

MINUTES OF: THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 28th November 2007

Present: Councillor S Pawson (in the Chair)
Councillors L Barnes, Cheetham, Driver, Eaton, Haworth,
Lamb, Neal, Nuttall, Robertson and Steen

In Attendance: Linda Fisher, Executive Director of Regulatory Services
Neil Birtles, Senior Planning Officer
Philip Mepham, Interim Environmental Health Officer
Peter Jepson, Ecologist – Lancashire County Council
Jenni Cook, Committee Officer
Caroline Brennan, Clerical Officer

Also Present: Councillor Challinor and approximately 100 members of the public and 2 representatives of the press

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillor Swain (Councillor Steen substituting) and Councillor Thorne (Councillor Driver substituting).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to consider whether they had personal and/or prejudicial interests in the application to be discussed at the meeting. The following interest was declared:

Councillor Haworth declared a personal interest in all applications on the agenda by virtue of his employment with a builder's merchant.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items for consideration.

APPLICATION FOR CONSIDERATION

**4. APPLICATION NUMBER 2007/125
ERECTION AND OPERATION OF 3 WIND TURBINES WITH ASSOCIATED
SUBSTATION, MET MASTS AND ACCESS
AT: LAND AT REAPS MOSS, BACUP**

The Senior Planning Officer introduced the application and briefly summarised the content of his report. He outlined the application and consultation responses received and advised Members of the Planning Policy reasons that had given rise to the recommendation of refusal of the application. The Senior Planning Officer outlined the reasons for refusal as and briefly discussed each one:

1. Green Belt
2. Landscape and Visual Impact

3. Ecology/Hydrology
4. Badgers
5. Failure to satisfactorily complete a Section 106 Planning Obligation

Within the Late Items Report, it was noted that the Applicant had submitted additional information, which included an offer to reduce the height of the turbines from 125m to 110m and have the habitat management plan run for 10 years beyond the date of de-commissioning. The Applicant had also requested a deferral of determination of the application in order that the additional information could be reflected in the Officer's report. The Senior Planning Officer stated that the additional information had been forwarded to key consultees for comment. A written response had been received from Natural England in respect of impacts on blanket bog, carbon budget and landscape/visual issues. It did not wish to make any further response that would affect the outcome of the application. Lancashire County Council (Landscape) had similarly commented verbally and Lancashire County Council's Ecological Advisor was in attendance at the meeting. The Senior Planning Officer advised that deferral would not result in a change to the recommendation for refusal. Members agreed to continue and determine the application.

In accordance with the Procedure for Public Speaking which was amended for this meeting only, the following people spoke against the application:

Mrs Denise McGowan, Friends of the South Pennines
Mr Alan Heyworth, Peat Specialist
Mr Michael Bridge, Local Resident
Mr Geoff Watkins, Local Landowner
Mr Kevin White, Local Resident

The following people spoke in favour of the application:

Mr Robin Parker, Elected Member of Rochdale Borough Council
Mr Barnaby Fryer, Local Resident
Ms Kim Thompson, Local Landowner
Mr Andrew Crossley, Steward to the Lord of the Manor of Rochdale
Mr Graham Harding, Local Schoolteacher

Councillor Challinor, the Councillor for Greensclough Ward and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration also spoke on the application.

The Applicant's representative, Mr Vickram Mirchandani, spoke on the application and answered questions from Members.

Members discussed the application and raised concerns in respect of the effect on the environment, wildlife, ecology, tourism and use of the moors. However it was noted that these concerns must be balanced against the need to consider alternative forms of energy-generation for future generations.

The Senior Planning Officer advised members of his concerns in respect of the feasibility of the proposed habitat management plan. In response to queries by Members the Interim Environmental Health Manager advised that he could not substantiate a refusal of the application on the grounds of the noise detriment likely to be experienced by local residents. At the request of

Members, Mr Peter Jepson, the Lancashire County Council Ecologist, provided Members with clarification and information on peat and blanket bog issues.

A proposal was moved and seconded to refuse the application. It was agreed that a named vote would be carried out.

Voting took place on the proposal the result of which was as follows:

Councillor	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTENTION
L Barnes	✓		
Cheetham	✓		
Driver	✓		
Eaton	✓		
Haworth	✓		
Lamb	✓		
Neal		✓	
Nuttall	✓		
Pawson	✓		
Robertson		✓	
Steen	✓		
Total	9	2	0

Resolved:

That the application be refused for the reasons set out in the report with the following amendment to reason 3, paragraph 6:

The Applicants ability to provide an adequate scheme of mitigation/ management in this instance is questioned, amongst other reasons, as a significant portion of the peat deposit lies outside the red-edged and blue-edged land of the application. As a consequence of the above a further concern is the potential of the blanket bog CO2 storage to be reduced through drying out and oxidation of the peat, or even for the bog to become a net source of CO2.

A proposal was moved and seconded that the Todmorden Moor and Crook Hill applications within Calderdale and Rochdale be objected to, due to their cumulative impact.

Voting took place on the proposal, the result of which was as follows:

Councillor	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTENTION
L Barnes	✓		
Cheetham	✓		
Driver	✓		
Eaton	✓		
Haworth	✓		
Lamb	✓		
Neal		✓	
Nuttall	✓		
Pawson	✓		
Robertson		✓	

Steen	✓		
Total	9	2	0

Resolved:

That Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council and Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council be advised that Rossendale Borough Council objects to permission being granted for the Todmorden Moor and Crook Hill Windfarm proposals due to their cumulative impact.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 9.45pm