low average wind speed when compared to other wind farms in the South West,

nevertheless having regard to relevant policy guidance (PPS22) and in the absence of compelling evidence to the contrary it is considered that the proposal would be acceptable in viability terms and comply with relevant Development Plan policy:

Structure Plan policy: Implementation Policy A;

Local Plan policy: 1.1 - Development will be permitted in cases where the proposal is compatible with the aims of the Sustainable Development Strategy.

10. The scheme would comply with Development Plan policy (Structure Plan policy - Implementation Policy D and Local plan policy 1.8) in relation to issues relating to health. In this respect, regard is had to national statements (PPS22) which identify that there is no evidence that ground transmitted low frequency noise from turbines is at a sufficient level to be harmful to human health and the absence of conclusive contrary evidence. Equally, it is considered that there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that risks associated with any of other identified health issues are such as to mean that the scheme would not be acceptable.

11. Whilst it is accepted that a scheme of this nature could cause electromagnetic interference, having regard to policy advice and the absence of clear evidence to the contrary it is considered that any such interference to TV and radio could be adequately addressed by the inclusion of a suitable condition, and the scheme would accord with Structure Plan policy D and Local Plan policy 1.8.

12. With regard to tourism, whilst there is some evidence to suggest that specific individuals may opt to avoid locations where turbines are present, overall the evidence is considered inconclusive and that the presence of the scheme could equally be perceived by some as providing tourism opportunities. Overall, it is considered that there is no conclusive evidence that demonstrates that the scheme would harm tourism, and in respect of this issue the scheme is considered to accord with Structure Plan policy - Implementation Policy D and Local Plan policy 1.8.

13. In the context of access and highway safety issues, statutory consultees have indicated that the scheme is acceptable subject to the imposition of suitable conditions and advice in PPS22 is that wind turbines should not be treated differently to other highway distractions. Whilst recognising concerns expressed in respect of horses, there is no statutory requirements for separation distances for turbines from public rights of way and the topography is generally open in the locality. Overall it is considered that the scheme is acceptable in access and highway terms and would comply with Structure Plan Policy D and Local Plan policy 1.8.

14. No exceptional circumstances have been identified in relation to occupiers of those few properties in the locality which might be affected by shadow flicker. In so far as any such incidence may occur it is considered that this is a situation that can be suitably mitigated by way of a condition and in this respect the proposal accords with Structure Plan policy D and Local Plan policy 1.8.

Conclusion

Although therefore it is considered that the scheme does create some adverse effects (in the context of landscape and impact on settings of listed buildings) and in those respects would be contrary to relevant Development Plan policy, overall it is considered that any such harm is outweighed by the potential of the scheme to contribute significantly to relevant renewable energy targets, to reduce carbon dioxide and other harmful emissions all being relevant to the issue of climate change.

In reaching this decision the policies in the Development Plan for the area, which currently comprises the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan 2000 and the North Dorset District Wide Local Plan (First Revision) 2003, were taken into account.

This includes specifically the following policies:

Local Plan:

- 1. 1 Sustainable Development Strategy
- 1.29 Arch. Remains of Local Importance
- 1.31 Historic Parks & Gardens
- 1.33 Landscape Character Areas
- 1.36 Site of Nature Cons. Importance
- 1.38 Protected Species & Their Habitats
- 3.12 Renewable Energy
- 1. 6 Development in the Countryside
- 1. 8 Standard Assessment Criteria
- 1.19 Lighting Standards
- 1.20 Contaminated Land
- 1.23 Setting of Listed Buildings
- 1.24 Character of Conservation Areas

Structure Plan:

- EN.A Spec/Classified Areas/Ramsar Sites
- EN.C NCIs & Geological/Geomorph. Sites
- EN.D Specially Protected Species/Habitat
- EN.F Maint'nce/Enhance. of Landscape
- EN.Q Architectural & Historic Heritage
- EN.S Local Arch. Remains/Setting
- I.A Sustainable Development
- I.D Security, Safety & Amenity
- S.I Development Outside Settlements

COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT

The attention of the Applicant/developer is drawn to the fact that development pursuant to this planning permission may **not** lawfully commence unless and until **all** conditions requiring the consent, agreement or approval of schemes and/or details have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning

Authority. The Applicant/developer should be aware of their responsibility in this regard. If you have not already done so, you are advised to put arrangements in place for the timely submission of these requirements and to check that there are no omissions in terms of the details required. Failure to do so may render the development totally unauthorised and could result in **Enforcement Action** being taken by the Council.

APPENDIX 1

	Dorset		Offshore		Total Region	
	MW	MW	Homes	MW	Homes	Homes
Shoreline wave	0 (0)	0 (0)	0	1 (2)	750	0
Offshore wave	0 (0)	5 (5)	11,000	5 (5)	11,000	0
Tidal Barrage	0 (0)	0 (0)	0	0 (28)	0	0
Tidal Stream	0 (0)	1 (1)	750	1 (1)	750	0
Small-scale Hydro	0.1(0.1)	0 (0)	0	9 (9)	4,750	50
Solar PV	0.3(0.3)	0 (0)	0	2 (2)	500	75
Energy Crops/FR Straw	5 (7)	0 (0)	0	73 (100)	144,750	9,750
Anaerobic Digestion	0 (1)	0 (0)	0	0 (7)	0	0
Poultry Litter	2 (2)	0 (0)	0	15 (15)	30,250	4,000
Landfill Gas	0 (1)	0 (0)	0	10 (14)	20,000	0
Energy from Waste	10 (10)	0 (0)	0	46 (46)	96,250	21,100
					66,500	
Onshore wind (Wind res. +/- LSA)	6 (30)	0 (0)	0	32-38 (252)	0-79,000	12,500
Offshore wind	40-60 (75-153)	0 (0)	0	319-415 (788-1694)	209,750-272,750	26,250-39,500
	0	50 (50)	38,250	50 (50)	38,250	0
Totals	64-84 (127-205)	56 (56-56)	50,000	563-673 (1316-2225)	623,250-698,750	73,750-86,750

Notes

The figures in the 'Homes' column represent the estimated number of homes that could be supplied by the equivalent amount of electricity generated by each source (rounded to nearest 250). The figures assume average electricity consumption per home of 4,000 kWh and assume appropriate load factors for each technology. The load factors take account of the intermittent nature of a number of the renewable technologies.

Throughout the South West as a whole there are just over 2 million homes. Reaching the lower end of the target range could therefore supply the equivalent of nearly a third of the homes in the South West. The regional target for the South West is 595 MW.

Bracketed figures represent the accessible resource for each technology. For wind the bracketed figures include the range of accessible economic resource after and before the landscape sensitivity assessment. For the totals (in MW) the bracketed figures include the range of accessible economic resource after and before the landscape sensitivity assessment.

As an example of the level of development this target may require, assuming an average wind turbine size of 1.3MW in clusters of around 10 turbines (clusters may be larger or smaller), the South West as a whole may need between 22-32 wind clusters to make a reasonable contribution towards the regional target.

The rationale to the assessment of on-shore wind is derived from a landscape sensitivity analysis undertaken by Land Use Consultants. As a consequence the total potential resource of 153MW has been discounted by 50% to reflect landscape sensitivity including the AONB, thereby reducing the total to 75MW. The 40-60MW range was adopted to reflect issues raised during the consultation, and in particular the smaller scale environmental impacts associated with individual proposals and public acceptability. It notes that assuming an average generating capacity of 1.3MW, between 31 and 46 turbines would be need by 2010.