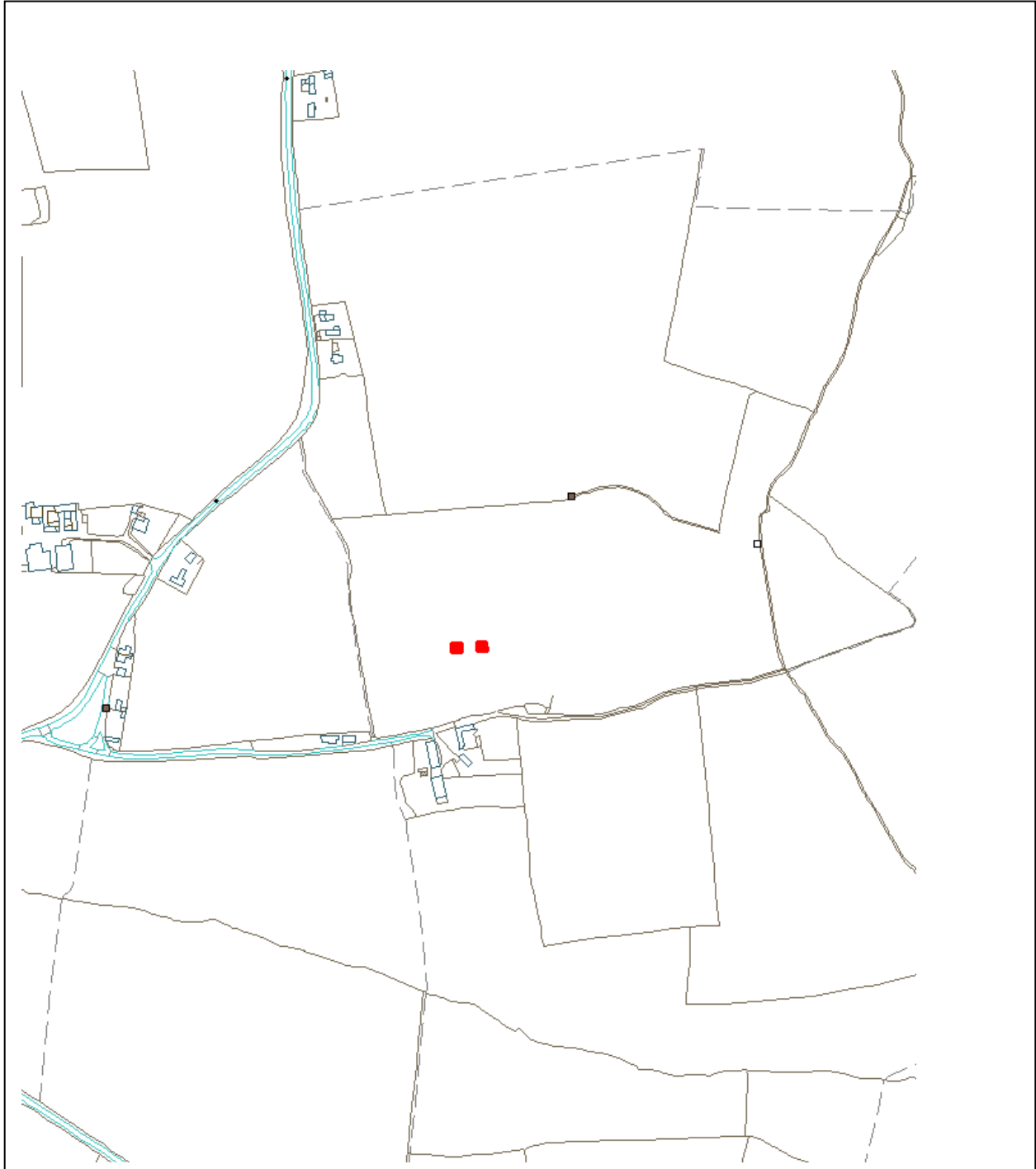


PLANNING COMMITTEE

27 MARCH 2013

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING

A.3 PLANNING APPLICATION - 12/01386/FUL - BARKERS FARM, BARKERS LANE, BEAUMONT, CLACTON ON SEA, CO16 0AL



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Application: 12/01386/FUL

Town / Parish: Beaumont

Applicant: Mr B Hull

Address: Barkers Farm, Barkers Lane, Beaumont, CO16 0AL

Development: Installation of two micro scale wind turbines (14.9m to hub, 5.6m diameter blades).

1. **Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The proposal is for a small scale renewable energy scheme comprising 2 No. wind turbines 14.97m to hub height, with 3No.x 5.6m diameter blades. The proposal will not be harmful to local or residential amenity and will not be harmful to landscape character or have harmful visual effects. It will not be harmful to the setting of any listed building or be likely to cause any material harm to biodiversity, including protected species. It accords with national and local planning policies for sustainable development, including renewable energy and will help to support local business.

Recommendation: Approve

Conditions:

1. Time limit for commencement – three years
2. Development in accordance with submitted plans
3. Turbines to be removed if not working for six months

Reason for approval:

In approving this application the Local Planning Authority has taken account of the development plan policies and/or proposals listed above and it considers that the proposed development is in accord with those policies and does not harm public amenity. This renewable energy scheme will enable power to be generated on a local scale, which will help to support the viability of the farm enterprise and help to reduce carbon emissions.

2. **Planning Policy**

National Policy:

National Planning Policy Framework

Local Plan Policy:

Adopted Tendring District Local Plan (2007)

QL7 – Rural regeneration

QL9 – Design of New Development

QL11 – Environmental Impacts and Compatibility of Uses

COM22 – Noise Pollution

EN1 – Landscape Character

EN6 – Biodiversity

EN6a – Protected Species

EN13a – Renewable Energy

EN23 – Development within the Proximity of a Listed Building

Tendring District Local Plan Proposed Submission Draft (2012)

PRO15 – The Rural Economy

SD9 – Design of New Development

PLA4 – Nature Conservation and Geo-Diversity

PLA5 – The Countryside Landscape

PLA6 – The Historic Environment

PLA8 – Listed Buildings

PLA10 – Renewable Energy Installations

3. Relevant Planning History

None

4. Consultations

Public Experience (Pollution and Environmental Control) – No comments to make.

ECC Highways – No objection.

Natural England – No specific comment to make – no likely or significant risk.

RSPB – No comments received.

Essex Wildlife Trust – No comments received.

MoD – No objection

Civil Aviation Authority – Standard advice.

National Grid Gas Networks – No potential problems foreseen.

Arquiva (BBC/ITV transmission network) – No objection.

5. Representations

5.1 One general objection has been received:

- Appears that large companies override local residents.
- Must be other sources of renewable energy available.

5.2 Your Officers advise that:

- Each application must be considered on its merits

- Whether alternative sources of renewable energy may be available is not a material planning consideration.

5.3 A specific objection has been received from a neighbour in Swan Lane:

- It will affect the aspect and view from my garden plus there is the possibility of noise.

5.4 These issues will be considered below, under “Residential amenity”.

6. Assessment

6.1 The main planning considerations are:

- Landscape character;
- Visual effects;
- Setting of Listed Building;
- Protected species; and,
- Residential amenity.

6.2 The proposal is for two wind turbines 14.97m to hub height, with 3No.x 5.6m diameter blades. The wind turbines would be sited in an open field about 100m north of Barkers Farm, a Grade II listed building. Public footpaths run about 70m (min.) south of the proposed wind turbines, in an east - west direction and 100m to the west of the proposed wind turbines, in a north-south direction.

6.3 The central issue is whether there would be any material adverse impact on the local environment to outweigh the general presumption in favour of sustainable development, including renewable energy schemes.

Landscape character

6.4 The application land is not subject to any special landscape designation and is not of special importance in planning terms. In respect of local character, the adopted Tendring District Landscape Character Assessment describes the land as being within the Tendring and Wix Clay Plateau. The study states that “The landscape is visually sensitive as a result of its open and rural character and long views – here the inappropriate siting or location of any development such as a farm building or tall structures has the potential to have a high visual impact. However, the woodlands and gently undulating topography provide some opportunities to integrate development.” Your Officers do not consider that the two proposed small-scale wind turbines would be materially harmful to landscape character, as they are not particularly tall structures and they would not have a high visual impact.

Visual effects

6.5 The Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for Built Development includes specific advice in relation to the potential for development to be highly visible at plateau edges, which are particularly sensitive. The application land is not at the plateau edge, however. The visual effects of the proposal will be mitigated by the gently undulating topography and the site is constrained visually by a wooded area to the east and surrounding field hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Your Officers do not consider that the two proposed small-scale wind turbines would be materially harmful visually to the landscape, in the circumstances.

Setting of Listed Building

6.6 Your Officers do not consider that the setting of the listed building would be affected by the proposed siting of the two wind turbines due to their small scale, the distance involved and

intervening landscape features, including the field hedgerow on top of the bank which runs alongside the public footpath between the proposed turbines and listed building.

Protected species

- 6.6 Beaumont Parish Council has expressed concerns over possible impact upon wildlife, including Fisher's Estuarine Moth. An Ecological report submitted by the Agents for the application considers that "the realistic likelihood of this turbine impacting on this species is negligible". Natural England has been consulted and does not consider that there would be any likely or significant risk from the proposal and has no specific comment to make on that basis. There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal would have any harmful effect upon any protected or other species.
- 6.7 The RSPB and Essex Wildlife Trust have also been consulted but have not commented.

Residential amenity

- 6.8 The nearest unrelated dwelling is about 150m away to the south west in Barkers Lane. Other dwellings nearby in Swan Lane are about 180m or more away to the west. Having regard to the size and siting of the proposed turbines and their distance from the nearest dwellings, there would be no material loss of residential amenity. The fact that the proposed turbines may be visible from residential property would not be a sustainable reason to refuse planning permission.
- 6.9 There would be no loss of residential amenity due to noise.
- 6.10 Your Officers note the additional objections of Beaumont Parish Council but advise that each application must be considered on its merits. In terms of local planning policies, the central policy in this case is Policy EN13a, which is permissive in its approach to renewable energy schemes; rather than seeking to resist such proposals. The development plan must be read as a whole and all other material considerations taken into account, including national planning policy. National policy seeks to encourage sustainable development, including renewable energy schemes. Although this does not mean that all such proposals will be acceptable, in the absence of any clear and overriding reasons to refuse planning permission, the expectation is that planning permission will be granted. Your Officers do not consider that there would be any adverse cumulative effects if all of the proposed micro wind turbines which appear on this agenda were erected; having regard to their small scale, numbers and locations.

Other issues

- 6.11 Your Officers note the additional objections of Beaumont Parish Council but advise that each application must be considered on its merits. In terms of local planning policies, the central policy in this case is Policy EN13a, which is permissive in its approach to renewable energy schemes; rather than seeking to resist such proposals. The development plan must be read as a whole and all other material considerations taken into account, including national planning policy. National policy seeks to encourage sustainable development, including renewable energy schemes. Although this does not mean that all such proposals will be acceptable, in the absence of any clear and overriding reasons to refuse planning permission, the expectation is that planning permission will be granted. A similar wind turbine already exists to the south of Oak Corner. Your Officers do not consider that there would be any adverse cumulative effects if all of the proposed micro wind turbines which appear on this agenda were erected; having regard to their small scale, numbers and locations.

Background Papers

None.