

# NORTHUMBERLAND

## COUNTY COUNCIL

NCC/0/3

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18<sup>th</sup> April 2008

Dear Sir

### Northumberland County Council consultation response to AMEC's revised scheme of 16 Wind Turbines at land at Ray Fell, Northumberland

Northumberland County Council has responded to the consultation request by AMEC for a revised scheme of 16 Wind Turbines at land at Ray Fell, Northumberland.

Northumberland County Council would like to submit this document before the Inquiry under the prefix NCC/0/3. The documents were considered under the Council's delegated powers the County Council's response is detailed below:

1. On the 15 February 2008 AMEC advised the Inquiry of their intention to withdraw four turbines from their proposed Ray windfarm development. They subsequently confirmed this in a letter to the County Council dated 27 February 2008.

2. The County Council's position at this Inquiry, confirmed in a County Council report prepared in December 2007 (NCC/1/3.18) in advance of the Inquiry has been that we object to the 20 turbine proposed development on three grounds:

i) the adverse impact on landscape character of the four proposed turbines south of the C195 road in the vicinity of Great Wanney Crag

ii) the unacceptable visual impact of these four turbines on the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument at Great Wanney Crag Hillfort; and

iii) the unacceptable cumulative impact of the proposal in terms of its visual effects when considered alongside the proposed Steadings and Green Rigg windfarms; and in terms of its impact on the historic environment when considered alongside the Green Rigg windfarm

3. In the original County Council report considered by the Planning and Regulatory Committee report of May 2007 (NCC/1.3.1) members were advised that the deletion of the four turbines in closest proximity to Great Wanney Crag would mitigate any adverse impact on landscape character and unacceptable visual impact of these turbines on the setting of Great Wanney Crag Hillfort Scheduled Monument. Accordingly in response to the revised Ray proposal where these four turbines are withdrawn the County Council **withdraws** its objections i) and ii).



Head of Planning and Conservation - John Bell

4. The Assistant County Archaeologist now further considers that in its amended form there is no longer an unacceptable cumulative impact in terms of its impact on the historic environment when considered alongside the proposed Green Rigg windfarm.

5. The County Council's landscape witness has also considered the cumulative visual effects of the revised Ray proposal. He considers the effects of the 16 turbine option are materially less than the 20 turbine option. However apart from one instance in a view from Knowesgate his cumulative visual effects assessment indicates that they remain within the same categories of visual effects as for the 20 turbine option. This includes an effect of severe adverse effect on Great Wanney Crag. (NCC/2/1- C: Appendix B). Therefore he concludes that there remains a basis for maintaining an objection to the revised Ray proposal on grounds of its cumulative visual effects.

6. The County Council need to take cognisance of this view when considering its revised position. It also needs to have regard to the significant weight that should be given to renewable energy developments in the planning balance as well as the fact that the remaining 16 turbines fall substantially within the preferred Scenario D of the Arup report. Accordingly taking into account all these factors and recognising AMECs willingness to modify its scheme the County Council has also resolved to **withdraw** its objection (iii), in relation to the revised submitted scheme for 16 turbines.

7. As a further consequence of the revised submitted scheme and the decision of the County Council to withdraw its objection (iii) in respect of the proposed Ray windfarm the County Council now also **amends** its objections to the proposed Green Rigg windfarm in respect of its cumulative impact on the historic environment when considered alongside the revised Ray scheme (leading to an amended reason (iii)). The County Council **maintains** its objection to Green Rigg as a stand alone development on the grounds of its unacceptable visual impact on the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument at Great Wanney Crag Hillfort (reason (ii)).

8. The revised reasons for objection in respect of the proposed Green Rigg windfarm are as follows:

- i) the proposed turbines due to their number, would have an adverse impact on the landscape character of the area
- ii) the unacceptable visual impact on the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument at Great Wanney Crag Hillfort
- iii) the unacceptable cumulative impact of the proposal in terms of visual effects when considered alongside the proposed Steadings and Ray windfarms

*This note has been prepared by Ian Campbell who, in accordance with the County Council's scheme of delegation, has been authorised to respond on behalf of the Authority to matters raised during the course of the Inquiry*

Please do not hesitate to contact our office on (01670) 534063 should you wish to discuss these matters.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'IAC', with a horizontal line underneath.

Ian Campbell  
Team Leader  
Strategic Policy and Initiatives Team

*Enc.*