



Committee and date
South Planning Committee
24 June 2014

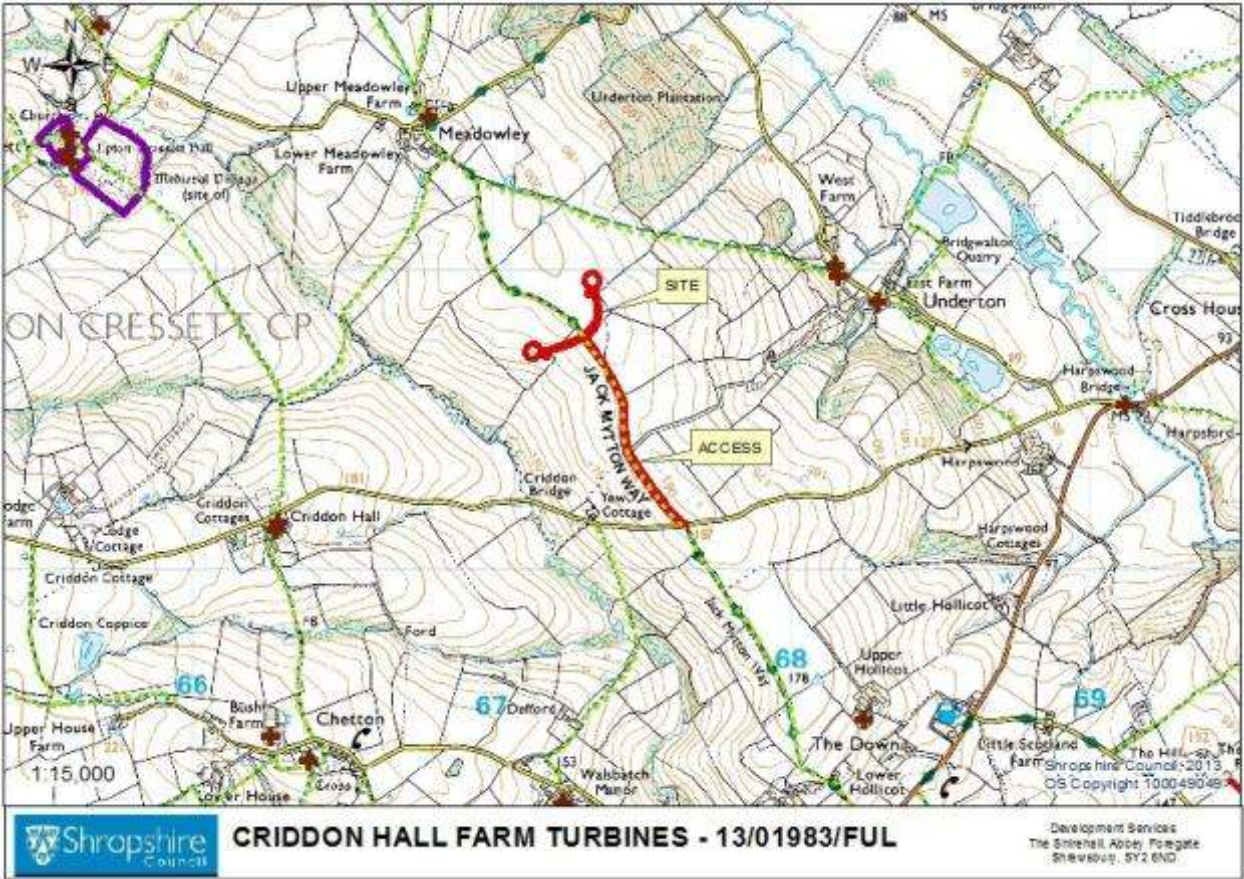
Item
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Public

Development Management Report

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Summary of Application

Application Number: 13/01983/FUL	Parish: Morville
Proposal: Erection of 2 no. wind turbines up to a height of 80.0m to tip and associated infrastructure including new access tracks, one control building, (amended to 77m tip height)	
Site Address: Criddon Hall Farm, Criddon, Upton Cressett, Bridgnorth, WV16 6UJ	
Applicant: Sharenergy	
Case Officer: Grahame French	email: planningdmse@shropshire.gov.uk



Contact: Tim Rogers (01743) 258773

Recommendation:- Refuse Permission for the following reason:

The scale and location of the proposed turbine would have an unacceptably adverse effect on the character and scenic quality of the local landscape, on the setting of local heritage assets including Upton Cressett Hall and also on local amenities and leisure and tourism interests, including equestrian use of the Jack Mytton Way. This would be contrary to the objectives of Core Strategy Policies CS5, CS6, CS13, CS16, CS17 and sections 28 and 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

1.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 1.1 It is proposed to construct and operate two wind turbines together with associated infrastructure including foundations, transformer and crane hard-standing areas; and new on-site access tracks. Each turbine would have a generating capacity of between approximately 0.5 and 1.0 MW, resulting in a total capacity of up to 1.5 MW.
- 1.2 The proposals as originally submitted specified a height of 80m for each turbine but the applicant has recently reduced this to 77m in order to address an objection by the MOD. Other associated infrastructure would include foundations, transformer/switchgear building, crane hard standing areas, new access tracks and underground cabling. The planning application site area is 50 ha but the finished operational site would consist of approximately 0,7 ha, leaving the remaining land undisturbed.
- 1.3 The finish and colour of the wind turbines is likely to be semi-matt and pale grey and the wind turbines will be of a variable speed type, so that the wind turbine rotor speed will vary according to the energy available in the wind. The wind turbines will have a rotational speed of between approximately 8 and 20 revolutions per minute (dependent on variations in wind speed). The sections of new access track that will be built will be constructed using type 1 material. Any excavated material will be spread alongside the tracks and re-graded to the existing ground levels and reseeded to minimise the visual impact.
- 1.4 The turbine delivery vehicles will constitute abnormal loads during delivery to the site turbine components would most likely be delivered by and transported to site via the M54 at junction 4 continuing on to the A464, A442, A458, B4364 and the minor road to the site. Approximately 24 abnormal load trips would be required, associated with wind turbine component delivery towards the end of the 30 approximate week construction period. During the approximate 30 week construction period vehicular access to site would also be required for:
- Low loaders and other heavy goods vehicles to deliver equipment and plant;
 - 20-tonne lorries, to deliver/move material and stone for access tracks;
 - Flat-bed lorries to deliver control building components;
 - Extendable semi-low and platform trailers to deliver turbine components (requiring private or police escort);
 - Cranes delivered as mobile units and on low-loaders;
 - Deliveries of fuel and water by tanker; and
 - Construction personnel, by private car, light vehicles or minibus.

- 1.5 Up to 15 workers would be on site at any one time during the construction phase. The operational site would generate occasional routine maintenance visits by a small four wheel drive vehicle. There may be an occasional need for an HGV / road-going crane or similar to access the site for heavier maintenance and repairs.
- 1.6 An existing track leads to the proposed access point from the public highway. The junction with the minor road may need to be suitably surfaced. An estimated 400 m of onsite access tracks would also be required to provide access within the site. These would be constructed of stone chippings on geotextile to a width of up to 5m. The edges of the tracks would be allowed to re-vegetate following construction. The track layout has also been designed to complement existing agricultural activities onsite.
- 1.7 There are two public rights of way which run through the planning application red line site boundary. The proposed wind turbines are located well outside of either the oversail or 'fall over' distances from these public rights of way. The 'Jack Mytton Way' does follow the existing access track that would be used to access the site of the proposed turbines for the temporary construction period. Any disruption to users of this right of way would therefore be temporary. The construction compound would be used for storage and parking of vehicles to prevent obstruction of the right of way. The Applicant is also proposing to offer an alternative of additional permissive route running through the north west part of the site, located approximately further 50-75m further away from the proposed turbines.
- 1.8 The development is a community led scheme (the 'Crida Community Wind Project') which the applicant advises has been jointly developed with Sustainable Bridgnorth, a local voluntary environmental organisation. It is stated that the local community has been involved in all stages of the environmental assessments, and will continue to work with the Applicant throughout the planning and post-planning stages of the Development.

2. SITE LOCATION / DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site lies approximately 1.6 km south east of Upton Cressett and 3.5km west of Bridgnorth. The turbines would be sited on a ridgeline c.350m apart at an elevation of approximately 180 and 195 m AOD. The Application Site and surrounding area mainly comprises agricultural land interspersed with areas of woodland. A road approximately 650 m to the south of the proposed turbine locations would serve the development via an existing access and new access tracks. The B4364 is approximately 1.6 km to the east, and the A458 Bridgnorth by-pass is located approximately 3,5km to the east. The layout of the Development is shown in Drawing 002 accompanying the planning application.
- 2.2 The easternmost of the 77m turbines would sit on the top of a ridge which stands 110m above the level of land at the Mor Valley to the immediate east. The western turbine would be 310m south west and 20m lower on the south-east facing slope of the minor valley which leads to Upton Cressett.

3. REASON FOR COMMITTEE

- 3.1 The Parish Council has objected to the proposal, and following consultation with the Development Manager the application is referred to the committee for determination.

4. CONSULTEE RESPONSES

- 4.1 Morville Parish Council – Objection.

- 4.2 Neenton Parish Council (nearby parish council): Objection. I write to you as Chairman of Neenton Parish Meeting in connection with various proposals for industrial-sized wind turbines in neighbouring parishes, including those that are the subject of the following planning applications:

- Upton Cressett (13/01983/FUL)
- The Down (13/02194/FUL)
- Upper House Farm, Chetton (13/0253/SCR)
- Middleton Priors (13/03126/FUL)
- Upton Park Farm, Upton Cressett (13/0319/SCR)

Our Parish Meeting discussed these proposals at its meeting on 27th August. There was real concern and a unanimous view that such developments would be highly prejudicial to both quality of life and the economy of the local area of which Neenton is a part. In particular, the siting of these turbines in prominent positions on high ground would destroy the unspoiled character of the local landscape, ruining its appeal both for local people as well as for tourists looking to this part of Shropshire as a place of escape from the modern built environment. Such turbines sited on local hills as proposed would not only deter the many visitors who approach the area from the east by blighting the landscape in front of the Shropshire Hills AONB, they would blight the AONB itself. The AONB was designated in part in recognition of the outstanding panoramic views from places such as Brown Clee Hill, the highest point in Shropshire. The proposed turbines would sit in the middle of the view north-east across the midland plain, obscuring it and destroying its appeal and thus seriously diminishing the qualities of the AONB. Neenton is presently engaged on an ambitious project to regenerate the village and our surrounding area and the ability to attract visitors and tourists is critical to the success of that endeavour. We urge you in the strongest possible terms to reject these proposals, and any others of a similar ilk that may appear, because of the damage even one of them would do to the character and quality of the landscape that the Shropshire Core Strategy recognises to be Shropshire's greatest asset.

- 4.3 English Heritage: Objection:

- i. Setting makes an important contribution to the significance of the group of designated heritage assets at Upton Cressett. The proposed development is within that setting and would cause harm to the significance of the historic environment. English Heritage Advice Two turbines are proposed, south east of Meadowley, sited on locally high ground, one at about at 180metres and the other at about the 195 metre contour. They would be about 350 metres apart and 80 metres tall. The proposed location of the turbines is about 1.6 km to the east, and within the

setting of a group of highly designated heritage assets clustered together in a manorial complex at Upton Cressett. They are: Upton Cressett Hall (Grade I listed); Upton Cressett Gatehouse (Grade I listed); the former St Michael's Church, Upton Cressett (Grade I listed); and the Moated Site and Fishponds, Upton Cressett (Scheduled Monument). Two further sites are detached from this group, namely a Roman Wayside Settlement (a Scheduled Monument about 650 metres to the west of Upton Cressett Hall), and St Giles' Church, Chetton (Listed II* located about 1.5 km to the south west of the nearest turbine). Each of the assets at Upton Cressett has particular significance, but because they are also closely interrelated this adds to the overall significance of the manorial complex as a whole.

- ii. Significance of Upton Cressett: The Romanesque chancel arch of St Michael's Church indicates Anglo-Norman origins for the medieval manorial complex. The adjacent moated site was probably constructed in the high Middle Ages on a gentle hillside offering wide views to the south-east, and is likely to be partly contemporary with the adjacent medieval village site. The original manor house was replaced with the present half-timbered house in the mid C15. The house was encased in brick, and a detached brick gatehouse added in 1580. The complex includes remarkable historic fabric spanning the period C12-C16. Upton Cressett has a strong association with the Cressett family, significant members of the Tudor and Stuart Royal Court, involved in numerous national events. The manor was associated with a deer park, although its exact extent has not been defined within the present landscape. From available evidence, however, it is most likely that the proposed location of the turbines is not within the former park. The complex is, in our view, designed to take advantage of views to the south and east. These views remain essentially rural without significant C19 and C20 influence. This setting is important to the significance of Upton Cressett as it contributes to a strong sense of remoteness and tranquility which enhances the quality of design and composition. The spiritual value of St Michael's and St Giles' Churches is enhanced by this sense of remoteness.
- iii. Impact on significance: The turbines would introduce new, large, industrial elements into the setting that would result in harm being caused to the significance of the Upton Cressett manorial complex because of their contrasting scale, appearance and movement that would diminish from the experience of this unusual and sensitive historic environment complex.
- iv. Planning and legislative context: English Heritage's assessment of the proposal rests on the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; the Government's planning policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, the Development Plan and relevant guidance. NPPF policies 6,7,8,9 and 17 outline that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, and that proposals that do not conserve are not sustainable development unless outweighed by another competing objective, and, avoidance of conflict between competing objectives has been sought. In terms of the NPPF the tests of paragraph 17, 131, 132, and 133 and 134 are also relevant in terms of the impact upon setting.
- v. Recommendation: Having considered those tests in overall terms, we consider that the significance of the Upton Cressett assets would be harmed by the proposed