ITEM

Application Reference	**DC/088104**
Location:	Bradshaw Trees Barn Chatterton Lane Mellor Stockport SK6 5NF
PROPOSAL:	Erection of wind turbine to serve dwelling
Type Of Application:	Full Application
Registration Date:	09/03/2023
Expiry Date:	04/05/2023
Case Officer:	Mark Burgess
Applicant:	Mr P Sanderson
Agent:	MCD Construction Consultancy

Update following Marple Area Committee

Marple Area Committee members agreed that planning permission be granted for the development, however the proposed development is considered to be a departure from the development plan where decisions do not fall within the delegation status for an Area Committee. The authority to determine the application in this instance sits with Planning and Highways Regulation Committee.

The proposals are therefore presented as a departure to the development plan and before Planning and Highways Regulation Committee at the meeting on Thursday 6 July for a decision.

DELEGATION/COMMITTEE STATUS

Marple Area Committee - Application called-up by Councillor Senior.

Planning and Highway Regulation Committee - Departure from the Development Plan.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

Full planning permission is sought for the erection/installation of a demountable domestic wind turbine to serve an existing residential dwellinghouse at Bradshaw Trees Barn, Chatterton Lane, Mellor.

The proposed wind turbine would be sited within a field to the South East of and outside the residential curtilage of the existing dwellinghouse. The proposed wind

turbine would have a hub height of 9.0 metres, a maximum height of 11.8 metres to the tip of the blades, a maximum pole width of 0.4 metres and a rotor diameter of 5.6 metres. The proposed wind turbine would be erected at the highest point of the applicants land, some 300.0 metres above sea level.

The application is accompanied by the following supporting documents :-

- Planning Statement.
- Landscape Visual Impact Assessment.
- Planning Support Pack.
- Product Specification.
- Desktop Survey Report.

The plans and drawings submitted with the application are appended to the report.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site is located on the Southern side of Chatterton Lane in Mellor and comprises a field to the South East of in the ownership and outside the curtilage of a residential dwellinghouse at Bradshaw Trees Barn.

Open field/agricultural land adjoin the site to the South and West and beyond an access track to the East. Chatterton Lane lies beyond open fields/agricultural land to the North. The nearest neighbouring residential properties are sited a distance from the site, at Bradshaw Trees Farm to the North West, Lower Bradshaw Farm to the North East and Shiloh Hall/Shiloh Hall Farm to the South East.

POLICY BACKGROUND

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications and appeals to be determined in accordance with the Statutory Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Statutory Development Plan for Stockport comprises :-

- Policies set out in the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review (saved UDP) adopted on the 31st May 2006 which have been saved by direction under paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; and

- Policies set out in the Stockport Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Core Strategy DPD) adopted on the 17th March 2011.

The application site is allocated within the Green Belt, as defined on the UDP Proposals Map and is located within the Mellor Moor Landscape Character Area. The following policies are therefore relevant in consideration of the application :-

Saved UPD policies

- LCR1.1 : LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS
- LCR1.1A : THE URBAN FRINGE INCLUDING THE RIVER VALLEYS
- EP1.9 : SAFEGUARDING OF AERODROMES AND AIR NAVIGATION FACILITIES
- GBA1.1 : EXTENT OF GREEN BELT
- GBA1.2 : CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT IN GREEN BELT

Core Strategy DPD policies

- CS1 : OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE
- SD-1 : CREATING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
- SD-3 : DELIVERING THE ENERGY OPPORTUNITIES PLAN – NEW DEVELOPMENT
- SD-5 : COMMUNITY OWNED ENERGY
- CS8 : SAFEGUARDING AND IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT
- SIE-1 : QUALITY PLACES
- SIE-3 : PROTECTING, SAFEGUARDING AND ENHANCING THE ENVIRONMENT
- SIE-5 : AVIATION FACILITIES, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER BROADCAST INFRASTRUCTURE
- CS9 : TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT
- T-3 : SAFETY AND CAPACITY ON THE HIGHWAY NETWORK

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF, initially published in March 2012 and subsequently revised and published in July 2021 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

In respect of decision-taking, the revised NPPF constitutes a 'material consideration'.

Paragraph 1 states *'The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied'.*

Paragraph 2 states '*Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise'.*

Paragraph 7 states '*The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development'.*

Paragraph 8 states '*Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives) :-*

a) An economic objective

b) A social objective
c) An environmental objective'

Paragraph 11 states '*Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means :-*

c) Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless :-

> *i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
>
> *ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole'.*

Paragraph 12 states '……..*Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local Planning Authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed'.*

Paragraph 38 states '*Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way…... Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible'.*

Paragraph 47 states '*Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing'.*

Paragraph 219 states '*existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)'.*

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

NPPG is a web-based resource which brings together planning guidance on various topics into one place (launched in March 2014) and coincided with the cancelling of

the majority of Government Circulars which had previously given guidance on many aspects of planning.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- DC066788 : Discharge of conditions 2,4,7,11,11,12,14,15,16 of planning permission DC052636 : Discharged – 03/12/2019.

- DC053784 : Non-material amendment to planning permission DC050479 for the addition of two number velux windows to the west elevation : Granted – 30/10/2013.

- DC052745 : Non-material amendment to planning permission DC050479 for the addition of two number velux windows to the east elevation and one number to the north elevation : Granted – 20/06/2013.

- DC052636 : Change of use of barn to dwelling, demolition of modern extension and erection of detached garage/store : Granted – 27/09/2013.

- DC051545 : Change of use of barn to dwelling to include single storey side extension and detached garage/store : Withdrawn – 15/02/2013.

- DC050480 : Restoration of original dwelling to include single storey side extension and detached garage/store : Withdrawn – 02/10/2012.

- DC050479 : Two storey side extension and new combined garage and bin store : Granted – 28/09/2012.

- J.67136 : Shippon/barn : Granted – 04/06/1997.

NEIGHBOUR'S VIEWS

The owners/occupiers of surrounding properties were notified in writing of the application and the application was advertised by way of display of notices on site and in the press.

No letters of representation have been received to the application.

CONSULTEE RESPONSES

Planning Policy Officer

The UK has set into law a target to bring all its greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. In March 2019, Stockport Council declared a climate emergency, and agreed that Stockport should become carbon neutral by 2038, in advance of the UK 2050 target. The Stockport CAN strategy was developed to underpin this agreement and was approved by the council in October 2020. The strategy sets out to ensure that Stockport achieves carbon neutrality by 2038, in order to support global efforts to prevent global warming going above 1.5°C. The Environmental Law Foundation

has suggested that climate emergency declarations should be regarded as material considerations in the determination of planning matters.

Our local approach reflects the Greater Manchester Five Year Environment Plan. The Five-Year Environment Plan includes a commitment to be carbon neutral by 2038, and an accompanying science-based carbon budget. (Carbon neutrality is defined by the Tyndall Institute's study for GM as below 0.6 Mt CO2/year across GM). Priorities 1 and 3 of the plan specifically relate to this proposed development: Increasing local renewable energy generation; increasing the diversity and flexibility of our electricity supply.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF places mitigating/adapting to climate change as an overarching objective for the planning system, to ensure sustainable development.

Paragraph 151 of the NPPF states: *"When located in the Green Belt, elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development. In such cases developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances if projects are to proceed. Such very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources."*

Paragraph 158 of the NPPF states: "*When determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should:*
a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and

b) 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 expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas."

Objective 1 of the Core Strategy relates to climate change, this is supported by a number of policies that seek to deliver this primary objective.

Policy SD-5 of the Core Strategy states: *"The Council recognises the important role that community owned energy generation including wind and hydro energy will play in reducing CO2 emissions and increasing installed low carbon and renewable energy capacity. While the Council will consider favourably all applications for standalone or 'onsite' low carbon and renewable energy generation, the Energy Opportunities Plan identifies a number of principal opportunities."*

Page 163 of the Core Strategy is a map showing the "Energy Opportunities Plan" which includes those areas which are "potential areas for installation of medium to large scale wind energy". The proposed turbine is located in the area identified as being technically feasible to locate wind turbines.

As identified by the Stockport Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, the proposal is located within the Landscape Character Area of "Mellor Moor". In terms of views and visual character, pylons are prominent across this area, which are existing examples of vertical infrastructure of a similar height to small wind turbines. Areas influenced by these existing features are less sensitive to small wind turbines. The presence of a single 9m micro turbine on Bogguard Road reduces the sensitivity of the LCA to micro turbines in this location.

In terms of the proximity to overhead electrical lines, please see the advice contained within "Electricity Networks Association Engineering Recommendation L44 Separation between Wind Turbines and Overhead Lines, Principles of Good Practice" as adopted by National Grid. This sets out that: *"Wind turbines shall be positioned such that the minimum horizontal distance from the worst-case pivot point of the wind turbine and the overhead line conductors hanging in still air is the greater of:*

- The tip height of the turbine (Ht) + 10%
- The tip height of the turbine (Ht) + the electrical safety distance (Lc), applicable to the voltage of the overhead line and given in Table 1"

System Voltage (kV)	≤33	66	132	275	400
Electrical Safety Clearance (Lc) for Turbines Falling towards line with conductor hanging vertically	1.7m	1.9m	2.3m	3.3m	4.0m

Table 1 Electrical Safety Toppling Clearance (Lc)

There are no formal definitions for the different categories of heights for modern wind turbines, but they are generally described with the following size ranges: "micro" wind turbines which would typically be up to 25m in height to blade tip, "small" turbines around 50m to blade tip, "medium" turbines around 75m, and "large" being 75m+. The proposed turbine is therefore a micro turbine of a very modest height, and well-suited to the domestic use being proposed. The desktop survey estimates that a turbine with a hub height of 10metres at that location may generate an estimated 12,122kWh per annum, depending on annual wind speeds.

In many circumstances micro-wind energy turbines are considered to be permitted development as set out in schedule 14 Class I of the GPDO and, subject to meeting certain provisions, would not need to apply for planning permission. The proposed turbine is only slightly taller than what would be considered acceptable within a residential curtilage for permitted development i.e. 11.1 metres as opposed to the proposed 11.8 metres in height.

The proposal is located in the Green Belt, which at this location also corresponds to an area with a higher windspeed, as depicted on the NOABL wind speed database: https://www.rensmart.com/Maps#NOABL A figure for annual electricity consumption has been provided as 17,323kWh, which includes the mid-year switch from an LPG

(fossil fuel boiler) to an air source heat pump which runs on electricity only, and the ongoing domestic charging of an electric vehicle. As detailed above, the desktop survey indicates that an estimated 12,122kWh will be generated per annum at a height of 10 metres above ground level. However the proposed turbine will be slightly taller, and thus may generate more electricity per annum, thus providing the vast majority of their household energy needs, and make a significant contribution to transport needs due to the use of an electric vehicle.

In summary, the proposed scheme will reduce the reliance on fossil fuels to generate domestic energy, and make a meaningful positive contribution to help Stockport stay within its science-based carbon budget. It will help to deliver the national and local objectives and policies described above, whilst having a limited negative impact on the landscape, therefore the scheme is fully supported.

Environmental Health Officer (Noise and Amenity)

The proposal, has been assessed in relation to impact upon the environmental quality of life to existing sensitive receptors, in proximity to the proposed development.

- WIND TURBINE SPECIFICATION

A single wind turbine is proposed for domestic use. The SD6, 9m ARE Tower System, drawing SDI-06-TW-09-214, submitted in support of the application, show a hub height of 9m, a tip height of 11.8m and rotor diameter of 5.6m.

- LOCATION

The wind turbine is proposed to be located, within a field, south-east of Bradshaw Trees Barn. There are no other wind turbines in this area.

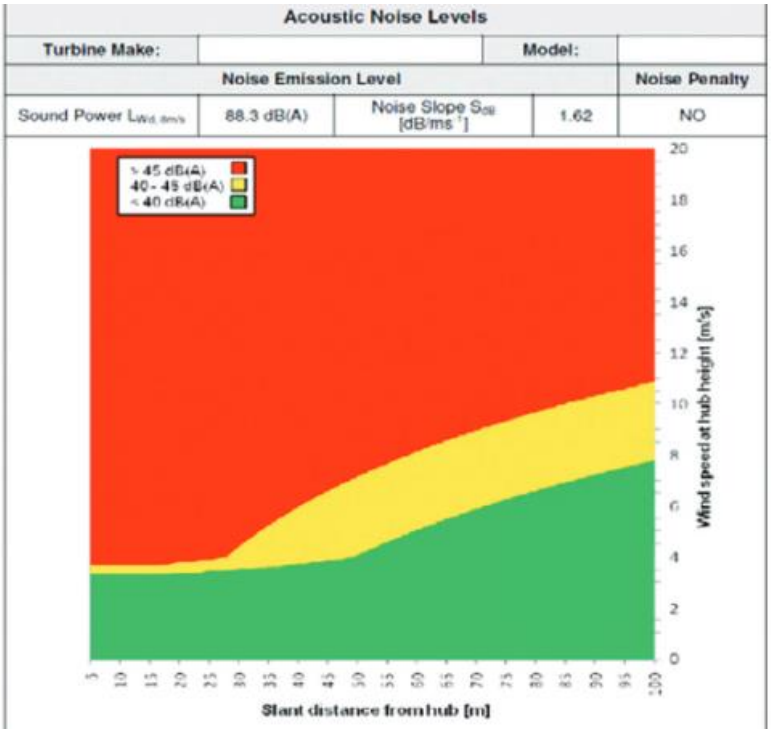
- RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

The proposed wind turbine, is to be located in a rural area, generally considered to have a low background sound-scape.

The nearest ‘non-involved’ noise sensitive property/receptor, is located to the north of Bradshaw Trees at Lower Bradshaw Farm on Chatterton Lane, at a distance greater than 190m from the proposed wind turbine.

The SD6 Product specification leaflet submitted in support of the application, states a rated power of 5.2kW @ 11 m/s. The SD6 Planning Support Pack, under Performance, states Peak Power: 6.1kW. Acoustic Information, the turbine is not considered tonal with a Sound Power Level, 88.3 dB (A), LWd, 8m/s.

From the acoustic noise level data provided in the SD6 Planning Support Pack: the x-axis is the slant distance from hub (the graph goes to 100m) and y-axis wind speed.



Sound attenuates over distance. With the nearest 'non-connected' residential receptor/receiver, greater than 190m from the proposed wind turbine sound source. From the above graph, assessing the slant distance from the hub and wind speed, the predicted sound emission from the wind turbine will be less than 40dB (A).

To further the assessment, have used Wind Turbine Noise Calculator | WKC Group – online calculator tool, using the sound power (dB) of the wind turbine and the distance (m) of the wind turbine from the receptor, the calculated noise level is 33.79dB. As Stockport Council has received very few wind turbine applications, have looked to how other local authority assess single wind turbine applications. Due to the large number of wind turbines within Cornwall, have looked to Wind turbines - Cornwall Council, where turbine noise levels at noise sensitive receptors are limited to a maximum of:

- 35dB LAeq - small turbine/s
- 35dB LA90 - large turbine/s

The proposed single turbine sound level at receptor, is predicted to be less than 35dB (A).

This service has no objection to this application with regard to noise. For completeness, the following noise condition is recommended to be applied to any planning consent:

RECOMMENDED CONDITION – SINGLE WIND TURBINE

When measured at the boundary of the nearest noise sensitive receptor.

The sound emission from the wind turbine, shall not exceed the lowest background sound level (LA,90, 1minute), by more than 5dB(A), at all wind speeds up to 10 meters per second.

Within 21 days of a request by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and/ or following a justified complaint relating to noise from the turbine. The wind turbine operator shall, at their expense, employ a suitably competent and qualified person to measure and assess by a method to be approved in writing by the LPA, whether wind turbine sound emission meets the above criteria.

If the assessment requested by the LPA demonstrates that the specified level is being exceeded, the operator of the turbine shall take immediate steps to ensure that the noise emissions from the turbine are reduced to, or below, the specified noise limit. The operator shall provide written confirmation of that reduction to the LPA within a time period to be agreed with the LPA. In the event that it is not possible to achieve the specified noise limit with mitigation within a reasonable time period, then the operation of the turbine shall cease.

Reason: To ensure that existing noise sensitive receptors are adequately protected from wind-turbine noise impacts:

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, 20 July 2021

- AMENITY: para. 130 (f) *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users*

- NOISE: para. 174 (e) *preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of …. noise pollution ….*

- POLLUTION: para. 185 *Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:*

    - *NOISE:* para 185 (a) *mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and*

avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life

- *AGENT OF CHANGE: para. 187 decisions should ensure that new development can be integrated effectively with existing businesses and community facilities (such as places of worship, pubs, music venues and sports clubs). Existing businesses and facilities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established. Where the operation of an existing business or community facility could have a significant adverse effect on new development (including changes of use) in its vicinity, the applicant (or 'agent of change') should be required to provide suitable mitigation before the development has been completed.*

Conservation Officer

No comments made, therefore no objections.

Highway Engineer

I raise no objection, in principle, to this application noting that, once constructed, the wind turbine should not have any highway implications. Construction / erection of the turbine may, however, have highway implications and, as such, I would recommend that any approval granted is subject to a condition which requires the submission, approval and implementation of a construction method statement so as to ensure that the works are carried out in a safe way and in a manner that will minimise disruption during construction.

- Recommendation : No objection, subject to the following condition :-

No development shall take place until a method statement detailing how the approved wind turbine will be constructed / erected has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The method statement shall include details on how the turbine and other materials will be transported to the site, access arrangements, turning / manoeuvring facilities, vehicle movements, vehicle routing, traffic management, signage, hoardings, where materials will be loaded, unloaded and stored, parking arrangements and mud prevention measures. The wind turbine shall be constructed / erected in complete accordance with the approved method statement.

Reason: To ensure that the approved development is constructed in a safe way and in a manner that will minimise disruption during construction, in accordance with Policy T-3 'Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network' of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD. The details are required prior to the commencement of any development as details of how the development is to be constructed need to be approved prior to the commencement of construction activities.

Informative

A condition of this planning consent requires the submission of a Construction Method Statement. In order to ensure that the statement includes all the required information

the applicant / developer is advised to use the Council's template Construction Method Statement. This can be obtained from the 'Highways and Transport Advice' section within the planning pages of the Council's web-site (www.stockport.gov.uk).

Nature Development Officer

Nature Conservation Designations

The site has no nature conservation designations, legal or otherwise, as listed in Stockport's current Local Plan (Site of Biological Importance, Local Nature Reserve, Green Chain etc).

It has however been identified as an opportunity area within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) pilot study for Greater Manchester. This is not necessarily a barrier to development and does not confer protection or prevention of land uses but shows that such areas have been prioritised for restoring and linking up habitats.

The application area is within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) but the proposed development type is not included in those listed by Natural England and so no impacts on any SSSIs are anticipated.

Legally Protected Species

The proposal would comprise an approx. 12m high turbine placed approx. 10m from the east boundary of the field. Potential impacts on wildlife associated with wind turbines include impacts to bats and birds: relating to collision risk, barotrauma (damage to tissues from air pressure changes around turbines), and also fragmentation of foraging and commuting habitats.

All species of bats and their roosts are protected under UK (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)) and European legislation (The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations, 2019). All breeding birds and their nests are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Best practice guidance: Bats and Onshore Wind Turbines: Survey, Assessment and Mitigation (August 2021, Bat Conservation Trust *et al*) acknowledges that the risks to bats (and other wildlife) is dependent on the scale and location of the anticipated impact.

In this case, the 'project size' is small and the habitat risk is considered to be 'low'. The site is located in an open area of farmland, in a relatively exposed location, with low quality bat foraging habitat in the immediate vicinity albeit that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats. The site has limited connectivity to the wider landscape by prominent linear features, with the adjacent stone-walls being low and with minimal associated vegetation and so unlikely to offer significant shelter belts for invertebrates (food for bats).This gives an overall anticipated risk to bats of 'low' according to the overall risk assessment criteria set out within the guidance.

Most published research and guidance on birds and wind turbines relates to larger-scale multi-turbine schemes. Natural England Technical Information Note TIN069 Assessing the effects of onshore wind farms on birds (2010), advises that any survey scope should be proportionate to the scale of likely impact and sensitivity of the site. Where impacts are likely to be low and sites considered to be low risk (i.e. not near important bird habitats or known migration routes), applications for small-scale schemes do not necessarily need to be supported by survey data. Single turbines will have a smaller rotor-swept area, thereby reducing the collision risk and any displacement effects would be highly localised. Studies have also shown that birds take active avoidance action as they fly through an area to avoid potential impact. Potential risks associated with birds are therefore considered to be low

Paragraph 016 of the Natural Environment Planning Practice Guidance (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment#biodiversity-and-ecosystems) states that the local authority should only request a survey if they consider there is a reasonable likelihood of a protected species being present and affected by development.

Given the above, I do not consider it reasonable to request an ecology survey as part of the current planning application in this instance as the anticipated risk to wildlife is considered to be very low.

Planning Policy Framework

- Core Strategy DPD policy CS8 'Safeguarding and Improving the Environment' (Biodiversity and Nature Conservation : 3.296).
- Core Strategy DPD policy SIE-3 'Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment' (A - Protecting the Natural Environment : 3.345, 3.361, 3.364 and 3.369).

Recommendations

In this instance I would not consider it reasonable to request an ecology survey as part of the current application as the proposals are considered to be of very low risk to protected species. As a precautionary measure an informative should be attached to any planning consent granted so that the applicant is aware that the granting of planning permission does not negate the need to abide by the legislation in place to protect biodiversity. If at any time during works, evidence of protected species is discovered on site and are likely to be impacted, the consented works must stop and a suitably experienced ecologist be contacted for advice.

Although the risk to wildlife is anticipated to be low, it was requested as part of pre-application correspondence that the following mitigation measures would further reduce this risk and advised that consideration be given to the implementation of these where possible :-

- It was recommended that if possible, a 50m buffer is provided between the turbine blade tip and the stone-walls to minimise collision risk for species which

follow flight-lines (such as pipistrelle bats which may use the stone walls as a flight line in the absence of other landscape features). The turbine will be sited closer than this (approx. 10m), however it is acknowledged that the turbine will be located at the highest elevation within the site (to maximise efficiency of the turbine). This will also have a secondary effect of reducing potential impacts to foraging bats since they typically prefer more sheltered areas at lower altitudes where food is usually more abundant.

- It was recommended that where possible the cut-in speed be increased during higher risk periods (i.e. warm evenings in summer with low wind speeds when bat activity is likely to be at its highest). The application information states that this however is not possible given the specification of the turbine proposed and that cut-in speed is quite low: 2m/s (equivalent to 5.6mph). Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that high-flying species, such as noctules, (to which this recommendation also relates) tend to fly higher than the height of the turbine) and therefore the risk of impacting high-flying species is considered minimal.

As such, although implementation of the above measures would be welcomed, they are not vital in this instance as due to the landscape conditions of the site, potential risks to wildlife are considered to be low.

Biodiversity enhancements are expected as part of developments in line with local (paragraph 3.345 of the LDF) and national planning policy (NPPF). A suitable measure would be provision of bat and/or bird boxes (minimum of two boxes) elsewhere on the farm away from the proposed turbine (e.g. on farm buildings). Boxes should be made from woodstone/woodcrete for greater longevity, and placed minimum 4m high in an unlit location. These measures would be particularly welcomed given the designation of the site as an opportunity area within the pilot LNRS for Greater Manchester. The planning statement submitted with the application states that two boxes will be provided as per these recommendations. This can be secured by condition with details of the type and location of bat boxes to be submitted to the LPA for review).

Manchester Airport

The Safeguarding Authority for Manchester Airport has assessed this proposal and its potential to conflict aerodrome Safeguarding criteria. We have no objection subject to the following informative :-

The applicant's attention is drawn to the procedures for crane and tall equipment notifications, please see: https://www.caa.co.uk/Commercial-industry/Airspace/Event-and-obstacle-notification/Crane-notification/

It is important that any conditions or advice in this response are applied to a planning approval. Where a Planning Authority proposes to grant permission against the advice of Manchester Airport, or not attach conditions which Manchester Airport has advised, it shall notify Manchester Airport, and the Civil Aviation Authority as specified in the Town & Country Planning (Safeguarded Aerodromes, Technical Sites and Military Explosive Storage Areas) Direction 2002.

Coal Authority

The application site does not fall within the defined Development High Risk Area and is located instead within the defined Development Low Risk Area. This means that there is no requirement under the risk-based approach that has been agreed with the LPA for a Coal Mining Risk Assessment to be submitted or for The Coal Authority to be consulted.

In accordance with the agreed approach to assessing coal mining risks as part of the development management process, if this proposal is granted planning permission, it will be necessary to include The Coal Authority's Standing Advice within the Decision Notice as an informative note to the applicant in the interests of public health and safety.

ANALYSIS

Policy Principle

The application site is allocated within the Green Belt, as defined on the UDP Proposals Map. As such, assessment of the proposal against the provisions of saved UDP policy GBA1.2 and the NPPF is required.

Saved UDP policy GBA1.2 sets out, among other things that '*Forms of development other than new buildings, including changes in use of land, will not be permitted unless they maintain openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt'*.

In assessment of the proposal against the requirements of saved UDP policy GBA1.2, although of slim line appearance, the height of the proposed wind turbine would undoubtedly have a certain degree of impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. On this basis, the proposal would comprise inappropriate development within the Green Belt, contrary to saved UDP policy GBA1.2.

Whilst saved UDP policy GBA1.2 is considered up to date with the NPPF in broad terms, it is not entirely consistent with this national policy on Green Belt set out within Chapter 13 of the NPPF, which is considered to provide a more suitable framework for the determination of this application.

Within Chapter 13, Paragraph 147 of the NPPF states that *'Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances'.*

Paragraph 148 of the NPPF then sets out that *'When considering any planning application, Local Planning Authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations'.*

Paragraph 151 of the NPPF states that *'When located in the Green Belt, elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development. In such*

cases, developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances if projects are to proceed. Such very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources'.

In view of the above, the proposal for a renewable energy project is considered to comprise inappropriate development within the Green Belt. In accordance with the requirements of Paragraphs 148 and 151 of the NPPF, there is a requirement for the applicant to demonstrate that 'Very Special Circumstances' exist to justify that any potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The applicants case for 'Very Special Circumstances' contained within the submitted Planning Statement has been assessed by the Council Planning Policy Officer and the following is noted :-

- The UK has set into law a target to bring all its greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. In March 2019, Stockport Council declared a climate emergency and agreed that Stockport should become carbon neutral by 2038, in advance of the UK 2050 target. The Stockport Climate Action Now (CAN) strategy was developed to underpin this agreement and was approved by the council in October 2020. The strategy sets out to ensure that Stockport achieves carbon neutrality by 2038, in order to support global efforts to prevent global warming going above 1.5°C. The Environmental Law Foundation has suggested that climate emergency declarations should be regarded as material considerations in the determination of planning matters.

- Stockport's local approach reflects the Greater Manchester Five Year Environment Plan, which includes a commitment to be carbon neutral by 2038. Priorities 1 and 3 of this plan specifically relate to this proposed development and seeks to increase local renewable energy generation and increase the diversity and flexibility of our electricity supply.

- Paragraph 8 of the NPPF places mitigating/adapting to climate change as an overarching objective for the planning system, to ensure sustainable development.

- Paragraph 158 of the NPPF states that '*When determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, Local Planning Authorities should: a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and b) 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 expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas'.*

- Core Strategy DPD policy SD-5 states that *'The Council recognises the important role that community owned energy generation including wind and hydro energy will play in reducing CO2 emissions and increasing installed low carbon and renewable energy capacity. While the Council will consider favourably all applications for standalone or 'onsite' low carbon and renewable energy generation, the Energy Opportunities Plan identifies a number of principal opportunities'.*

- The site is located within the 'Energy Opportunities Plan' identified within the Core Strategy DPD which includes areas which are 'potential areas for installation of medium to large scale wind energy'. The proposed turbine is located in the area identified as being technically feasible to locate wind turbines.

- The proposed wind turbine is considered to comprise a 'micro' turbine due to its modest height and would be well-suited to the domestic use being proposed. The Desktop Survey Report submitted in support of the application estimates that a turbine with a hub height of 10.0 metres at the site location may generate an estimated 12,122kWh per annum, depending on annual wind speeds. The site is located within an area of higher wind speed and the proposed height of 11.8 metres may generate more electricity per annum. Coupled with existing energy efficient and low and zero carbon developments undertaken or proposed to be undertaken at the applicants property, this would provide the vast majority of their household energy needs.

- In many circumstances, micro-wind energy turbines are considered to be permitted development, as defined by Schedule 2, Part 14, Class I of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). As such, the proposed window turbine would only be slightly taller by 0.7 metres than would normally be considered acceptable within the curtilage of a residential dwellinghouse without the requirement for planning permission.

In summary, it is acknowledged that the proposed renewal energy project comprises inappropriate development within the Green Belt, as defined by Paragraph 151 of the NPPF and would be contrary to saved UDP policy GBA1.2. However, it is considered that 'Very Special Circumstances' exist in the form of reduction on the reliance on fossil fuels to generate domestic energy and make a meaningful positive contribution to help Stockport stay within its science-based carbon budget and the proposal would help to deliver the national and local objectives and policies described above. On this basis, the requirement of Paragraphs 148 and 151 of the NPPF are considered to be met and the proposal is considered to be acceptable within the Green Belt in this particular case.

<u>Impact on Landscape Character and Visual Amenity</u>

The site is located within the Mellor Moor Landscape Character Area. Saved UDP policy LCR1.1 requires that development within such areas is sensitively sited, designed and accommodated without adverse effects on the landscape quality of the particular character area. In addition, saved UDP policy LCR1.1a seeks to protect, conserve and improve the landscape quality and natural history of the locality and encourage the development of a variety of attractive landscapes.

It is inevitable that the installation of a wind turbine at the site, with an overall maximum height of 11.8 metres, would result in a certain degree of impact on the quality of the Mellor Moor Landscape Character Area within which the site is located. A Landscape Visual Impact Assessment has been submitted in support of the application, which includes photomontages of the proposed wind turbine in its context from a number of vantage points within the immediate area in order for its visual impact to be assessed.

Critically, in this particular case, there is evidence of existing electricity pylons and associated equipment within the field to which the proposed wind turbine would be sited and further electricity pylons and associated equipment within the wider area. The existing pylons are between 22.0 metres and 26.0 metres high, which is substantially higher than the maximum height of the proposed wind turbine of 11.8 metres. As such, when viewed against the backdrop of existing electricity pylons, it is considered that the siting, size and height of the proposed wind turbine could be accommodated on this site and assimilated within the winder landscape setting without causing undue harm to the visual amenity of the area or the quality of the Mellor Moor Landscape Character Area. On this basis, the proposal complies with saved UDP policies LCR1.1 and LCR1.1A and Core Strategy DPD policy SIE-1.

Impact on Residential Amenity

The proposed wind turbine would be sited within an existing field and is surrounding on all sides by open fields/agricultural land. The nearest residential properties are sited a distance from the site, at Bradshaw Trees Farm to the North West, Lower Bradshaw Farm to the North East and Shiloh Hall/Shiloh Hall Farm to the South East.

The detailed comments received to the application from the Council Environmental Health Officer are contained within the Consultee Responses section above. The Environmental Health Officer acknowledges that rural areas generally have a low background soundscape, however notes the separation from the proposed wind turbine to existing residential properties/noise sensitive receptors.

Information submitted in support of the application confirms that the proposed noise level at receptors resulting from the proposed single wind turbine is predicted to be less than 35db (A), which is considered acceptable by the Environmental Health Officer. A condition is recommended to ensure that noise emissions are appropriately limited and to require measures to reduce noise emissions should specified levels be exceeded.

In view of the above, in the absence of objections from the Environmental Health Officer and subject to conditional control, it is considered that the proposed wind

turbine could be accommodated on the site without causing harm to the amenity of surrounding residential properties, in accordance with Core Strategy DPD policies CS8, SIE-1 and SIE-3.

Impact on Protected Species and Ecology

The detailed comments received to the application from the Council Nature Development Officer are contained within the Consultee Responses section above.

The Nature Development Officer notes that the site has no nature designations, legal or otherwise. The site has however been identified as an opportunity area within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) pilot study for Greater Manchester and within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone (IRZ).

Potential impacts on protected species associated with wind turbines include impacts to bats and birds, such as collision risk, barotrauma (damage to tissues from air pressure changes around turbines) and fragmentation of foraging and commuting habitats. Best practice guidance acknowledges that the risks to wildlife is dependent upon the scale and location of the anticipated impact.

Due to the small scale of the proposed single turbine, its proposed siting and the nature of the surroundings, the potential risks and impacts of the proposal on both bats and birds is considered to be very low and the Nature Development Officer does not consider it reasonable to request the submission of an Ecology Survey as part of the application. Additional mitigation measures to further reduce the risk to wildlife have been recommended by the Nature Development Officer, however are not considered to be vital in this particular case as potential risks to wildlife are considered to be low due to the landscape conditions of the site.

The applicant will be advised of legislation is place to protect biodiversity and procedures to be followed should protected species be discovered on site and likely to be impacted by way of informative. Biodiversity enhancements, including the provision of bat and/or bird boxes elsewhere within the site, would be secured by condition.

In view of the above, in the absence of objections from the Nature Development Officer, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of its impact on protected species, biodiversity and the ecological interest of the site, in accordance with Core Strategy DPD policies CS8 and SIE-3.

Highways Considerations

The detailed comments received to the application from the Council Highway Engineer are contained within the Consultee Responses section above.

In raising no objections to the proposal, the Highway Engineer notes that, once constructed, the proposed wind turbine should not have any highway implications. In order to ensure that highway implications and disruption are minimised during construction/erection, a condition is recommended to require the submission, approval and implementation of a Construction Method Statement.

In view of the above, in the absence of objections from the Highway Engineer and subject to conditional control, the proposal is considered acceptable from a highways perspective, in accordance with Core Strategy DPD policy T-3.

Other Considerations

No objections are raised to the proposal from Manchester Airport. On this basis, the proposal is considered acceptable from an aerodrome safeguarding perspective, in accordance with saved UDP policy EP1.9 and Core Strategy DPD policy SIE-5.

No objections are raised to the proposal from the Coal Authority, who note that the site is located within the defined development low risk area. As such, the proposal is not considered to be at risk from coal mining legacy, in accordance with Core Strategy DPD policy SIE-3.

SUMMARY

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF establishes three dimensions to sustainable development – economic, social and environmental and indicates that these should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.

Full planning permission is sought for the erection/installation of a demountable domestic wind turbine to serve an existing residential dwellinghouse at Bradshaw Trees Barn, Chatterton Lane, Mellor.

The site is located within the Mellor Moor Landscape Character Area. The siting, scale and size of the proposed wind turbine, coupled with the character of the surroundings, would be such that it could be accommodated on the site and assimilated within the wider landscape setting in this particular case without causing undue harm to the visual amenity of the area or the quality of the Mellor Moor Landscape Character Area.

In the absence of objections from relevant consultees and subject to conditional control, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of its impact on residential amenity; highway safety; protected species and ecology; aerodrome safeguarding; and coal mining legacy.

The site is located within the Green Belt and it is acknowledged that the proposed renewable energy project comprises inappropriate development within the Green Belt, as defined by Paragraph 151 of the NPPF and would be contrary to saved UDP policy GBA1.2. However, it is considered that ‘Very Special Circumstances’ exist in the form of the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources and the reduction on the reliance on fossil fuels to generate domestic energy, in order to justify approval of the proposal. As such, the requirements of Paragraphs 148 and 151 of the NPPF are considered to be met and the proposal is considered to be acceptable within the Green Belt in this particular case.

In view of the above, in considering the planning merits of the proposal against the requirements of the NPPF, the proposal is considered to represent sustainable development. On this basis, the application is recommended for approval.

Given the conflict with saved UDP policy GBA1.2 and the NPPF, the proposal is considered to be a Departure from the Development Plan for determination at Planning and Highways Regulation Committee.

In view of the above, the proposal is considered to comply with relevant saved UDP and Core Strategy DPD policies. In considering the planning merits of the proposal against the requirements of the NPPF, the proposal is considered to represent sustainable development. On this basis, in accordance with the requirements of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the application is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant.

MARPLE AREA COMMITTEE (21/06/2023)

The Planning Officer introduced the application and highlighted the pertinent issues of the proposal.

The applicant spoke in support of the application. The applicants wished to be a net-zero household. Due to the location of the site, wind was considered to be a resource which could be utilised to provide domestic energy needs along with the existing air source heat pumps and other sustainable energy facilities that had been undertaken at the property. Excess energy would be exported to the grid. Solar energy was not considered to be appropriate, due to the age of the property and the footprint required. Existing electricity pylons in the area would ensure that the development would not look out of place and, due to the valley location, the proposed development would have limited visibility. It was also proposed to provide two bat boxes for ecological gain.

Members sought clarification from the applicant with regard to the distance of the proposed development from existing electricity pylons and cables. The applicant confirmed that the proposed development would be sited more than 10.0 metres from the pylons so as to retain a safe distance.

Members debated the proposal. It was noted the application had been called-up for determination by Committee as it was the first type of such a proposal and was worthy of public debate. It was noted that no neighbour objections had been received and the proposal was considered to be uncontroversial.

Following the debate, Members resolved to grant planning permission for the proposed development.