

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)

**Appeal by Broadview Energy Developments Limited against a
refusal to grant planning permission by South
Northamptonshire Council for five wind turbines on land to the
north of Welsh Lane between Greatworth and Helmdon**

**SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF MICHAEL J MUSTON
ON BEHALF OF THE HELMDON, STUCHBURY AND
GREATWORTH WINDFARM ACTION GROUP**

PINS Reference APP/Z2830/A/11/2165035

South Northamptonshire Council Reference S/2010/1437/MAF

1. The starting point in this appeal is the position in relation to the Development Plan – the South Northamptonshire Local Plan. I have shown that the all but one of the relevant policies from the Local Plan are compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework and should therefore be given full weight. I have also shown that the proposal is contrary to NPPF compliant and saved Policies EV1, EV11 and EV12 of the Local Plan.
2. I have shown that the Development Plan is not out of date, silent or absent in relation to judging the appeal proposal. It may not contain a policy that deals specifically with wind farms, but it does contain all the necessary policies to allow the proposal to be considered and is consistent with the NPPF.
3. If the Inspector disagrees in relation to the status of the Development Plan policies, then I would comment that significant weight should be given to the policies of the emerging Core Strategy, in particular Policy S11. This policy is compliant with the NPPF and is a more appropriate and local expression of policy in relation to wind farms than simply falling back on the national policy stance contained in the NPPF. It is after all the Government's stated position that policies should be formulated and acted upon locally and this objective should be acted upon in this case.
4. The proposal is in any event contrary to specific guidance in the NPPF, notably on heritage assets, tranquillity and conserving the natural environment and landscape character. I have also shown that the proposal is contrary to other guidance, including the recently published central Government guidance, adopted SPDs, Highways Agency advice note SP12/09, and PPS5 Practice Guidance.
5. I have drawn on the evidence given by Alison Farmer, Robert Davis and affected local residents and shown that the proposal would be seriously harmful to the living conditions of a large number of local residents. The Tims at Stuchbury Hall Farm would be particularly severely affected, but other residents at Grange Farm and in Greatworth would also suffer serious negative impacts on their amenities.

6. I have drawn on the evidence to this inquiry from Alison Farmer, Richard Hall and Roger Miles to show that there would be a considerable adverse impact on the public rights of way in the vicinity of the site and on the locality more generally from the appeal proposal. The presence of so many public rights of way close to the turbines would mean that there would be a profusion of public viewpoints from where the adverse visual impact of the turbines would be appreciated. In addition, these rights of way are well used but would become much less attractive for use were the appeal proposal to proceed. The appeal proposal would therefore be very likely to reduce the use of the rights of way in the area.

7. I have noted that the highway authority do now object to the application on the grounds of highway safety. I have drawn on the evidence of Veronica Ward and on my own experience as a chartered town planner and concluded that the turbines would risk distracting drivers and consequently have a negative impact on highway safety.

8. I have noted the inadequacy of the community engagement pursued by the appellants and noted that the approach they took, which was always inadequate, is now, given the new advice published this summer, totally inconsistent with up-to-date Government advice.

9. Finally, I have given great weight to the fact that the proposal would provide renewable energy, in line with Government policy, and noted the limited duration of the development's life and its reversibility. However, I have noted that the amount of renewable energy generated, and the amount of CO₂ saved, is not known with any real degree of certainty. I have also pointed out the small scale of the proposed electricity generated compared with other larger wind farms elsewhere in the country.

10. I acknowledge that a balance must be struck between the benefits of the proposal and the harm it would cause. However, in my view the benefits are clearly outweighed by the significant harm that I and other witnesses have outlined. The

adverse effects of the development are unacceptable and are not outweighed by the benefits. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.