

F/YR12/0415/F

28 May 2012

Applicant : Mr D Wheeler
Alan Hudson Limited

Agent : Mr A Lee
Bowler Energy LLP

Land West of Alan Hudson Limited, Bevis Lane, Wisbech St Mary, Cambridgeshire

Erection of 2 x 18.3 metre high (hub height) wind turbines

This proposal is before the Planning Committee due to the proposal being of wider concern.

This application is an other.

The site area is 0.0265 hectare.

1. **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The application site is located to the south of the main settlement of Wisbech St Mary and to the east of Bevis Lane. Access is gained via Bevis Lane, which is an unclassified road, and through the existing farm which is operated by Alan Hudson Limited (fruit growers).

The area around the site is flat in character and consists predominantly of open fields and orchards. The main settlement of Wisbech St Mary lies approx. 700m to the north of the proposed turbines.

2. **HISTORY**

Of relevance to this proposal is:

F/YR11/0968/F - Erection of 216no ground mounted photovoltaic panels – Granted 07/02/2012

3. **CONSULTATIONS**

Parish Council:

We support this development and recommend approval.

Local Highway Authority (CCC):

The modest size of the turbines results in them being able to be delivered to site by standard size vehicles.

The number of HCV movements likely to be generated during construction is extremely modest and I am satisfied that the highway network is capable of accommodating the number and size of vehicle to be generated during the short construction period.

Environment Agency

No objection

Openreach BT

Apparatus exists near to the area of your proposed works and requires protection.

Network Rail

No comments to make

FDC Environmental Protection

I have considered the above mentioned planning application, in respect to the impact of the noise of the proposed development on the nearest noise sensitive properties. I have noted the information provided and in response recommend that the following conditions should be added to a planning permission should it be granted.

Night-time noise levels

The noise emission (LA90, 10 minute) from effects of the wind turbine, as measured in free field conditions at any dwelling, shall not exceed during night hours 2300 – 0700, the greater of 43dB(A) or 5dB(A) above the night hours background noise (LA90, 10 minute) as measured in accordance with ETSU-R-97.

Day-time noise levels

At all other times the noise emission (LA90, 10 minute) from the effects of the wind turbine, as measured in free field conditions at any dwelling, shall not exceed the greater of 35dB(A) or 5dB(A) above the Quiet Waking Hours background noise (LA90, 10 minute) at wind speeds within the site not exceeding 10 metres per second.

Informative:

Period of hours have been used are as defined in ETSU-R-97 (The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms).

Quiet day-time periods are defined as:

- All evenings from 6pm to 11pm,
- Plus Saturday afternoons from 1pm to 6pm,
- Plus all day Sunday, 7am to 6pm.

Night-time is defined as 11pm to 7am.

Police Architectural Liaison Officer.	<p>The height of the turbines should have no detrimental effect on operation of the Constabulary. The only risk, prevalent to the development, is the theft of cabling linking the turbine to the outlet point. Given the possible length of underground cable and the current scrap price of copper, theft of cabling is sadly altogether prevalent so to counter this it is advised that any cables are buried to a substantial depth i.e. at least 1.8 metres below ground level.</p> <p>I can inform you that apart from the above the crime impact assessment of the proposals is low and I have no further comments to make in respect of crime prevention and fear of crime. We would not object to granting of permission for this application.</p>
Anglian Water	No concerns from a groundwater perspective.
Chatteris Airfield	No objection.
NATS/NERL	The proposed development has been examined from a technical safeguarding aspect and does not conflict with our safeguarding criteria.
Natural England	The proposal does not appear to affect any statutorily protected sites or landscapes, or have significant impacts on the conservation of soils, nor is the proposal EIA development.
MOD	No objection.
Joint Radio Company (UK Power Networks and National Grid)	No objection
Save our Swans, Archaeology, Countryside Access, CPRE, EDF, Ramblers Association, Save our Skyline, The Wildlife Trust, RSPB, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Cambs Bats Group, Sibson Airfield, Peterborough Airfield, Marshals Paddock, Cambridge	No response received.

Airport, Fenland Aerodrome and Raptor Foundation.

Local residents/interested parties: No comments received

4. POLICY FRAMEWORK

FDWLP Policy

- | | |
|----|---|
| E1 | - New development for which a rural location is essential should be sited on a site which minimises visual impact, of a scale and design that can be assimilated into the landscape and adequately screened and landscaped with native species. |
| E3 | - Where appropriate, conditions requiring landscaping and tree planting schemes will be imposed on planning permissions to ensure that new development significantly contributes to the visual character of the neighbourhood. |
| E8 | - Proposals for new development should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for the protection of site features; • Have regard to the amenities of adjoining properties; • Provide adequate access. |

East of England Plan

- | | |
|------|--|
| SS1 | - Achieving Sustainable Development |
| ENV3 | - Biodiversity and Earth Heritage |
| ENV4 | - Agriculture, Land and Soils |
| ENG1 | - CO2 Emissions and Energy Performance |
| ENG2 | - Renewable Energy Targets |

Core Strategy Draft Consultation – July 2011

- | | |
|------|--|
| CS12 | - Renewable energy proposals will be supported and assessed on their own merits taking account of the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The surrounding landscape and historical features, • Residential amenity, • Specific highway safety, designated nature conservation and biodiversity considerations, • High quality agricultural land. |
|------|--|

National Policy (NPPF)	Planning Framework	Achieving Sustainable Development	Paras and 11	2	- Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
			Para 14		- Presumption in favour of sustainable development.
Core Principles	Planning		Para 17		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants; - take account of the different roles and character of different areas; recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it; support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate; taking full account of flood risk and coastal change; and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy);
Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change			Paras 93 – 98	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. They should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources; ● design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts; ● consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure the

Conserving and Para 109
enhancing the natural
environment

development of such sources;
When determining planning
applications, local planning
authorities should:

- approve the application if its
impacts are (or can be made)
acceptable.

The planning system should
contribute to and enhance the
natural and local environment by
minimising impacts on biodiversity
and providing net gains where
possible.

5. ASSESSMENT

Nature of Application

This is a full application for the erection of 2 x 18.3 metre hub height, 11kW wind turbines with a maximum tip height of 24.5 metres.

The application is considered to raise the following key issues;

- Site history and background
- Principle and policy implications
- Layout, design and access
- Landscape character and amenity
- Ecology and biodiversity.

Site History and Background

In February 2012 planning permission was granted for ground mounted photovoltaic (PV) panels to allow this 200 acre fruit farm to generate their own electricity.

The fruit needs to be stored in a temperature controlled environment 24 hours a day and as the PV panels do not generate electricity at night the turbines would enable generation through the night. Any electricity not used on the farm would be fed into the national grid.

Principle and Policy Implications

The proposal has been considered in line with the Development Plan Policies and National Guidance. Accordingly the relevant policies are found in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Fenland District-Wide Local Plan, the East of England Plan and also the new Core Strategy, which is currently at Draft Consultation stage, but carries weight.

The Government has set a target of generating 20% of the UK's electricity by 2020 and also aims for the UK to be on a path to cut its carbon dioxide emissions by 60% by 2050, as well as maintaining reliable and competitive energy supplies. The development of renewable energy is considered to form a key part of meeting this target which has led to the view that renewable energy schemes should be supported where they do not result in other adverse impact upon the area that outweigh the renewable energy benefits. Wind turbines are a sustainable and efficient source of renewable energy and, therefore, comply, in principle, with the provisions of the NPPF

and emerging Core Strategy.

Policy E1 of the Fenland District-Wide Local Plan 1993 seeks, amongst other things, to ensure that new development for which a rural location is essential should be sited on a site, which minimises visual impact, of a scale and design that can be assimilated into the landscape and adequately screened and landscaped with native species.

Policy E3 of the Fenland District-Wide Local Plan 1993 advises that where appropriate, conditions requiring landscaping and tree planting schemes will be imposed on planning permissions to ensure that new development significantly contributes to the visual character of the neighbourhood.

Policy E8 of the Fenland District-wide Local Plan 1993 seeks, amongst other things, to protect the amenities of adjoining residential properties and ensure that development is in keeping with the character of the surrounding area.

The RSS East of England Plan Policy SS1 seeks to bring about sustainable development through a number of measures in order to help meet obligations on carbon emissions, amongst other criteria.

The RSS East of England Plan Policy ENV3 seeks to ensure that new development minimises damage to biodiversity by avoiding harm to local wildlife sites and wherever possible achieving environmental gains in development sites through retention of existing assets, enhancement measures and new habitat creation.

The RSS East of England Plan Policy ENV4 aims to ensure that the landscape, historic and wildlife value of farmland is increased whilst responding to issues such as climate change.

The RSS East of England Plan Policy ENG1 advises that new development should be designed to optimise its carbon performance and the supply of energy from renewable and low carbon energy sources should be encouraged.

The RSS East of England Plan Policy ENG2 states that the development of new facilities for renewable power generation should be supported in order to meet the regions targets.

Paragraphs 93 to 98 of the NPPF highlight the importance of providing renewable energy sources. Paragraph 98 states that applications should be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, and that Local Planning Authorities should recognise the valuable contribution renewable energy projects have in relation to cutting greenhouse gas emissions. This demonstrates that there is a strong presumption in favour of renewable energy projects. In addition, Paragraph 65 of the NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should not refuse planning permission for developments, which promote high levels of sustainability because of concerns about incompatibility with an existing landscape. This suggests that, on balance, more weight should be afforded to sustainability principles than to visual appearance.

Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy (Draft Consultation July 2011) states that proposals for renewable energy will normally be supported. Whilst it is noted that the policy is still in draft form, it demonstrates Fenland's direction of travel in terms of proposals for renewable developments. CS12 would, therefore, reinforce that more weight should be afforded to sustainability principles rather than visual appearance.

Layout, Design and Access

The application seeks full planning permission for 2 x 11kW turbines, mounted on free standing 18 metre galvanised steel lattice masts. The turbines have two blades, which are manufactured as a single composite unit 13 metres in diameter. The masts and blades are coloured grey with the masts being a darker colour than the blades which are a pale grey/off white. There is no additional plant and machinery associated with the turbines and they are aligned running in a roughly east/west direction and at a right angle to Bevis Lane.

Access to the site of the turbines, and for construction purposes, will be via Bevis Lane and through the existing farmyard and farm track and this poses no issues from a highway point of view.

Landscape Character and Amenity

The site is located in relatively open countryside with the surrounding area being predominantly agricultural and topographically flat. The turbines will be visible from Bevis Lane, particularly to the north of the existing farm buildings, where there is little landscaping along the road frontage. The applicant has indicated that he has plans to plant the field to the north of the turbines with orchard trees, which will eventually stretch to the roadside and soften the views of the turbines.

The landscape is punctuated with residential development, tree lines and groups of trees and hedging, which will help to minimise long distance views of the proposed turbines. The choice of colour and design will also help to mitigate the effects of the installations on the wider landscape.

The nearest dwelling to the application site, which is not occupied by the applicant, is approx. 310 metres to the north east. The application contains a report regarding the noise issues associated with turbines of this size and this has been considered by FDC Environmental Protection. As a result of the assessment of the noise report standard conditions have been recommended to ensure the noise levels are maintained at acceptable levels during the day and at night.

It is acknowledged that the proposal will have some impact on the character of the area; however, the nature of the development is of a scale which can be considered compatible with the local agricultural landscape. The existence of natural landscape features and the settlement of Wisbech St Mary will break any wider views of the turbines and close up view points will be limited to Bevis Lane where there will be a distance of approx 300m to the nearest turbine.

The site lies in an area classified as "Settled Fen" which has been assessed (in the Wind Turbine Policy Guidance report prepared for FDC by the

Landscape Partnership) as having a medium/high capacity to accommodate a small scale group of turbines and a high capacity to accommodate a single turbine. The report is mainly used to consider the impact of commercial turbines with a typical height of 100-125m as opposed to the smaller scale installations under consideration here, however, it is useful in so far as the recommendations show that the site is located in an area which has the capacity to accommodate turbines without causing material harm to the landscape.

Ecology and Biodiversity

The applicant has conducted a desk top survey within a 2km radius of the application site and there are no nature reserves, Ramsar sites, special areas of conservation, RSPB reserves or SSSI's within the area. Natural England has issued guidance, which states that turbines of the size proposed in this application should be sited 50 metres from woodland and this advice has been observed. As a result Natural England has no objection to the application.

The turbines are proposed on agricultural grassland and the construction involves minimal disturbance. There is no loss of hedgerow habitats and negligible loss of productive (Grade 1) agricultural land.

Conclusion

This application has been considered fully against the relevant National and Local Policies and other material considerations. Due to the scale and positioning of the turbines the proposal is unlikely to result in any adverse material planning impacts in terms of landscape impact and amenity issues. The proposed turbines will generate power for a local business and national and local policies are supportive of the scheme, therefore approval is recommended.

6. RECOMMENDATION

Grant, subject to the following conditions:

- 1. The development permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.**

Reason - To ensure compliance with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2. Within a period of 25 years from the date of the first electricity generation on site the development hereby permitted shall be removed from the site in its entirety and the site restored to its former condition unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**
- 3. Reason - To allow the Local Planning Authority to re-assess the condition of the development in line with the potential life span of the installation.**
- 4. Should the wind turbines not be used for the production of energy for a period of six months, the structures shall be removed in their entirety and the land shall be restored to its former condition.**

Reason - To prevent the retention of development in the countryside that is not being used for its intended purpose.

Night-time noise levels

The noise emission (LA90, 10 minute) from effects of the wind turbine, as measured in free field conditions at any dwelling, shall not exceed during night hours 2300 – 0700, the greater of 43dB(A) or 5dB(A) above the night hours background noise (LA90, 10 minute) as measured in accordance with ETSU-R-97.

Day-time noise levels

At all other times the noise emission (LA90, 10 minute) from the effects of the wind turbine, as measured in free field conditions at any dwelling, shall not exceed the greater of 35dB(A) or 5dB(A) above the Quiet Waking Hours background noise (LA90, 10 minute) at wind speeds within the site not exceeding 10 metres per second.

Informatives

Period of hours have been used are as defined in ETSU-R-97 (The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms).

Quiet day-time periods are defined as:

- All evenings from 6pm to 11pm,
- Plus Saturday afternoons from 1pm to 6pm,
- Plus all day Sunday, 7am to 6pm.

Night-time is defined as 11pm to 7am

Remedial Action

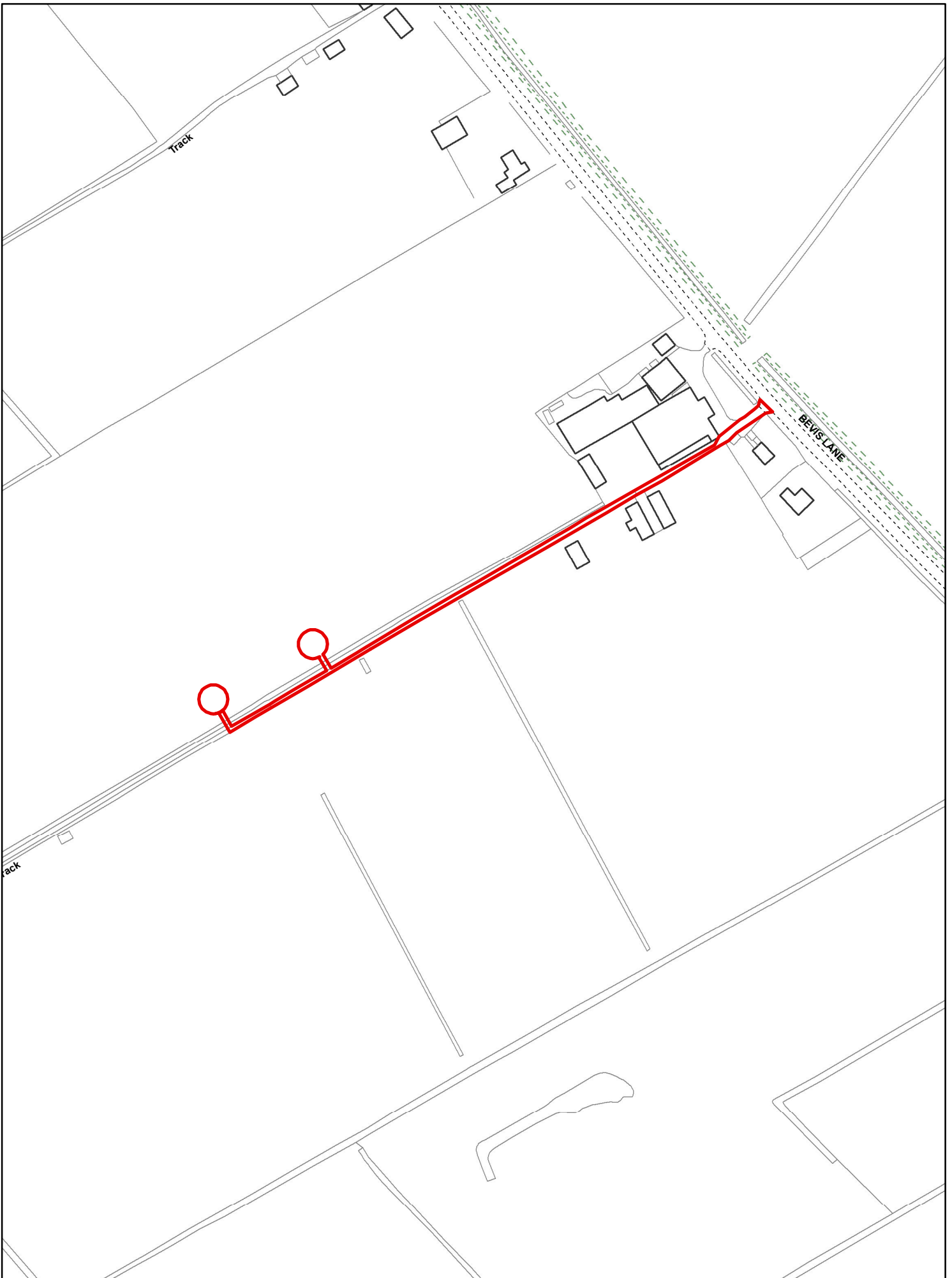
In the event that noise exceeds the limits specified in the planning permission remedial action must be undertaken to reduce the noise levels. This would include, checking the source noise level of individual turbines (if this has not already occurred as part of any warranty agreement with the turbine supplier or by compliance testing). Mitigation applied may involve slowing of turbine rotational speed, thus reducing noise, or even shut-down of individual turbines, under critical wind conditions.

Operator monitoring

At the reasonable request of, and following a complaint to, Fenland District Council the operator of the development shall, measure and assess the level of noise emissions from the wind turbine generators, following the procedures described in “The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms, ETSU-R-97” published by ETSU for the Department of Trade and Industry.

Cumulative impact

Monitoring undertaken to identify compliance of planning conditions or justify complaints must consider the cumulative impact of other wind farms/turbines. The existence of other wind farm noise should not be considered as part of the prevailing background noise.



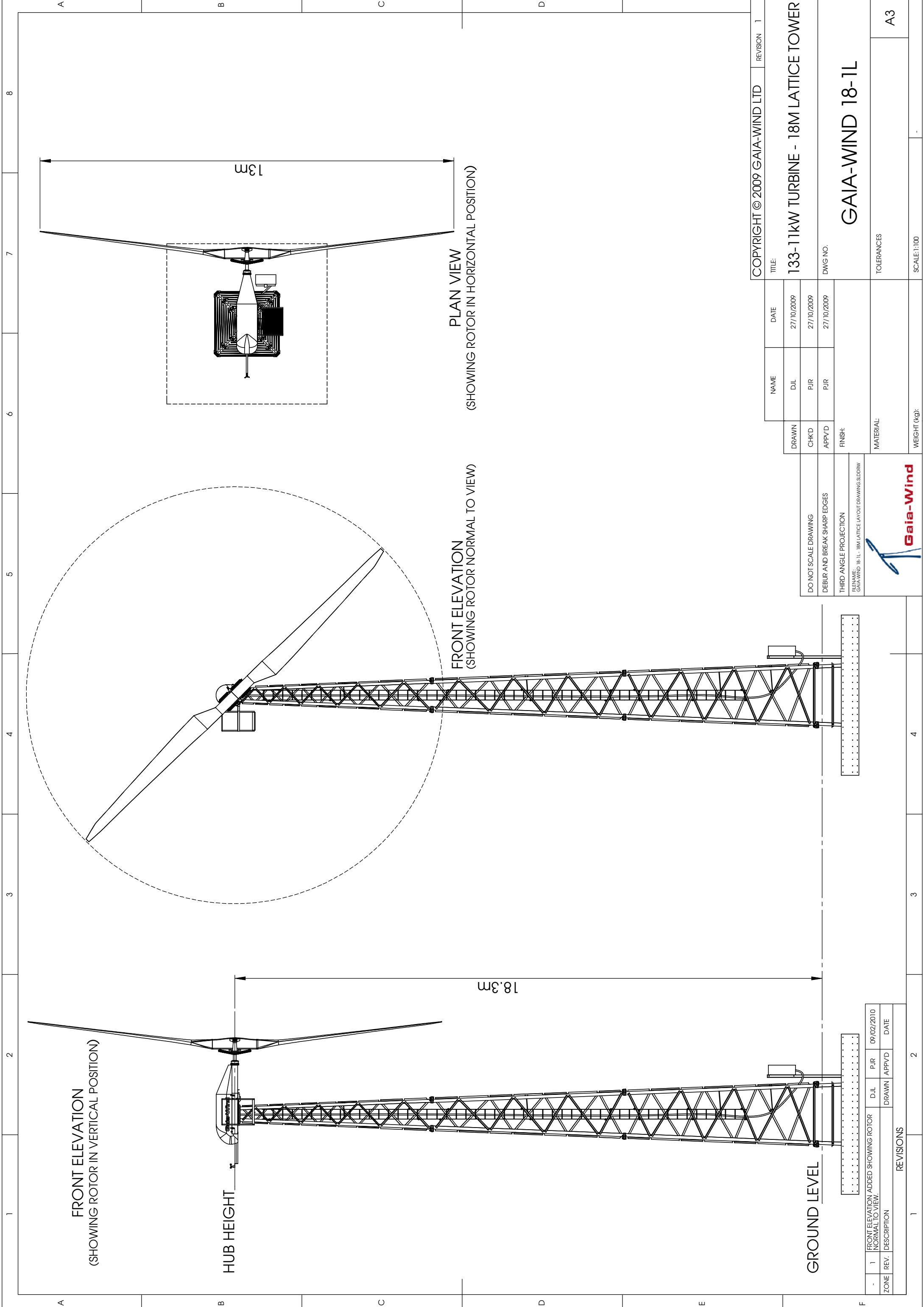
Created on: 01/06/2012

© Crown Copyright and database rights 2012 Ordnance Survey 10023778

F/YR12/0415/F

Scale = 1:2,500





FRONT ELEVATION
(SHOWING ROTOR IN VERTICAL POSITION)

HUB HEIGHT

18.3m

GROUND LEVEL

FRONT ELEVATION
(SHOWING ROTOR NORMAL TO VIEW)

PLAN VIEW
(SHOWING ROTOR IN HORIZONTAL POSITION)

13m

ZONE	REV.	DESCRIPTION	DRAWN	APPVD	DATE
-	1	FRONT ELEVATION ADDED SHOWING ROTOR NORMAL TO VIEW.	DJL	PJR	09/02/2010

REVISIONS

DO NOT SCALE DRAWING
DEBUR AND BREAK SHARP EDGES
THIRD ANGLE PROJECTION
FILENAME: GAIAWIND 18-1L - 18M LATTICE LAYOUT DRAWING.SLDRAW



COPYRIGHT © 2009 GAIA-WIND LTD		REVISION	1
TITLE:		133-11kW TURBINE - 18M LATTICE TOWER	
DRAWN	NAME	DATE	
CHKD	DJL	27/10/2009	
APPVD	PJR	27/10/2009	
FINISH:		27/10/2009	
MATERIAL:		TOLERANCES	
WEIGHT (KG):		SCALE: 1:100	

GAIA-WIND 18-1L

A3