

The planning application for this development was submitted in February this year. It proposed the erection and operation of a 500kw wind turbine with associated transformer housing and cabling on a site right on the banks of the River Thames on reclaimed land within the Aggregate Industries site which sits within the Manor Road industrial area. The turbine's dimensions are given as three 28m long blades with a hub height of up to 59m, giving a maximum height to blade tip of 87m. The purpose of the wind turbine is to generate renewable energy to supply electricity to Aggregate Industry's existing operation with any surplus energy fed into the National Grid. A number of technical reports were submitted to support the application including a noise assessment, flood risk assessment, aviation consultation, landscape and visual assessment and planning policy summary. Statutory consultees were involved in the consideration of the proposal, including the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage as well as internal Council departments.

In view of its location a number of business premises in the vicinity of the site were notified and site notices posted on Manor Road. Local Ward Councillors were advised of the application. The nearest residential properties are located on Canada Road 350 metres to the south-east and Mariners Walk 580 metres to the west and are well separated from the proposed turbine by Manor Road and the intervening industrial development. Accordingly no individual residential properties were notified.

The application was assessed having regard to current national and local policy on sustainable energy initiatives and in particular the **National Planning Policy Framework** (March 2012). The section of the Framework on " Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change" exhorts local planning authorities to adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Paragraph 97 in part requires local authorities to:-

1. have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources;
2. design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts;
3. consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure....

Bexley's Core Strategy which was adopted on the 22 February 2012 includes policies to achieve sustainable development including Policy CS01 which lists a number of principles including "adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change" and specifically in Policy CS04 on the Erith geographic region :

“ supporting investigations into the potential for wind turbine development on Manor Road Estate, Holyhill Park and Belvedere Industrial area and decentralised heat and power networks within Erith Town centre and North End”

In principle therefore it is the case that wind turbines have been identified as acceptable and renewable energy solutions are fully supported by the current Government

Notwithstanding this any application must be considered on its merits. Whilst it is the case that by definition any wind turbine will be visible within a surrounding area in itself this is not in itself reason to withhold planning consent. The many successful wind turbine appeals testify to that. The Council's Environmental Health department were consulted on the application with particular regard to noise which is an issue now being raised by local residents. Conditions were imposed on the planning permission to protect noise levels and any potential disturbance to TV reception in the area. I reproduce the relevant planning conditions below which are typically imposed on such Wind Turbine planning consents.

3 The level of noise from the wind turbine shall not exceed the ETSU-R-97 noise limits at the nearest residential properties, for the wind speeds set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Noise Limits (dB La90)

Time Period	Measured 10m-height Wind Speed (ms⁻¹)											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Night Noise Limit	43.0	43.0	43.0	43.0	43.0	43.0	43.0	43.0	43.0	43.0	43.0	43.0
Daytime Noise Limit	43.4	43.4	43.4	43.4	43.6	44.2	45.1	46.2	47.3	48.3	49.0	49.0

Reason: To minimise the potential for pollution and disturbance to local amenity.

4 Within 21 days of a request by the Local Planning Authority following a complaint relating to turbine noise, the wind turbine operator shall, at their expense, employ a suitably competent and qualified person to measure and assess if the wind turbine is being operated in accordance with the limits set out in Table 1 above. All relevant data and reports shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Should the ETSU-R97 limits be exceeded the operator shall cease generation until appropriate mitigation is implemented to achieve the noise limits in Table 1.

Reason: To minimise the potential for pollution and disturbance to local amenity.

8 In the event of a complaint in respect of interference to television reception made to the Local Planning Authority within two years of the commencement of generation, the operator shall commission a study of signal strength in the vicinity of the complaint within one month of the complaint being received. The study shall assess the signal strength whilst the turbine is in operation and the signal strength when the turbine is not operating. If a competent and suitably qualified expert determines that material TV interference at the relevant receptor is caused by the turbine operation then a scheme to mitigate the impact shall be agreed with the Local Planning Authority within one month.

Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents

Given the imposition of these planning conditions the Local Planning Authority consider that residential amenities will continue to be protected.