



DM.29 11/12
Development Management Committee
Date 2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2012

**Subject: Public and Parish Council speaking at Development Management Committee regarding applications for determination relating to larger wind turbine and wind farm applications.**

Report by:

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Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

This report relates to a proposal to increase the time afforded to supporters, objectors and parish councils when addressing the Development Management Committee during items for the determination of planning applications for the larger wind turbine and wind farm developments.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

**A. That the total time periods afforded to all supporters, all objectors and parish councils for addressing the Development Management Committee for planning applications for determination relating to wind turbine and wind farm developments in excess of the thresholds contained within this report (section 4) are increased from 5 minutes for each group to 15 minutes for each group.**

## IMPLICATIONS

**Legal:**

None arising from this report.

**Financial :**

None arising from this report.

**Staffing :**

None arising from this report.

**Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :**

The planning applications will be considered against Human Rights implications especially with regard to Article 8 – right to respect for private and family life and Protocol 1, Article 1 – protection of property and balancing the public interest and well-being of the community within these rights.

**Risk Assessment :**

None arising from this report.

**Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :**

None arising from this report.

**Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

Current public speaking arrangements are explained in leaflet accessed via the following link:-

<http://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/your-council/have-your-say/public-speaking-at-meetings/>

The publicity requirements for larger wind turbine and wind farm planning applications agreed by councillors at the September 2011 meeting of the Development Management Committee

<http://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/your-council/decision-making-and-council-meetings/meetings-agendas-minutes-and-reports/committee-information-post-april-2011/development-management-committee/development-management-committee-reports/development-management-committe/107041.article>

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

Yes  No

**Key Decision:**

Yes  No

**1. Executive Summary**

1.1 This report relates to the Council’s response to the interest that has been generated for development proposals for wind turbine and wind farms. The height and resultant visibility of the largest of these examples of these developments means that the geographical area of impact is uniquely wide. This results in a considerable number of people making representations to the Council and the potential for a number of people wishing to address this Committee as well as more than one parish council. The current time period for 5 minutes in total for all supporters, 5 minutes in total for all objectors and 5 minutes in total for all parish councils per item is considered to be unreasonably short for the larger wind turbine and wind farm development proposals and it is recommended that the time periods are increased for each group.

**2. Background**

2.1 The Council are receiving an increasing number of pre-development enquiries and formal planning applications for wind turbines, including single installations for farms and other rural enterprises as well as off-grid residential development and much larger scale commercial wind farms. It is anticipated that two applications for wind farms could be submitted to the Council for determination this year.

2.2 Members may recall that a paper relating to the publicity requirements for larger wind turbine and wind farm applications was reported to the September 2011 meeting of the Development Management Committee. Members agreed with the officer’s recommendation that enhanced publicity was required for these type of developments due to their unique characteristics. Specific height and number thresholds for such applications were agreed, above which the enhanced publicity arrangements were agreed. There was also agreement to hold meetings of the Development Management Committee near to the application sites where practicable.

2.3 Currently, there is a time limit of five minutes for all supporters and five minutes for all objectors. There is an encouragement for people to get

together and arrange a single spokesperson where more than one person wishes to speak in each category. A maximum of three speakers are allowed in each category, sharing the time equally, if agreement cannot be reached. If more than three persons still wishes to speak, time will be allocated on the basis of the first three who have been registered with the Committee Administration team.

### **3. Discussion**

- 3.1 The Council receive many major applications per year for developments ranging from new housing schemes, holiday accommodation, intensive livestock units, water treatment works to new factories. Many of these generate significant levels of interest and, in some cases representations from more than one parish council. However, the larger wind turbine and wind farm development are considered to be unique in their characteristics by virtue of the uniformly high levels of public interest they generate and their wide area of potential visual impact. This is mainly due to their height, use of modern materials and rotating action. This paper is not seeking to pass judgment on the merits or otherwise of such developments, but is proposing recognition that the current period of time afforded to objectors, supporter and parish councils is unreasonably short.

### **4 Proposal**

- 4.1 For planning applications submitted to the Council comprising:-
- (i) A Horizontal axis turbine where the hub height is 50m or higher above the level of the ground upon which the turbine is erected, or;
  - (ii) A Vertical axis turbines in excess of 50m in height above the level of the ground upon which the turbine is erected, or;
  - (iii) Any development of three or more turbines where all of the turbines proposed exceed a hub height of 35m in height for a horizontal axis turbine or 35m overall height for a vertical axis turbine;

The public speaking periods at the Development Management Committee will be as follows:-

A time limit of 15 (fifteen) minutes for all supporters, 15 (fifteen) minutes for all objectors and 15 (fifteen) minutes for all parish councils. A maximum of three speakers will be allowed in each category, sharing the time equally, if agreement cannot be reached. If more than three still wish to speak, time will be allocated on the basis of the first three who registered with the Committee Administration team.

A further period of time will be permitted for the following categories; ward councillors, neighbouring ward councillors, County councillors and Members of Parliament who wish to

address Committee. No time limit will be imposed for these categories.

## **5. Implications**

- 5.1 Members may wish to consider revising the resolution to incorporate other categories of development if it is considered that similar extended public speaking arrangements should apply. However, it is considered that , due to their height and rotating action, the larger turbine and wind farm applications can be uniquely identified as being different to other categories.
- 5.2 The length of time of Development Management Committees has the potential to be extended with a resultant cost to the Council. However, given that most Development Management Committees last for 2 to 4 hours, the addition extra time for speaking is not considered to be significant (officers do not envisage more than one larger wind turbine or wind farm applications being reported to each Committee meeting).
- 5.3 Finally , it is considered that the increased time period will demonstrate that the council takes such proposals vey seriously and has responded to the interest that is commonly shown.

## **6. Conclusions and recommendations**

- 6.1 The changes detailed in section 4 are considered to be necessary so that the level of public speaking is more commensurate in scale and nature to the interest generated in these developments.