

**7 DCSW2008/2058/F - INSTALLATION OF SMALL DOMESTIC WIND TURBINE, LITTLE LLANAFON FARM, DORSTONE, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR3 6AT.****For: Mr M Gibbins, Little Llanafon Farm, Dorstone, Hereford, HR3 5AT.****Date Received: 8 August 2008 Ward: Golden Valley North Grid Ref: 32528, 41545****Expiry Date: 3 October 2008**

Local Member: Councillor PD Price

**1. Site Description and Proposal**

- 1.1 Little Llanafon Farm lies to the south of the B4348 between Peterchurch and Dorstone. The site is accessed to the east of the existing stone barn that abuts the roadside which leads onto a concrete forecourt area where the farmhouse lies at right angles to the west and various outbuildings further south. There is an orchard of mature trees to the north-west of the outbuildings. The land falls gradually to the south-west from the roadside to the lower adjoining agricultural land where the River Dore runs west to east along the south-west boundary. The agricultural land is accessed through metal gates to the south of the barns. The land provides a hedgerow to the south-west along with mature trees to the south and east. Neighbouring dwellings are Llandore Bungalow to the west and Llanafon Lodge to the east. The site lies within open countryside and is also described as Principal Settled Farmlands within the Landscape Character Assessment.
- 1.2 The proposal seeks to erect a small domestic wind turbine (a Skystream 3.7) to the west boundary of the agricultural parcel of land. The Skystream will be mounted on a 10.56m galvanised steel tower with the three light pastel blue blades forming a 3.72m swept area. The overall height to the tip of the blade is 12.41m.
- 1.3 Supporting information was submitted with the application for the proposed turbine in terms of assessing noise, landscape and visual impact, safety and ecology.

**2. Policies****2.1 Government Guidance**

- PPS22 - Renewable Energy
- PPG24 - Planning and Noise

**2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan**

- Policy S1 - Sustainable Design
- Policy S2 - Development Requirements
- Policy S7 - Natural and Historic Heritage
- Policy S11 - Community Facilities and Services
- Policy DR4 - Environment
- Policy LA2 - Landscape Character and Areas Least Resilient to

		Change	
Policy NC1	-	Biodiversity and Development	
Policy CF4	-	Renewable Energy	

### 3. Planning History

3.1	SH940190PF	Change of use of general farm building to Class B1 Workshops	- Approved 23.03.94
	SH961005PF	Change of use of existing barn to holiday cottage/ annexe	- Approved 02.10.96
	DCSW2005/2396/F	New front entrance and porch	- Approved 30.08.05
	DCSW2005/2454/F	Demolition of existing outbuildings, new holiday let residence. Ancillary outbuildings site support facility. 6KW wind turbine. New access drive. New treatment plant. Agricultural land to residential	- Withdrawn 19.09.05
	DCSW2006/0537/F	Replacement of existing corrugated sheet barn with new building to provide garage, domestic workshop, mower store, w.c. and storage	- Approved 12.04.06

### 4. Consultation Summary

#### Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 Defence Estates - No objection to the proposal, subject to notifying the MOD of progression of works to verify that it will not adversely affect defence interests.

#### Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 The Traffic Manager raises no objections due to the distance from the Public Highway.
- 4.3 The Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards raises no objection.
- 4.4 Conservation Manager observations are as follows:-

“Little Llanafon Farm lies adjacent to Great Llanafon Farm on the south side of the B4348, approximately half a kilometre to the east of Dorstone. The farms are on the floor of the Golden Valley, with the land falling gently to the south-west, towards the River Dore. The housing and outbuildings associated with both farms form quite a significant group of buildings adjacent to the main road. Open pastoral fields lie between the buildings and the river. This area is described as Principal Settled Farmlands in the Landscape Character Assessment.

The proposed site for the wind turbine is approximately 50 metres to the south of the orchard at the rear of Little Llanafon Farm and it is adjacent to a field hedgerow that runs from Little Llanafon Farm to the River Dore. There is a group of trees between the orchard and the proposed site for the wind turbine, but the hedgerow itself is quite low and there are no hedgerow trees within its southern section.

The principal viewpoints to consider are views from the B4348 and from Dorstone. There are no public rights of way in the immediate vicinity of the site. When travelling along the B4348 from the south-east (Peterchurch), there are only very limited glimpsed views of the proposed site due to its location on low-lying ground and the presence of field hedgerows along the B4348, which screen views. In addition, it was evident that the buildings associated with Little Llanafon Farm, Great Llanafon Farm and Dorstone are the predominant structures in the view up the Golden Valley. The wind turbine would read as an insignificant element in relation to these buildings. When travelling from Dorstone towards the site, along the B4348, there would be some views of the wind turbine. However, it is considered that the wind turbine would have negligible adverse impact, due to the fact that it is relatively small scale (of similar size to electricity poles) and it would be viewed against a backdrop of agricultural land and trees, not on the skyline. The wind turbine would not have an adverse visual impact when viewed from more elevated viewpoints within the valley, because again, it would be seen against a backdrop of agricultural land and trees and it would appear as a very insignificant element in the broad views of the valley.

In conclusion that from a landscape perspective, the proposed wind turbine would not have an unduly harmful impact on the rural landscape. If permission is granted for this development, it is recommend that some new native species hedgerow trees should be planted at intervals within the section of field hedgerow to the south of the turbine site. Such trees, when mature, would draw the eye away from the turbine and would not obstruct the wind flow from the west.”

## **5. Representations**

5.1 In a letter dated 29th August 2008, accompanied with a scaled site location plan, further information for siting a small wind turbine and photomontage of wind turbine was submitted. The following main points was raised:-

- The proposed location plan is more than 130m from the nearest neighbour.
- Photomontage shows the nearest point where the site is visible from public highway some 500m west on the B4348.
- Turbine position can be seen to the right of electricity pole against the backdrop of trees to the eastern boundary.
- Proposed location has taken into account optimum operational location as well as visual impact on neighbours and public.
- The location has been tested by anemometer over 12 months and is an appropriate location.
- The site is not elevated, the valley acts to funnel the wind and the relatively open western aspect will harness the prevailing wind.
- The location is away from the public highway and neighbouring properties.
- No public footpaths in the area.
- The field is a Caravan Club Certificated Location and has already a certain amount of activity.
- Alternative locations have been considered, however, trees, buildings and neighbours to the north, east and south restrict maximum benefit of wind turbine.

- 5.2 Dorstone Parish Council object to the application due to the location, visibility within the Area of Great Landscape Value, visibility to neighbour, continual noise level. No information on wind speed to assess the noise created over a 24 hour day, 7 day week period.
- 5.3 One letter of objection was received from Miss M. Minton, Llandore Bungalow, Dorstone, Herefordshire HR3 6AT. The following main points was raised:-
- The wind turbine is directly in front of the windows of my bungalow.
  - Proposal will have a serious visual impact not only for my property but surrounding area as part of the Golden Valley.
  - 12m wind turbine will be easily seen from B4348 which runs behind my bungalow and cause distraction to vehicle drivers.
  - Height of turbine difficult to screen by means of tree planting, the use of which could be counterproductive.
  - Concerns of noise of turbine when active.
  - Turbine could be positioned elsewhere without affecting efficiency, minimising the impact to neighbourhood.
- 5.4 One letter of support was received from Mr. P. Gunn-Wilkinson, (for the Golden Valley Environment Group), Lyonshall Barn, Stockley Hill, Peterchurch, Herefordshire, HR2 0ST. The following main points was raised:-
- The Golden Valley Environment Group (GVEG) tries to facilitate positive action in the community to reducing the rate of carbon emissions and climate change globally.
  - The major difference in the current application arises from its location in the valley and the proximity of a neighbouring bungalow.
  - Mast is some 130 metres from the adjoining property and the noise impacts are generally abated within 30-40 metres.
  - The landscape and visual impact of this mast and blades should not be too intrusive as it is partially hidden by trees.
  - The application supports national and local policy objectives to reduce CO2 emissions.

The full text of these letters can be inspected at Southern Planning Services, Garrick House, Widemarsh Street, Hereford and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

## **6. Officer's Appraisal**

- 6.1 The main issues are considered to be the impact upon landscape and visual effects of the proposal, biodiversity and neighbouring amenity.
- 6.2 Planning Policy Statement 22: "Renewable Energy" sets out the Government's objectives to cut its carbon dioxide emissions by some 60% by 2050 with real progress by 2020. The Government has already set a target to generate 10% of UK electricity from renewable energy sources by 2010. Increased development of renewable energy is vital to facilitating the delivery of the Government's commitments on both climate change and renewable energy. It advises that Local Planning Authorities should adhere to the key principles in their approach to planning for renewable energy. Paragraph 1(vi) states, "small-scale projects can provide a limited but valuable contribution to overall outputs of renewable energy and to meeting energy needs both locally and nationally and (viii) states, "development proposals should demonstrate any environmental, economic and social benefits as well as how any environmental and

social impacts have been minimised through careful consideration of location, scale, design and other measures”.

- 6.3 Policy CF4 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan underpins the objectives of national policy in helping to deliver the targets and goals for renewable energy and climate change, which are central to achieving sustainable development, while continuing to protect the countryside. Proposals for the production of renewable energy will be permitted provided that outside of nationally designated sites and areas, there would be no significant detrimental effect upon the character of the particular landscape qualities of that location and would not significantly impact upon the amenity of neighbouring residents, through noise, odour or electro-magnetic interference.
- 6.4 The proposed Skystream 3.7 has been sited through careful consideration whilst taking into account the optimum operational location. It is considered to be an elegant, quiet and modern design, which meets EC standards. Over the last 12 months the proposed location has been tested by anemometer (a tower to assess maximum wind speed). This is presently in position albeit different in appearance to the proposed turbine. To achieve maximum output from a wind turbine, it is essential it is sited away from obstructions with clear exposure to the prevailing wind. The position is not in an elevated site, the low-valley acts to funnel the wind and as such the open western aspect will harness the prevailing wind in order to achieve approximately 2,000 kw of electricity per year. In total the turbine will save the emission of 1.136 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year, a 20% saving based on the West Midlands average CO2 emissions per household of 5.7 tonnes a year. The expected lifetime of the turbine of 15 years will save the emission of 17 tonnes of CO2.
- 6.5 The Conservation Manager has considered the position of the turbine within the landscape in particular the views along B4348 from Peterchurch and Dorstone, as well as considering the biodiversity of the site. In terms of landscape the location of the turbine would not have an unduly harmful impact on the rural landscape due to its relatively small scale, being of a similar size to electricity poles, when viewed against the backdrop of agricultural land and trees, and low lying position away from the skyline. Moving the turbine from the hedgerow into the middle of the field would not be beneficial given that the field is used for caravans. Any other position in terms of being closer to trees or outbuildings to the north or south, would create obstacles and reduce the efficiency and output of electricity. Nonetheless, the Conservation Manager suggests that some new native species hedgerow trees should be planted at intervals to the south field hedgerow of the turbine site.
- 6.6 The concerns of the Parish Council and neighbour are noted. The landscape is not a designated Area of Great Landscape Value, nevertheless, the Conservation Manager has considered its impact within the Principal Settled Farmland and has no objection to the proposed location. The views to the south from Llandore Bungalow would be partially obscured by orchard trees and given the land falls south-westerly, it is considered such visual aspect of the turbine some 130m away would be negligible so as not to cause harm upon neighbouring amenity.
- 6.7 The Environmental Health & Trading Standards Officer raises no objection to the wind turbine. The turbine is designed to operate at low revs per minutes (RPM) specifically to minimise noise. The data submitted suggests that sound levels would be 45 decibels at 12m high with a wind speed at 8mph. Increase in wind speed of 20mph would be around 55 decibels. The higher the wind speed the wind turbine would be less audible due to the background sound of the wind. The distance from Llandore Bungalow is some 130m as explained at 6.6, the sweeping sound of the three blades

would be generally abated within 30 to 40 metres of the turbine and given the land lies south of the Class II road, the background noise of passing traffic and the wind, would not cause further harm in terms of noise levels upon the neighbouring amenity.

- 6.8 The proposal has demonstrated how environmental and social impacts have been minimised through careful consideration of landscape and amenity of neighbouring residents, as such the proposal satisfies national and local plan policies in achieving sustainable development whilst protecting the countryside and residential amenity.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. **A01 (Time limit for commencement (full permission) )**

**Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.**

- 2. **B01 (Development in accordance with the approved plans )**

**Reason. To ensure adherence to the approved plans in the interests of a satisfactory form of development and to comply with Policy DR1 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.**

- 3. **G13 (Tree planting )**

**Reason: In order to maintain the visual amenity of the area and to comply with Policy LA6 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.**

**Informatives:**

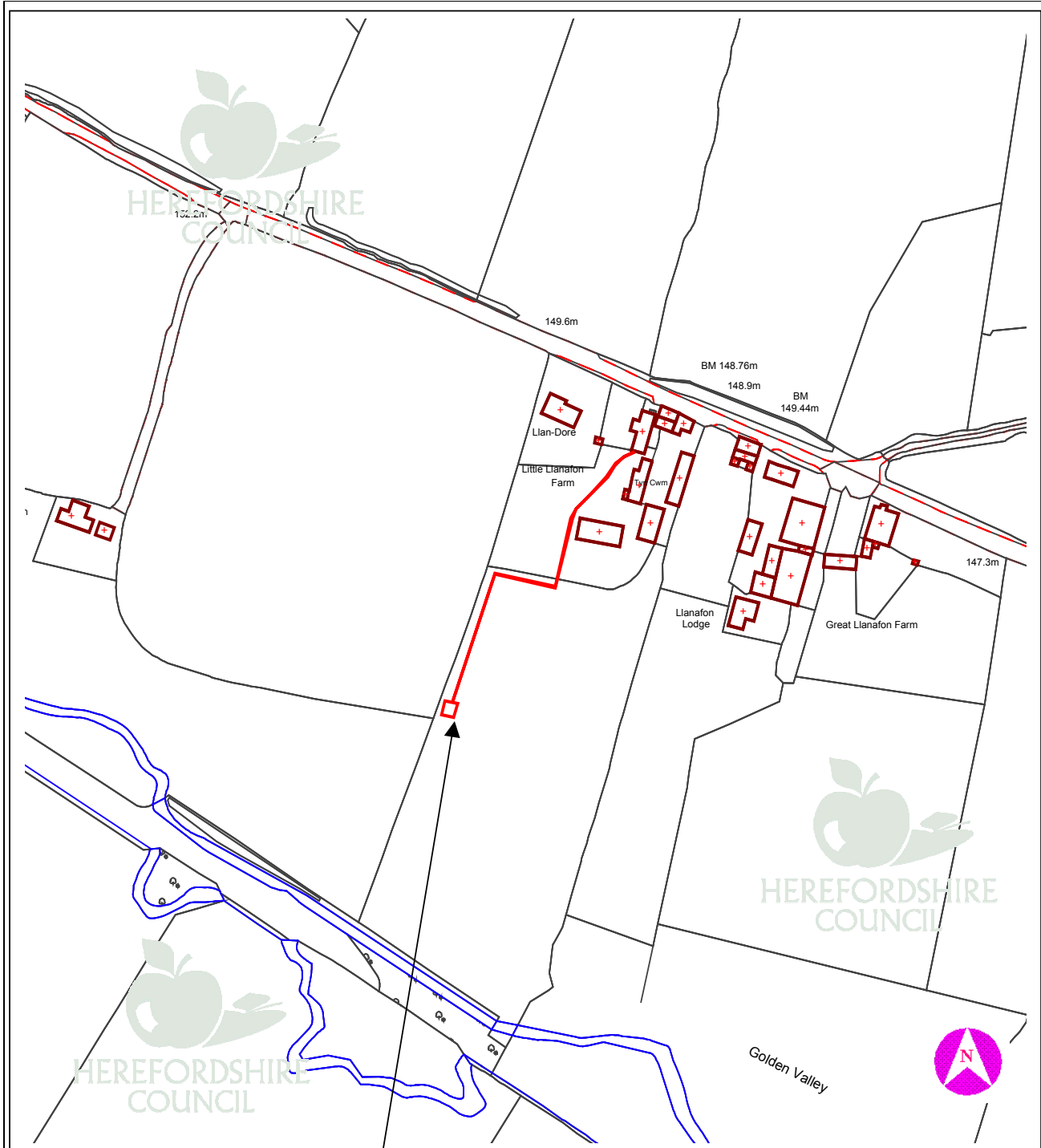
- 1. **The applicant is requested to notify the Defence Estates Safeguarding Officer the date construction starts and ends, the maximum height of any construction equipment and latitude and longitude of the turbine in order that it is plotted on the flying charts.**
- 2. **N19 - Avoidance of doubt - Approved Plans**
- 3. **N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of Planning Permission**

Decision: .....

Notes: .....

**Background Papers**

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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**APPLICATION NO:** DCSW2008/2058/F

**SCALE :** 1 : 2500

**SITE ADDRESS :** Little Llanafon Farm, Dorstone, Herefordshire, HR3 6AT

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