

Members' Library Service Request Form

Date of Document	01/09/12
Originator	Head Of Housing And Environment
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Document Title	Consultation Response to Midlothian Council: Planning Applications for 2 Wind Turbines at Cousland

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East Lothian Council

Additional information:

Authorised By	Monica Patterson
Designation	Ex Dir - Services for Communities
Date	26/09/12

For Office Use Only:	
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REPORT TO: Members' Library Service

MEETING DATE:

BY: Executive Director (Services for Communities)

SUBJECT: Consultation Response to Midlothian Council: Planning Applications for 2 Wind Turbines at Cousland

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform Members of an objection to planning application 12/00123/FUL on which this Council has been consulted by Midlothian Council as adjoining planning authority.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members note the objection to Midlothian Council planning application 11/00123/DPP because of the adverse impact on landscape character and visual amenity as detailed in the proposed letter of response attached as Appendix 1.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Midlothian Council has received a planning application for two wind turbines by Cousland, Midlothian. These turbines are close to the turbines which were the subject of a Members Library report earlier this month at Cousland Equestrian Centre, planning reference numbers 12/00401/DPP and 12/00402/DPP (Midlothian Council). The proposed three bladed turbines are 39.6m to blade tip, on a solid tower. The site is roughly 300m from the East/Midlothian boundary and visible from East Lothian, the nearest properties in East Lothian being at Elphinstone Tower.
- 3.2 The Supplementary Landscape Capacity Study for Smaller Wind Turbines does not apply to these sites as they lie within Midlothian. However, as it is so close to the boundary and within the same landscape character area as defined by the study, the same considerations in landscape and visual terms should apply.

3.3 The applications are each for a wind turbine of 39.6m to blade tip. The turbines are of a scale which is inappropriate to the landscape character and pattern of the area. The proposed turbines would be seen in context with existing electricity pylons and overhead cables which would result in undesirable visual clutter which would be detrimental to the landscape character and visual amenity of this locality.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial - none

6.2 Personnel - none

6.3 Other - none

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 East Lothian Supplementary Landscape Capacity Study for Smaller Wind turbines http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/206/planning-advice_and_guidance/1130/renewable_energy/3

7.2 Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Turbine Development in Midlothian, available http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/198/planning_policy/466/wind_energy_development

7.3 Planning application 12/00123/DPP Midlothian Council available on http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/161/planning_and_building_standards

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DATE	25 September 2012

Appendix

Our Ref: CONS/ADJ

Your Ref: 12/00123/DPP

Date: 25 September 2012

Kingsley Drinkwater via email to Kingsley.Drinkwater@midlothian.gov.uk

Dear Mr Drinkwater,

Applications for wind turbine development at Cousland – 11/00123/DPP

I refer to your recent consultation on the above planning application for 2 wind turbines to an overall height of 39.6m at Cousland. East Lothian Council **objects** to this application on the following grounds.

The proposed turbines are of a scale which is inappropriate to the landscape character and pattern of the area. It is also our view that these proposed turbines would be seen in context with existing electricity pylons and overhead cables which would result in undesirable visual clutter which would be detrimental to the landscape character and visual amenity of this locality.

East Lothian Council has approved a Supplementary Landscape Capacity study for smaller wind turbines in December 2011 (SLCS). The application site, although in Midlothian is situated in close proximity to the East Lothian boundary. Our SLCS found that there was capacity for wind turbines of no greater than 20m to blade tip if associated with farm buildings in this adjacent character area, due to significant effects likely to occur across a range of sensitivity criteria (these include scale, clutter, visibility). Our study also stated that any such turbines should avoid exacerbating the visual clutter of existing transmission lines and masts evident in some parts of this character area. As this site is so close to the boundary we feel the same constraints apply to the application site. We note that your landscape capacity study does not support turbines of this height in this location and makes a similar comments relating to the issue of visual clutter. These issues are apparent from the visualisations supplied by the applicant.

I also note it is usual practice that visualisation information is produced using bespoke software which uses contour information to give an accurate representation of the predicted appearance of the wind turbines. This is then superimposed over photographs taken from key viewpoints to give an accurate assessment of the likely visual impact. I have no knowledge of how accurate the method used by the applicant is, however, the comments above would still remain, bearing in mind that the visuals are a small part of the analysis of this application.

Yours sincerely,

[signed J Squires]

Ms J Squires

Planner, Policy & Projects

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