

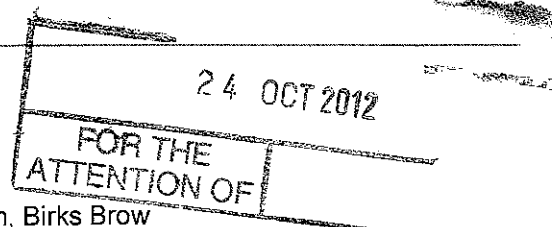
Graeme Thorpe

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

Sent: 24 October 2012 13:08

To: Graeme Thorpe

Subject: RE: 3/2012/0765, single wind turbine at Old House Farm, Birks Brow



Hi Graeme

Regarding the application for a single wind turbine at Old House Farm, Birks Brow I am unable to complete my assessment of landscape and visual impacts due to a number of significant weaknesses and omissions with the applicant's Landscape and visual impact assessment. The principal of these are summarised below:

- the photomontages are of little use as the applicant has not provided any viewing requirements for them e.g. size of image and viewing distance, the vertical scale of the landscape appears to be overly compressed making the wind turbine appear smaller than it would be in reality and there is an insufficient range of scenarios; only images taken with a wide angle lens have been provided rather than technically correct 50mm panoramic images and 75mm single frame images. There are some close range photomontages but details of the lens focal length has not been provided which limits their usefulness. I have checked one photomontage – 13.1 – on site to validate its accuracy and gain a better understanding of how the photomontages represent the landscape. To my surprise I found that the photomontage was extremely inaccurate appearing to have been constructed from at least two images that had been very crudely stitched together. In fact, some of the landscape features shown in the photograph are in completely the wrong place. In principle it is commendable that the applicant has provided more than 10 photomontages but the use of four similarly located viewpoints represents something of a wasted opportunity to illustrate the proposals and surprisingly there are no viewpoints beyond 1.0km from the proposed wind turbine. Scottish Natural Heritage guidance for visual representation of wind farms which, the applicant claims to have used, requires as a minimum a technically correct 50mm image for the construction of photomontages. Unfortunately the applicant's choice of a camera that has a reduced-size sensor and a 28mm lens means that this is not possible. This combination results in image distortion and under representation of elevation in the landscape by a factor of 3. I have to draw attention to these issues because I consider that photomontages are an important aid to making judgements on acceptability of impacts. Studies show that the general public in particular tend to place great reliance on photomontages to gain an understanding of proposed wind energy development. With this in mind, **it is essential that photomontages are as accurate and representative as possible of what the human eye would see to avoid misleading anyone considering the effects of the proposed wind turbine application**. Finally, it is not only the general public that places much reliance on the photomontages - the applicant uses them to support his judgements too.
- the OS background mapping on the ZTV map is too blurred to be readable.
- the assessment of the landscape sensitivity of the Moorland Fringe landscape character type that the site lies within - "*medium to low sensitivity*" - is unsupported. According to the *Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Energy*

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Development in Lancashire, February 2005 (Lancashire County Council) study, this landscape character type is deemed to have ***moderate to high*** landscape sensitivity.

- no cumulative ZTV mapping has been provided.
- the methodology for ZTV production has not been provided and the photomontage production methodology is inadequate.
- the assessment of visual impacts lacks detail and is inconclusive. Receptors are identified but the consideration of the likely change in their view or the significance of change is inadequate.
- there is no assessment of the proposals against the key tests of landscape planning policy

Due to the issues outlined above I do not think it would be appropriate to determine the application. As an absolute minimum, accurate usable photomontages should be provided together with clear ZTV mapping (for the turbine on its own and in combination with other wind energy development) and a detailed explanation of the methodology used to produce these visual aids.

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

Regards

Steve

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From: Graeme Thorpe [<mailto:Graeme.Thorpe@ribblevalley.gov.uk>]
Sent: 16 October 2012 13:05
To: Brereton, Steven
Subject: RE - 3/2012/0402/P & 3/2012/0539/P
Importance: High

Hi Steve,

Just wondered if you had had chance to look at these yet ?

Thanks,

Graeme Thorpe BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI |
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