

Graeme Thorpe

From: Brereton, Steven [Steven.Brereton@lancashire.gov.uk]

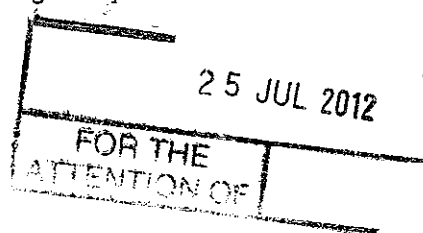
Sent: 25 July 2012 11:55

To: Graeme Thorpe

Cc: Lorimer, Elliott

Subject: RE: Crawshaw Farm 3/2012/0060

Hi Graeme



Reducing the proposed wind turbine's blade tip height to 22.5m ('micro scale', ref. *Forest of Bowland AONB Renewable Energy Position Statement*) would have a beneficial effect on the significance of likely landscape and visual impacts. In comparison with the initial proposal for a 29.2m blade tip height wind turbine, the smaller turbine would be visible over a noticeably smaller area. In particular, a long section of Back Lane would lose visibility of the turbine and areas around Tenter Hill, Gaughey Hill, Wood House Lane, Townfield Plantation and Pain Hill Moor would also lose visibility. Where the turbine would be visible it would appear as a less dominant and notable feature in the landscape (e.g. photomontage 1). In addition, the micro scale of the turbine would be more appropriate for the medium scale of the landscape. Locating the turbine to within less than 100m of the nearest farm building as is now proposed would also establish a much stronger visual relationship with the property that it provides power to (e.g. photomontage 3).

The reduced turbine scale and more appropriate location would also have beneficial effects on the significance of likely cumulative landscape and visual impacts – a smaller and less prominent turbine would be seen in combination with existing development. Three other wind energy developments could be seen in combination with the Crawshaw Farm wind turbine:

- a) Laythams Farm single wind turbine, 15m hub height, 1.7km to the north west.
- b) Fellside Farm, 9m hub height, 5.6km to the north.
- c) Throstles nest, 20m hub height, 9.6km to the north east.
- d) Mason House Farm, 18m hub height, 7.6km to the south.

b) – d) above would have cumulative impacts of **slight** significance with the proposed turbine due to the micro scale of development, intervening vegetation and the relatively substantial separation distances between them. The more distant turbines when seen in combination with the one that the viewer was closest to, would appear as very minor features in a broad view.

Regarding Laythams Farm wind turbine, cumulative impacts would be more significant as it would be located 1.7km from the proposed wind turbine. The existing and proposed wind turbines would be seen together in simultaneous, successive and sequential views particularly from public rights of way and elevated areas to the north. The open nature of much of the landscape would ensure that there was a clear line of site between them. Set against this however would be the mitigating impacts of the turbine's micro scale and intervening vegetation. Taking all these issues into account, it seems likely that the cumulative impacts of Laythams Farm wind turbine and the proposed wind turbine would be of **minor – moderate** significance.

25/07/2012

Whilst there would be real benefits in landscape terms from reducing the blade tip height of the proposed wind turbine and locating it closer to Crawshaw Farm, it must be accepted that within an area of approximately 0.75km radius from the turbine, there would be localised landscape and visual impacts of **minor – moderate** significance. The wind turbine would likely appear, particularly in near views from public rights of way, as a notable industrial structure in what is a tranquil moorland fringe landscape largely free of tall industrial structures. This would alter the local landscape character and significantly affect the landscape amenity experienced from the nearby public rights of way. The local landscape character would become one with wind energy development although given the micro scale of the proposed turbine and the limited cumulative impacts outlined above, this would not be the case at greater distances where the landscape character would essentially remain unchanged.

Overall, the reduced extent of turbine visibility, appropriate turbine scale, stronger visual relationship between the turbine and Crawshaw Farm and limited cumulative impacts with other wind energy development all indicate that the revised wind turbine would likely have landscape and visual impacts of **slight – minor** significance although as highlighted above there would be more significant localised impacts which cannot be fully mitigated. Despite these localised effects, the overall landscape and visual impacts of the proposed wind turbine would not be contrary to national and regional landscape policy and the purposes of the AONB designation would not be compromised.

Should the authority be minded to approve the application, I recommend that consideration be given to having a slightly darker grey surface finish than usual as the wind turbine would be seen in many views against Beatrix Fell, Dunsop Fell and Low Fell rather than the skyline. A slightly darker colour should aid the wind turbine's assimilation into the landscape.

I hope you find these comments helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss them further.

Regards

Steve

Steven Brereton
Senior Landscape Architect
Landscape Unit
Lancashire County Council
Tel Nr: 01772 534135 (direct)
Mobile Nr: 07557 030544
www.lancashire.gov.uk

