



Graeme Thorpe
Planning
Ribble Valley Borough Council

Email: ecology@lancashire.gov.uk
Your ref: CONECO/3/2012/0954
Our ref: 03/12/0954/ASM/ASP/RS
Date: 2nd November 2012

Dear Graeme Thorpe,

Ecological comments

Planning Application No: **3/2012/0954**

Proposals: **Erection of 1no. 20kW Wind turbine with a tip height of 27.1m and all associated works**

Location: **Lower Gazegill**

District: **Ribble Valley**

Thank you for your consultation in respect of the above planning application.

It seems reasonably unlikely that the proposed development would have any significant ecological impacts provided the **planning condition** recommended below is attached to any approval:

- Vegetation clearance works, site preparation, vehicle movements associated with the development, development work or other works that may affect nesting birds (including ground nesting birds) will not be carried out between March and August inclusive, unless the absence of nesting birds has been confirmed by further surveys or inspections.

JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1. LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY

In determining this application, the requirements of the following legislation, planning policies and guidance should be addressed:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
- The National Planning Policy Framework, 2012 (NPPF)

- Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System (DEFRA 01/2005, ODPM 06/2005).
- North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021, Policies EM1 and DP7.
- Environmental Protection / Nature Conservation policies of the Local Plan.

A planning condition is necessary to ensure compliance with the above legislation, policies and guidance.

2. BATS (EUROPEAN PROTECTED SPECIES)

The blades of the proposed turbine appear to be 50 metres from features likely to be used by bats, such as waterbodies, buildings, hedgerows, trees, suitable foraging habitat etc. As long as a buffer of 50 meters from these features to the turbine is maintained, the risk of the turbine to bat populations is likely to be minimal (with reference to Natural England guidance).

3. BIRDS

The proposed turbine is not within an area identified as supporting bird populations sensitive to wind turbines (RSPB & Lancashire Wildlife Trust, 2008) or in an area highlighted as being important for bird populations (RSPB). This combined with the small scale of development, and the nature of the habitat on the site and surrounding area, indicates that the risk to bird populations sensitive to wind energy developments is low. Unless other consultees have evidence to the contrary it would therefore be disproportionate to require bird surveys/assessments.

Habitats on the site may have the potential to support nesting birds, including ground nesting species. If Ribble Valley Borough Council is minded to approve the application it needs to be ensured that works associated with the development do not impact on nesting birds. A planning condition is recommended above to address this matter.

The above comments are based on a review of documents submitted with the planning application as well as a review of ecological records, maps and aerial photographs accessible to Lancashire County Council.

The above comments represent the professional opinion of an ecologist and do not constitute professional legal advice. You may wish to seek professional legal interpretation of the relevant wildlife legislation cited above.

I hope these comments are helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Stevens
Ecologist
Lancashire County Council