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| APPLICATION NO | PA/2014/0297 |
| APPLICANT | Mr P Maw, APM Partners |
| DEVELOPMENT | Planning permission for the installation of a small-scale 5kW wind turbine (18.465m hub height) |
| LOCATION | Roxby Hall Farm, 4 South Street, Roxby |
| PARISH | ROXBY |
| WARD | Broughton and Appleby |
| CASE OFFICER | Andrew Law |
| SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION | Grant permission subject to conditions |

REASONS FOR REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE At the discretion of the Head of Development Management

POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework: Paragraph 97 – to help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, local planning authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources.

Paragraph 98 – when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should:

- not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and also recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and
- approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should also expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas.

North Lincolnshire Core Strategy: Policies CS1, CS2, CS3, CS5 and CS18

North Lincolnshire Local Plan: Policies DS1, DS21, RD2, LC7 and IG9

Supplementary Planning Document: Planning for Renewable Energy Development

CONSULTATIONS

Highways: No objection.

Historic Environment Record: No objection.

Environmental Health: No objection subject to a condition.

Ecology: No objection subject to a condition.

Joint Radio Company: No objection.

Ofcom: No objection.

Natural England: No objection – the proposal is unlikely to affect any statutorily protected sites or landscapes. The proposal offers the potential for biodiversity enhancement.

NATS: No objection.

Anglian Water: No objection following assessment of radio system.

Ministry of Defence: No objection.

Civil Aviation Authority: No objection.

Robin Hood Airport: No objection.

PARISH COUNCIL

No objection.

PUBLICITY

Neighbouring properties have been notified and a site notice posted. One letter of objection has been received, and comments made questioning why the neighbours weren't consulted on the previous proposal for the existing wind turbine at the site.

ASSESSMENT

The application site is a piece of agricultural land, associated with Roxby Hall Farm, located in the open countryside outside of Roxby. This is an agricultural field in a rural area and has an existing vertical axis wind turbine sited in it at present. This turbine was granted planning permission in 2010 (PA/2010/0108) in order to generate renewable energy to support the existing farming operation. The existing turbine has failed to perform as expected and has experienced technical problems in strong winds. This application seeks planning permission to erect a horizontal axis turbine in the field to replace the existing turbine.

The main issues in the determination of this planning application are the principle of the development, and its impact on the character and appearance of the open countryside and upon residential amenity.

Local plan policy DS21 (Renewable Energy) applies and states that proposals for the generation of energy from renewable resources will be permitted provided that:

- (i) any detrimental effect on features and interests of acknowledged importance, including local character and amenity is outweighed by environmental benefits; and
- (ii) proposals include details of associated development, including access roads and other ancillary buildings, and their likely impact on the environment.

The proposal is for a replacement wind turbine which is of a more traditional horizontal, three-blade design with a slender tower standing 18m high with blades 2.75m long. This gives an overall height to blade tip of 20.75m. This is a difference of 10.05m from the existing turbine standing at an overall height of 10.7m to blade tip. The replacement turbine is proposed to offset the energy usage of the farm and generate new income to re-invest in the upkeep of the farm. The proposed turbine is a proven model which will work in this location, unlike the previous turbine which has failed. The turbine will support the existing agricultural business and provide them with a renewable source of energy; this will reduce their energy bills and reduce their carbon footprint. The turbine will produce approximately 14,600 Kwh of electricity per annum; 70% of this will be used on site and the rest will be exported to the grid. The impact of the proposed development upon the rural landscape and any designated sites/landscape is discussed in the following paragraph.

The application site is located in an area with protected ironstone reserves; however the single turbine proposed would not sterilise the ironstone deposits in the area and as such would not contravene policy IG9 of the North Lincolnshire Local Plan. Furthermore the land around the proposed wind turbine will remain in agricultural production, which will safeguard the Ironstone Gullet designation. The proposed replacement turbine will be located 25m to the south-east of the existing turbine and will not be located close to any designated sites of ecological or landscape value. Natural England has confirmed that the proposal is unlikely to affect any statutorily protected sites or landscapes. The nearest listed building is Roxby Hall Farmhouse, a grade II listed dwelling located 222m to the north-west. There are intervening buildings between the proposed replacement wind turbine, including a cluster of bulky, utilitarian agricultural buildings belonging to the applicant's farm. Given the separation distances involved (222m) and the existence of intervening buildings, the proposed replacement wind turbine is considered to preserve the character, appearance and setting of the listed building known as Roxby Hall Farmhouse.

The existing turbine is visible from Winterton Road (A1077) to the west and south-west and from Brackenholmes Road to the south of the site. This is largely due to the relatively open landscape in which the turbine is sited, devoid of any distinctive landscape or natural features. When approaching the site from the south and south-west (along Brackenholmes Road) the proposed replacement wind turbine will be viewed in the foreground, with the backdrop of Roxby directly to the north. From the west (from Winterton Road) the land rises slightly in a south-west to north-east direction, and the proposed wind turbine will be visible, however it will be viewed close to the built framework of Roxby to the north, together with a small area of woodland. It is worth noting that telegraph poles traverse the site in a south to north direction, therefore there are some existing man-made features within the local landscape, so again the wind turbine will be viewed in conjunction with these telegraph poles and not in isolation (within the open countryside). Although the replacement wind turbine will be markedly taller than the existing, it will have a slimmer tower and will be more traditional in design. In visual terms the removal of the existing bulkier wind turbine and its subsequent replacement with a more streamline (albeit taller) model is welcomed in this case. The proposed replacement wind turbine is not considered to affect any long-distance or key views in this part of the open countryside.

In light of the above it is conceded that the environmental landscape against which the replacement wind turbine is proposed is relatively flat and open, thereby resulting in a visually prominent feature, particularly given its height. However it should be noted that landscape character is not a static picture and is ever evolving as a result of both man's influence and natural forces. The fact that the existing wind turbine, with a height of 10.7m to blade tip, is visible within the surrounding landscape will effectively mean that the

proposed replacement turbine (at 10m higher and 25m to the south-east) will be visible. In assessing whether the visual impact is acceptable, it is necessary to take a balanced view, weighing up the extent of any impact and the harm it would bring against the public benefits of renewable energy, which would be to mitigate climate change. In the wider spatial context the turbine would be viewed in the foreground with the built context of Roxby immediately to the north and with the cluster of trees to the north-west. It is worth noting that appropriate choice of turbine colour can ensure that the proposed development can assimilate with the prevailing sky colour, this enables greater assimilation with the surrounding rural landscape.

Residential amenity

Turning now to the impact on residential amenity, the nearest residential property is located 160m to the north-west. Environmental Health have raised no objections on noise level grounds, and this takes into account proximity to existing residential properties. There are dwellings located within 130° either side of north relative to the turbines. However there are no dwellings located within 10 rotor diameters of the proposed turbine (27.5m in this case) therefore the proposed development is not considered to give rise to loss of residential amenity through the effects of shadow flicker. Turbines can cause flashes of reflective light which can be visible for some distance. It is possible to reduce the flashing but it isn't possible to eliminate it. Careful choice of blade colour and surface finish can help reduce the effect with grey, semi-matt finishes being the most appropriate. The recommendation of condition 6 will ensure that the tower and the blades are finished in an appropriate colour to reduce the potential for flashes of reflective light. The nearest public right of way is along Brackenholmes Road, located 120m to the west of the proposed replacement wind turbine. At this distance the proposed replacement turbine is considered to be clear of the fall over distance recommended in the Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph 16) for houses, this is stated as the height of the turbine to the tip of the blade plus 10%. Whilst this guidance is specific to the proximity of turbines to houses, it provides a safeguarding distance nonetheless.

Summary

Both local and national planning policy are supportive of measures that reduce carbon emissions. Indeed the National Planning Policy Framework states that 'local planning authorities should approve applications for renewable or low carbon energy if the impacts are (or can be made) acceptable' (NPPF 10, paragraph 98). In this application the wind turbine has been sited away from residential properties to ensure that there would be no adverse impact in terms of noise and shadow flicker. In terms of the visual impact the development would not adversely affect any key or long-distance views and whilst it will be visible, in the context of the flat, relatively open landscape, the turbine would not have a significant adverse effect on the character of the area or views of the surrounding countryside. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION Grant permission subject to the following conditions:

1.

The development must be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason

To comply with section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2.

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: PA/2014/0297/01, PA/2014/0297/02, 0140-AD-00367 and EVNH_5kW_18.3M_A_501.

Reason

For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3.

This permission shall endure for a period of 25 years from the date when electricity is first exported from the wind turbine to the electricity grid ("First Export Date"). Written notification of the First Export Date shall be given to the local planning authority no later than 14 days after the event.

Reason

For the avoidance of doubt.

4.

No later than 12 months prior to the end of this permission, a decommissioning and site restoration scheme shall be submitted for the written approval of the local planning authority. The scheme shall make provision for the removal of the wind turbine and associated above-ground works approved under this permission and details of the depth to which the wind turbine foundations will be removed. The approved scheme shall be fully implemented within 12 months of the expiry of this permission.

Reason

To protect visual amenity in the area.

5.

The existing vertical axis turbine shall be removed from site before the horizontal axis turbine hereby approved is connected to the electricity grid.

Reason

To protect visual amenity in the area.

6.

The blades and tower of the wind turbine hereby permitted shall be finished in a grey colour which shall thereafter be retained.

Reason

To safeguard the character and appearance of the countryside and to allow the development to assimilate into its countryside setting, in accordance with policies RD2 and DS1 of the North Lincolnshire Local Plan.

7.

The turbine hereby approved is the Evance 5Kw Wind Turbine model, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

Reason

To define the terms of the permission and to allow the local planning authority to assess whether an alternative model of wind turbine is appropriate in this countryside location, in the interests of safeguarding residential amenity.

8.

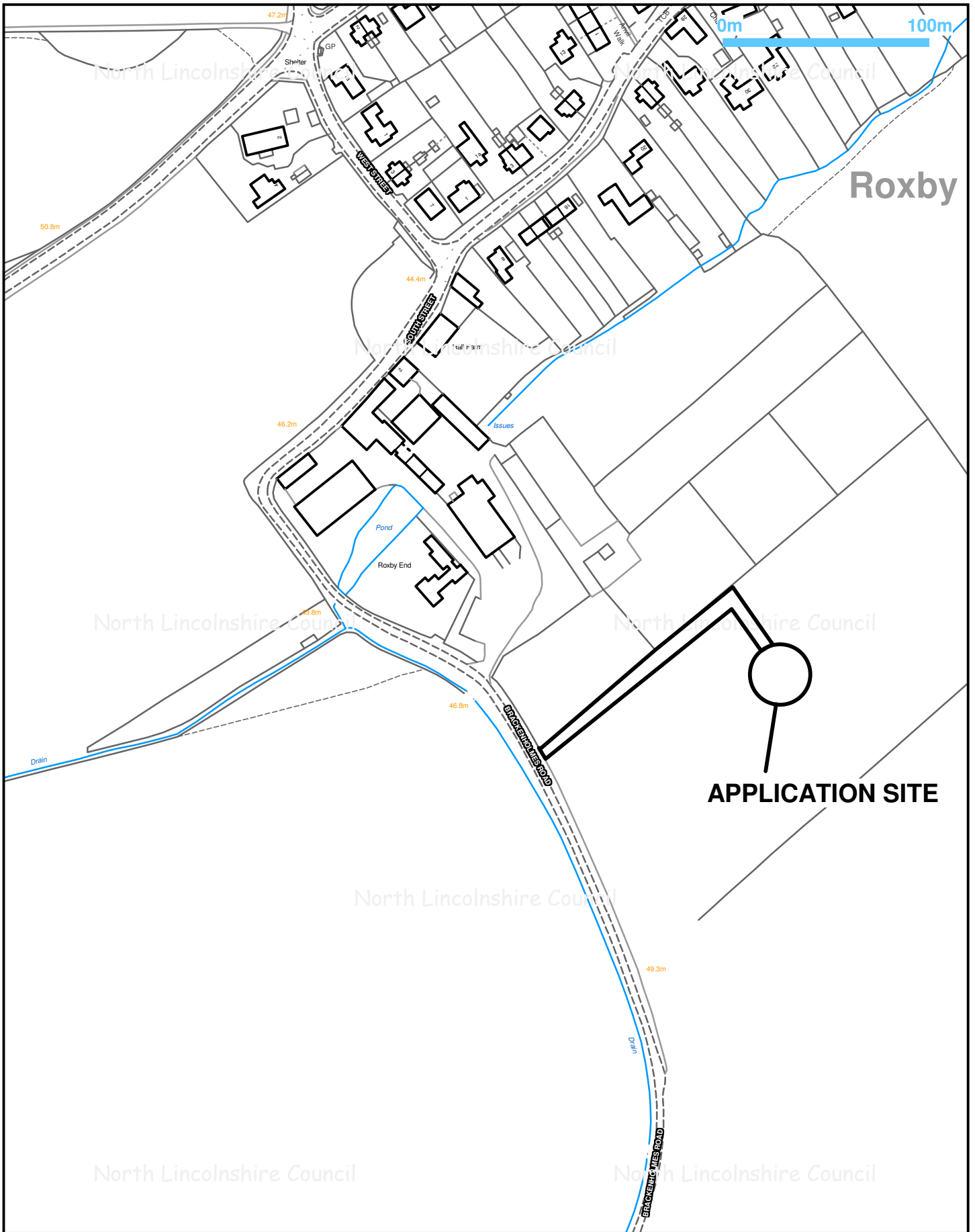
If the wind turbine hereby permitted ceases to be operational for a continuous period of 12 months, it shall be dismantled and removed from the site, and that part of the site shall be restored in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority no later than 2 months from the said period of 12 months.

Reason

To prevent the retention of development that is not being used for its intended purpose, in the interests of visual amenity, in accordance with policies RD2 and DS1 of the North Lincolnshire Local Plan.

Informative

In determining this application, the council, as local planning authority, has taken account of the guidance in paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework in order to seek to secure sustainable development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.



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Director of Places
Peter Williams
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PA/2014/0297 Proposed turbine Not to scale

