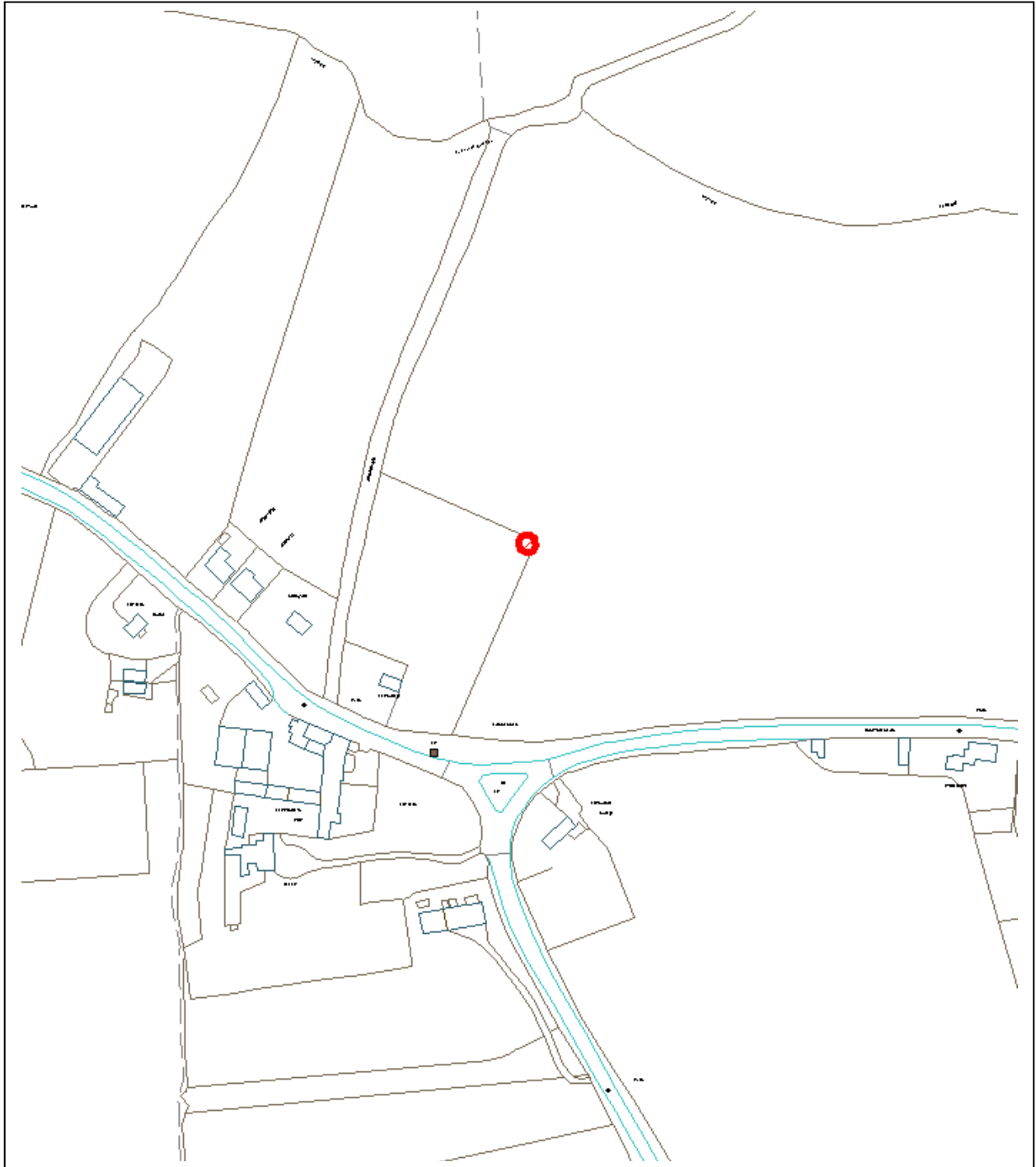


PLANNING COMMITTEE

27 MARCH 2013

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING

A.5 PLANNING APPLICATION - 12/01421/FUL - OAK COTTAGE, WIX ROAD, BEAUMONT, CO16 0AT



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Application: 12/01421/FUL

Town / Parish: Beaumont

Applicant: Mr R Cornish

Address: Oak Cottage, Wix Road, Beaumont, CO16 0AT

Development: Installation of a single micro scale wind turbine (14.9m to hub, 5.6m diameter blades).

1. **Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The proposal is for a small scale renewable energy scheme comprising 1 No. wind turbine 14.97m to hub height, with 3 No.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.

Recommendation: Approve

Conditions:

1. Time limit for commencement – three years
2. Development in accordance with submitted plans
3. Turbine 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 reduce carbon emissions.

2. **Planning Policy**

National Policy:

National Planning Policy Framework

Local Plan Policy:

Adopted Tendring District Local Plan (2007)

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)

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**

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

ECC Highways – No objection.

Natural England – Does not object – unlikely to cause any adverse effects to designated sites, landscape or protected species.

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.

Beaumont Parish Council – objects:

- Indiscriminate installation of obtrusive structures.
- Contrary to local planning policies aiming to protect the environment/landscape.
- Physical and emotional disturbance to local residents.
- Effects on wildlife, including Fisher's Estuarine Moth.
- Mushroom effect will begin and more turbines will follow.
- Local objections should not be ignored.

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.

6. **Assessment**

6.1 The main planning considerations are:

- Landscape character;
- Visual effects;
- Settings of Listed Buildings;
- Protected species; and,
- Residential amenity.

6.2 The proposal is for a wind turbine 14.97m to hub height, with 3No.x 5.6m diameter blades. The wind turbine would be sited in an open paddock area about 80m north east of Oak Cottage. Oak farmhouse and Oak Business Park are an extensive group of Grade II listed buildings about 120m away to the south west. 200m away to the south east is White House, which is also listed Grade II. A public footpath, Goff's Lane, runs about 80m to the west of the proposed wind turbine, 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 proposed single small-scale wind turbine would be materially harmful to landscape character, as it is not a particularly tall structure and it 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. Further, the visual effects of the proposal will be mitigated by the gently undulating topography and the site is constrained visually by Glebe Wood to the west and surrounding field hedgerows, hedgerow trees and other wooded areas. The turbine will be occasionally visible from Goff's Lane and for a short distance from both Wix Road to the south and from Harwich Road to the east, through gaps in field boundary vegetation. Your Officers do not consider that the proposed small-scale wind turbine would be materially harmful visually to the landscape, in the circumstances.

Settings of Listed Buildings

- 6.6 Your Officers do not consider that the settings of any listed buildings would be harmed by the proposal due to their distances from the proposed wind turbine, its small scale and intervening buildings, trees and hedgerows.

Protected species

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

Residential amenity

- 6.9 The nearest unrelated dwelling is about 100m away to the south west, part of a small group of dwellings in Wix Road. Having regard to the size and siting of the proposed wind turbine and its distance from the nearest dwellings, there would be no material loss of residential amenity.
- 6.10 There would be no loss of residential amenity due to noise.

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