



Blackstone Edge Wind Farm Planning Statement

January 2008

e-on

E.ON UK plc

**Blackstone Edge
Wind Farm**

Planning Statement

January 2008

Entec UK Limited

Report for

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E.ON UK plc**Blackstone Edge
Wind Farm**

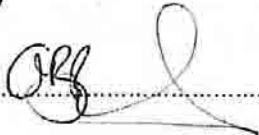
Planning Statement

January 2008

Entec UK Limited

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Document Revisions

No.	Details	Date
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Executive Summary

Introduction

This planning supporting statement has been prepared by Entec UK Ltd on behalf of E.ON UK plc, 'the Applicant', in support of a development of a wind farm at Blackstone Edge, near Crow Edge, South Yorkshire - 'the Proposed Development'.

It provides a short description of the development and its benefits in the context of the growing need for renewable energy, and summarises how the scheme accords with energy and planning policy and other significant material considerations.

The Development

The proposed Blackstone Edge Wind Farm would comprise of the installation and operation of a cluster of three wind turbines. Each turbine would consist of a tubular steel tower supporting a blade of up to 41m (up to 82m diameter) rotor at a hub height of up to 60m with a maximum height to blade tip of 101m. The turbines may generate up to 7MW of electricity annually but at the moment the likely case will be 6MW based on three 2MW machines. Other related elements of the development include: an anemometer mast of approximately 60m in height required to provide an ongoing measurement of wind speed to monitor and control performance; a small single storey electrical sub-station and a control building to mediate the flow of power generated into the local electricity distribution network. Underground cables on site will connect the turbines to the substation and control building and an underground cable connection off-site will provide the grid connection.

Renewable Energy - A Pressing Need

The Prime Minister is amongst those who are identifying climate change as a critical issue which should concern everyone. Growing consensus amongst scientists along with reviews such as the July 2006 Energy Review, the May 2007 energy review and the report by Sir Nicholas Stern add compelling weight to the need for action. The public awareness of the issue has increased with news reports and documentaries bringing almost daily reports of evidence of climate change and the potential consequences of inaction.

The importance of renewable energy generation as part of the response is recognised at a UK Governmental level and wind generation is acknowledged as the only truly viable form of substantive renewable energy production for the short to medium term. Furthermore, renewable energy from wind supports the national economic objective to diversify energy supply and to lessen dependence upon the importation of fossil fuel. Government consequently considers that the wider benefits to society and the economy (of renewable energy) are significant and must be given weight by decision makers in reaching their decisions on individual applications.

The Yorkshire and Humber region is responding to this requirement and a regional target of 708MW of installed renewables capacity by 2010 has been set in the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy – *The Yorkshire and Humber Plan* along with a sub-regional target for South Yorkshire of 47MW. The plan also illustrates indicative renewable energy potential within Local Authority areas to 2010 including Barnsley which is identified as having the potential for 15.4 MW of installed renewable energy capacity. In this context the Blackstone Edge proposal

provides the opportunity to make an important contribution towards these targets with a potential generation capacity of up to 7MW

Accordance with Policy

In shaping the form of the development the applicant has taken full account of the policy context for the development and modified the scheme accordingly in response to the emerging findings of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) summarised in an Environmental Statement (ES). It is considered that the submitted application is in full compliance with relevant policy and specifically the main themes of the Development Plan as briefly detailed below:

Sustainable Development - The Proposed Development contributes inherently to sustainable development as it helps to meet both national and regional targets for renewable energy supply. The ES identifies the sustainability of the development in its assessment of the degree to which the development would reduce reliance on fossil fuels and lead to the prevention of greenhouse gas emissions and reduced air pollution. Furthermore it indicates that the development does not create any significant adverse residual effects with regard to the landscape, visual effects, public amenity, hydrology, hydrogeology or land quality, ecology and ornithology, cultural heritage, traffic and transport. The Proposed Development therefore accords with the principles of sustainable development as set out in the Development Plan and conforms to national planning policy as set out in PPS1.

Renewable Energy Generation - The Development Plan encourages the generation of energy from renewable sources and places emphasis on the wider environmental benefits of using renewable sources. The Proposed Development will lead to an increase in the generation of energy from renewable sources, contributing towards the regional target of 9.4% by 2010. The output from three such turbines at Blackstone Edge could generate enough electricity to power up to 3,355¹ homes. Using an assumption that electricity from wind power would offset that produced in the UK using the current energy mix, this would see a reduction in emissions of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide (CO₂) of around 6,780² tonnes per year. The Proposed Development therefore accords with the aims of renewable energy policies, as set out in the Development Plan.

Community Engagement - The Statement of Community Involvement provides guidance to developers on the methods required to involve people in the process of making a planning application which include letters to residents, public meetings and exhibitions, local surgeries, press releases and the use of websites. The Applicant has undertaken an extensive programme of consultation which has included meetings with the planning authority and consultees, letters to local parish councils/residents, newsletters, a website and a public exhibition. The proposal therefore accords with the aims of community involvement as set out in the Development Plan.

Green Belt - The Blackstone Edge site lies within the Green Belt as defined in the proposals map of the UDP and therefore warrants special consideration in the context of the proposed development. The development plan requires the demonstration of very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Government guidance within PPS 22

¹ based on 30% load factor and average annual domestic usage of 4.7 MWh/year (Digest of UK Energy Statistics, 2004)

² grid electricity converting factor of 430kg CO₂/MWh (DEFRA)

indicates that such special circumstances may constitute the wider environmental benefits of the increased production of energy from renewable sources. The schemes contribution toward renewable energy development and subsequent reduction in CO₂ emissions warrant consideration as very special circumstances. The other key impact on the Green Belt is the issue of openness. This has been minimised through site design which has responded to local landscape character in terms of scale, layout and visual composition. The scheme aims to achieve a simple, balanced, rational and coherent image that will be viewed as an acceptable or positive component of the visual composition of the locality. In addition the scheme aims to minimise views as much as is possible for local residents, recreational areas, routes and popular hilltops. All these elements of the design contribute toward minimising the impacts on openness and should be considered in the context of the wider environmental benefits of the scheme which ultimately support Government aims of sustainable development. The Proposed Development therefore accords with the Green Belt policy as set out in the Development Plan and supported by Government guidance in PPS 22.

Landscape and Visual - The proposed turbines would be located within the Southern Yorkshire Pennine Fringe open landscape, which has a demonstrated capacity for wind farm development. The wind farm would generally be visible from parts of the open, upland farmland and neighbouring moorland. The proposed turbines would not change the open, agricultural/moorland character of the views. Significant cumulative visual effects would be limited to within approximately 2.5km of the site. This would include potential significant visual effects on the locally designated landscape of the Area of Borough Landscape Value and Peak District National Park areas within approximately 2.5km of the site due to the medium - high sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptors within the area. These effects would not be adverse because the proposed turbines would not be new landscape features and they would be viewed alongside existing turbines. The Proposed Development therefore accords with the landscape and visual amenity policies as set out in the Development Plan.

Public Amenity - The ES demonstrates that in respect of noise, the Proposed Development can be constructed and operated well within the limits established in relevant guidance (ETSU-R-97 as endorsed in PPS22) such that any discernible noise would not have any significant effect on the amenity of local residents. In respect of other amenity issues, the Applicant can adequately mitigate against any reduction in television reception quality where effects are attributable to the proposed wind farm (thus meeting the requirements of PPG8), the phenomenon known as shadow flicker may theoretically affect two properties known as Spicer House (for up to a maximum of 16.5 hours in a full year) and New Maythorn Farm (for up to a maximum of 33 hours in a full year). Discernible effects are therefore considered unlikely to occur and can be mitigated against if they do.

A communications and aviation study has been undertaken by Pager Power Ltd in May 2007 to assess the significance of potential effects on the performance of the Claxby radar as a result of the proposed operational turbines. The study concluded that the risk of a sustained objection from NATS is considered to be low.

A desktop study and field survey has been undertaken by National Grid Wireless in May 2007 to assess the possible effects on television services in the area around the proposed wind farm. The results of this study concluded that the Blackstone Edge wind turbines are unlikely to cause any adverse effects upon television reception.

Finally, the scheme has been developed to avoid any effects on existing infrastructure, telecommunications or on civil aviation and safety. The Proposed Development therefore complies with policies to protect public amenity within the Development Plan.

Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Land Quality - Land use on the site is agricultural, and there is no evidence from historical mapping that there has been any industrial use of the site. Quarrying has taken place within the vicinity of the site and an old quarry which has been used as a Category 4 Landfill lies adjacent to the site boundaries. Mining has historically taken place underneath the site at a depth of 145m below ground surface. A conjectured fault runs in a north westerly direction through the site, to the west of the turbine locations. Mitigation measures for this site have been developed to protect surface and groundwater quality and surface water quantity. Geotechnical site investigations will be undertaken before construction commences in the light of recent and historical quarrying and mining activities. These investigations will also consider potential faulting in the area and the potential for disturbance of the nearby landfill by site works though effects from or affecting both are unlikely. The Proposed Development therefore accords with policies on hydrology, hydrogeology and land quality as set out in the Development Plan.

Ecology and Ornithology - The nature conservation assessment in the ES finds that the site is not close to any statutory designated wildlife sites but there are several non-statutory wildlife sites in the local area. Densities of breeding birds on the site have been found to be low while three common bat species were found at the site in small numbers.

Future baseline conditions are not expected to change as a result of the development and no significant negative effects on nature conservation are expected. The overall impact of the development on nature conservation will be positive due to a financial contribution made toward the conservation of the lowland heathland in the local area and the planting of approximately 900m of species rich hedgerows on-site. The Proposed Development therefore accords with policies on ecology and nature conservation within the Development Plan

Cultural Heritage - The potential for significant previously unrecorded archaeological remains of any period within the Development Site is considered to be relatively low and even this limited potential is addressed through mitigation incorporated within the proposal design. The scheme design has also avoided the potential for effects on designated cultural heritage features. The Proposed Development therefore complies with policies on archaeology and cultural heritage within the Development Plan and with PPG15 and PPG16.

Traffic and Transport - Careful development of the access proposals to the site and mitigation which includes dedicated transport routes, appropriate timing of deliveries and the escorting of abnormal loads overcomes any potential effects from the Heavy Goods Vehicle movements associated with the construction phase. The Proposed Development therefore complies with relevant Development Plan policy.

Socio-Economics - In socio economic terms the areas that have been considered as having potential effects relate to the local and wider economy and the labour market, current and future residents and regular visitors to the area. No adverse effects on existing businesses, either in the immediate vicinity or more widely in the tourism industry, are envisaged during either construction or operation of the proposed wind farm. Positive socio-economic benefits will come from The Applicant's commitment to providing an annual community fund amounting to approximately £10,000 per year and a one-off low carbon package of energy saving technologies for local homes and community buildings. Whilst this is separate from the

development itself it is strongly linked and provides positive socio-economic benefits for the local community. The Proposed Development will have a positive socio-economic effect and comply with Development Plan policy.

Conclusion

The Proposed Development is located in an area with established capacity for wind energy development. The Proposed Development has been carefully designed to incorporate mitigation identified from an extensive and rigorous process of investigations. The result is a scheme which has been demonstrated to have no unacceptable effects and which is in accordance with the Development Plan and relevant national policy.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This planning application has been prepared by Entec UK Ltd on behalf of E.ON UK plc 'the Applicant', in support of a development of a wind farm at Blackstone Edge, near Crow Edge, South Yorkshire 'the Proposed Development'. This Planning Statement provides an assessment of the Proposed Development against Development Plan and other material considerations. This Statement should be read in conjunction with the Environmental Statement (ES) and the figures associated with it, and the Design and Access Statement.

1.2 Applicant

- 1.2.1 The Applicant is part of E.ON the world's largest privately owned integrated energy company. In the UK E.ON employs around 16,000 people, distributes electricity to 4.9 million customers and has 20 wind farms from Cornwall to Northern Ireland. The Applicant has been involved in wind energy projects since 1992 and is one of the UK's leading green generation businesses, with a large portfolio of onshore and offshore wind farms, hydro-power schemes and biomass-fuelled generation. The Applicant currently has two operational wind farms in Yorkshire at Ovenden Moor and Royd Moor, both of which are jointly owned with Energy Power Resources Limited (EPRL).

1.3 Environmental Impact Assessment

The Requirement for an EIA

- 1.3.1 The requirement to undertake EIA is prescribed in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999. The Proposed Development at Blackstone Edge falls within the 'Schedule 2' projects within the Regulations. Schedule 2 projects only require EIA if the local planning authority are of the view that a development could give rise to significant effects. In this instance a screening request was made to Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council to which the Council made a formal screening opinion that required the Applicant to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment. Subsequently a scoping opinion was sought by The Applicant that was issued by the Council on 11 December 2006 and identified a range of potential environmental effects that required detailed assessments.
- 1.3.2 The Environmental Statement produced, should be read in conjunction with this Planning Statement and the other application documents.

1.4 Methodology

- 1.4.1 This Statement has been produced in support of the planning application and considers the details of the Proposed Development and assesses them against the policies set out in the Development Plan and other material planning considerations. A conclusion is made of the degree to which the Proposed Development is in conformity with the Development Plan and whether other material planning considerations support the granting of planning consent.

Study Area

- 1.4.2 The Study Areas used when assessing the Proposed Development against planning policy have varied depending on what subject was being considered and the scope of the effects potentially encountered from that subject. Effects beyond the bounds of the Study Areas were considered where relevant such as those mitigating effects on global climate change brought by the use of renewable energy generation. The Study Areas are detailed individually for each subject in the ES.

2. The Proposed Development and the Need for Renewable Energy

2.1 Location and Description of the Development

Location

2.1.1 The site is located in South Yorkshire, approximately 15km to the west of Barnsley, 7km south-east of Holmfirth and approximately 1.5km to the north-east of the village of Crow Edge as shown in Figures 1.1 and 1.2 of the ES.

The Proposed Development

2.1.2 A full description of the Proposed Development is included in Chapter 4 of the ES and it is recommended this Chapter is referred to for further details. This section of the Planning Statement provides a brief review of these details.

2.1.3 The proposed Blackstone Edge Wind Farm would comprise of the installation and operation of three wind turbines. Each turbine would consist of a tubular steel tower supporting a blade of up to 41m (up to 82m diameter) rotor at a hub height of up to 60m with a maximum height to blade tip of 101m. The turbines may generate up to 7MW of electricity annually but at the moment the likely case will be 6MW based on three 2MW machines. Other related elements of the development include: an anemometer mast of approximately 60m in height required to provide an ongoing measurement of wind speed to monitor and control performance; a small single storey electrical sub-station and control building to mediate the flow of power generated into the local electricity distribution network. Underground cables on site will connect the turbines to the substation and control building and an underground connection off-site will provide the grid connection.

Construction Phases

2.1.4 Construction would consist of the following phases;

- Improvement of the site access;
- Construction of a temporary construction compound for off-loading materials and components and to accommodate site offices and welfare facilities;
- Construction of site tracks for access to turbine locations;
- Construction of the control building and electrical substation;
- Construction of turbine foundations;
- Construction of the cable to the grid connection point;
- Excavation of cable trenches and the laying of electricity and communication cables;

- The delivery and erection of turbine towers and installation of nacelles and blades;
- Commissioning of the Wind Farm; and
- Site reinstatement.

2.1.5 An indicative Construction programme is Provided in Box 2.1 below;

Box 2.1 Indicative construction programme	Month								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Access Track Work	■								
Foundation Work		■	■						
Control Building				■					
Turbine Erection					■				
Electrical Installation						■			
Testing and Commissioning							■	■	
Development Site Clearance								■	■
Development Site fully commissioned and operational									√

Decommissioning

2.1.6 Following the operational life of the wind farm it will be decommissioned unless alternative options such as further consents are sought. The turbines and associated infrastructure would be removed in accordance with industry good practice and/or in compliance with any planning conditions. This element of the scheme involves the complete removal of the turbines, mast, switchgear, and other equipment, the removal of all infrastructure located up to 1.2m below ground level and the re instatement of these areas to their original condition prior to the wind farm being built. The decommissioning process would take approximately two months to complete and will be in accordance with a decommissioning programme that will have been agreed with the planning authority prior to the commencement of the works.

2.2 Site Selection

2.2.1 A full description of the site selection process is detailed in Section 4 of the ES with this section providing a short review of the selection process.

2.2.2 Potential wind farm sites are identified either through approaches by landowners, which are then subject to a review by E.ON, or by the identification of sites by E.ON through either sieve mapping exercises or criteria based assessments.

2.2.3 The Blackstone Edge site was originally identified as having potential for a wind farm in early 2006. This was initiated after E.ON was contacted by the landowner of the site. Subsequent initial investigations by E.ON considered the feasibility of the site by applying the site selection criteria to the entire area of Barnsley.

2.2.4 The site selection criteria applied are as follows;

- Land Use and Context: the existing land use and environmental or planning designations on or near the site.
- Wind Resource: the wind resource on the site.
- Electrical Connection: proximity to electricity grid and its likely capacity.
- Transport Infrastructure: proximity to public road infrastructure for construction, operation and maintenance.
- Residential Amenity: proximity to dwellings and settlements.
- Military and Aviation Constraints: potential effect of wind turbines on military and aviation functions

2.2.5 On the basis of applying these criteria it was determined that the site showed potential for a wind farm and warranted further detailed environmental and technical assessment.

2.2.6 The outcome of E.ON's initial screening and feasibility investigations on Blackstone Edge highlighted that:

- The site itself and its immediate surroundings had no statutory planning or environmental designations;
- There were no regional or local planning policies which in principle precluded wind farm development;
- The Development Site was relatively remote and separated from residential settlements;
- There was likely to be a good wind resource potential;
- The surrounding landscape context was likely to be suitable to accommodate a wind farm;
- There were potential connection options at the nearby Hazlehead Primary; and
- There was no indication of likely significant bird concerns on site.

2.3 The Application Site

2.3.1 The Blackstone Edge site lies within upland farmland, within the Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe, between the moorland of the Peak District and the settlement/urban fringe areas of Barnsley and Huddersfield and the former coalfield areas to the north east and south east. Generally the landscape can be described as transitional between the strong valleys and the pastoral Pennine and High Peak foothills and hill plateaux. The landscape appears to be remote in character, with scattered farmsteads and hamlets, but the towns are also in close proximity, with long views to the urban areas across the plateaux.

2.4 Consultations

- 2.4.1 E-ON has undertaken a programme of public consultation. This included introductory letters to parish and town councils within 3km of the proposal and a newsletter for local residents made available from the Wind Mill Café at Royd Moor Wind Farm. In December 2006.
- 2.4.2 This was followed in February 2007 by the distribution of a newsletter to 3173 households within 5km of the proposal inviting local people to join the Blackstone Edge Mailing List to express their views on the proposal and share their ideas on community benefits. Copies of the newsletter were also sent to parish and town councils within 3km of the proposal, the Penistone & District Community Partnership and the Wind Mill Café. To date over 40 people have joined the Blackstone Edge Mailing List.
- 2.4.3 A public exhibition was held at Crow Edge Community Centre between March 27th and 28th 2007. The event was advertised locally and invites were sent to 3173 households within 5km of the proposal, parish and town councils within 3km of the proposal and the Penistone & District Community Partnership. A welcome pack with the March newsletter, E.ON's community benefits proposal, a feedback form and general information about wind energy was distributed to all attendees. Over 110 people attended.
- 2.4.4 In April 2007 the public exhibition handouts were sent to all members of the Blackstone Edge Mailing List.
- 2.4.5 The Blackstone Edge webpage, www.eon-uk.com/generation/blackstoneedge.aspx, was created in December 2006 and it is regularly being updated with the latest news and progress of the proposal.
- 2.4.6 Early discussions and meetings were held prior to the submission of a formal request for a scoping opinion. A range of issues were discussed and the LPA who advised that a robust cumulative impact assessment would be required to address the combined effects of the Royd Moor wind farm and the (then undetermined) Hazelhead wind farm.
- 2.4.7 As well as consulting with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and also seeking a formal scoping opinion, consultation was undertaken with a wide range of other relevant organisations.
- 2.4.8 Consultations were also undertaken with a range of utility and telecommunication companies and bodies representing aviation interests. From these consultations National Air Traffic Services identified a possible effect on the performance of the Claxby radar and as a result of this the Applicant appointed Pager Power Ltd, a consultancy that specialises in aviation and communication studies for wind farms, to assess the significance of the effect. The study looked at the likely operational effects from the proposed wind farm and a cumulative assessment of operational and consented wind farms on the provision of en-route air traffic services from National Air Traffic Services. An analysis of significant airspace in the vicinity of the site was conducted and an assessment made of En Route plc's (NERL) likely concerns and an estimation made of the likelihood of a sustained NERL objection. Following the full technical and operational assessment the risk of a sustained objection from NATS/NERL is considered to be low.

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- 2.4.9 More detail on the specific consultees' responses is provided in the relevant Chapters of the Environmental Statement.

2.5 The Pressing Need for Renewable Energy

- 2.5.1 The Prime Minister is amongst those who are identifying climate change as a critical issue which should concern everyone. Growing consensus amongst scientists along with reviews such as the July 2006 Energy Review, the May 2007 Energy White Paper and the report by Sir Nicholas Stern add compelling weight to the need for action. The public awareness of the issue has increased with news reports and documentaries bringing almost daily reports of evidence of climate change and the potential consequences of inaction. In February 2007 the most recent conclusions were published of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the UN body comprised of the world's foremost climate scientists. These conclusions are the strongest statement the IPCC have made to date with regard to climate change. The IPCC conclude that there is now no longer any doubt that climate change is real, serious and is being caused to a significant degree by human activities, particularly the burning of fossil fuels. Even if the causes of climate change are successfully stabilised, warming and sea level rises as a result of human activity would continue for centuries into the future³.
- 2.5.2 Change in global and regional temperatures and precipitation patterns can be a solely natural phenomenon and there have been a number of cooling and warming periods recorded over the last millennium. However, in the late 1980s a growing concern emerged that the climate was being influenced by human activity beyond these normal fluctuations. The issue of 'climate change' is normally used to mean that of the anthropogenic forcing of mean global temperatures through emissions to the atmosphere and land use changes.
- 2.5.3 Studies into the evidence for and implications of climate change have been largely co-ordinated by the IPCC which was established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organisation and the United Nations Environmental Programme. Its remit is to study historical evidence for climate change up to the present, modelling climatic processes and future climate change scenarios, identifying regional variations in climate change, quantifying the risk of potential global and regional effects of climate change and recommending mitigation and adaptation measures for the international community and individual governments.
- 2.5.4 The IPCC has so far reported in 1990, 1996 and 2001 and is due shortly to publish a full version of its fourth report in 2007, following on from advance reports from its individual working groups. Unequivocal evidence that climate change is occurring and that it is outside the fluctuations of natural changes is now recognised and in 2001, the IPCC warned of the dangers of not responding adequately to the threat. Evidence indicates that:

³Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis. Summary for Policymakers, February 2007.

"Global atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide have increased markedly as a result of human activities since 1750 and now far exceed pre-industrial values"¹

According to the summary of the IPCC Working Group 1's 2007 report¹

"Eleven of the last twelve years (1995-2006) rank among the 12 warmest years in the instrumental record of global surface temperature (since 1850)."

and further

"the understanding of anthropogenic warming and cooling influences on climate has improved since the Third Assessment Report, leading to a very high confidence (at least 90% chance of being correct) that the globally averaged net effect of human activities since 1750 has been one of warming"

2.5.5 The evidence is now unequivocal that the effect is being driven largely by anthropogenic factors. The factors include industrial and agricultural emissions of the so-called 'greenhouse gases' into the atmosphere and other effects such as land use changes which reduce the ability of the natural environment to recycle these gases. The summary report, produced by Working Group 1 of the IPCC in 2007, identifies carbon dioxide as the most important anthropogenic greenhouse gas. In 2001, carbon dioxide emissions are judged to represent about half of the warming effect of anthropogenic factors, and this proportion was predicted to increase to 75% by 2100⁴.

2.5.6 Likely impacts of expected climate change on human and natural systems are more difficult to predict than temperature, precipitation and sea level changes. The severity of the impacts on human and natural systems depends very much on the adaptability of systems to change. Natural ecosystems' ability to adapt will, in many cases, be severely inhibited by biogeographical fragmentation and other current existing pressures on ecosystems. Migration of whole ecosystems will be impossible in many areas due to human barriers to movement such as agriculturally intensive areas and urban development. In addition to effects of climatic changes many coastal ecosystems will also be affected by sea level rises. The second Working Group of the IPCC deals with the impacts of climate change, and they are not expected to approve their 2007 report until April. However, according to the 2001 IPCC report:

'many coastal areas will experience increased levels of flooding, loss of wetlands and mangroves, and seawater infusion into freshwater sources. The extent and severity of storm impacts, including storm surge floods and shore erosion will increase as a result of climate change'⁵

2.5.7 Human impacts are likely to be greatest in those countries with fewer resources to prepare themselves for adaptation. Developing countries will be most affected especially those reliant on primary production as a major source of income. However, the industrialised countries of the world are not immune to climate change and in 2001,

⁴ IPCC, (2001a) The Third Assessment Report of Working Group 1 of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2001

⁵ IPCC, (2001b) Climate Change 2001: Impacts, Adaption and Vulnerability. Third Assessment of Working Group 2, 2001

the IPCC recommended a two-pronged approach to reducing the effects of climate change.

- 2.5.8 The first approach is the reduction of human influences in climate primarily through reductions in the use of fossil fuels and emissions of greenhouse gases and to a lesser extent re-forestation projects. Secondly it is to allow natural and human systems to adapt as far as possible to expected changes. The earlier that greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced the lower the costs of adaptation and human costs of failure to adapt. According to the IPCC stabilising carbon dioxide concentrations at 450 ppm (that is 85 ppm above today's levels and 170 ppm above pre-industrial levels) in the long term would require the reduction of emissions worldwide to below 1990 levels within a few decades.³

2.6 The Contribution of the Blackstone Edge Wind Farm to Renewable Energy Generation

- 2.6.1 The importance of renewable energy generation as part of the response to climate change is recognised at a UK Governmental level and wind generation is acknowledged as the only truly viable form of substantive renewable energy production for the short to medium term. Furthermore, renewable energy from wind supports the national economic objective to diversify energy supply and to lessen dependence upon the importation of fossil fuel. Government consequently considers that the wider benefits to society and the economy (of renewable energy) are significant and must be given weight by decision makers in reaching their decisions on individual applications.
- 2.6.2 The Yorkshire and Humber region is responding to this requirement and a regional target of 708MW of installed renewables capacity by 2010 has been set in the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy – The Yorkshire and Humber Plan along with a sub-regional target for South Yorkshire of 47MW. The plan also illustrates indicative renewable energy potential within Local Authority Areas to 2010 including Barnsley which is identified as having the potential for 15.4 MW of renewable energy capacity. In this context the Blackstone Edge proposal provides the opportunity to make a significant contribution towards these targets with a potential generation capacity of up to 7MW.
- 2.6.3 The proposed three wind turbines could generate almost as much electricity as the 13 wind turbines at the nearby Royd Moor site. The proposed Blackstone Edge Wind Farm would comprise of the installation and operation of a cluster of three wind turbines, each with an assumed rating of 2MW. The output from three such turbines could generate enough electricity to power up to 3,355⁶ homes. Using an assumption that electricity from wind power would offset that produced from a coal fired power station, this would see a reduction in emissions of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide (CO₂) of around 6,780⁷ tonnes per year. Such savings in emissions may change depending on the generating mix. In addition the operation of the scheme would reduce the emissions of the gases sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, which contribute to the

⁶ based on 30% load factor and average annual domestic usage of 4.7 MWh/year (Digest of UK Energy Statistics, 2004)

⁷ grid electricity converting factor of 430kg CO₂/MWh (DEFRA)

production of acid rain. The outcome of the procurement process may see turbines of slightly larger power output secured, in which case the benefits described above would increase.

3. Development Plan

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 In shaping the form of the Proposed Development the Applicant has taken full account of the policy context for the development and modified the scheme accordingly in response to the emerging findings of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) summarised in an Environmental Statement (ES). It is considered that the submitted application is in full compliance with relevant policy and specifically the main themes of the Development Plan as detailed in sections 3.2 – 3.12
- 3.1.2 The planning application for the scheme will be determined under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Section 70(2) of the 1990 Act requires local planning authorities in determining planning applications to have regard to the development plan, so far as material to the applications, and to any other material considerations. Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004 requires planning decisions to be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.1.3 The Development Plan consists of the Regional Spatial Strategy for Yorkshire and the Humber (Selective Review of RPG 12), December 2004, Barnsley Council Unitary Development Plan (UDP), December 2000 and the Barnsley Statement of Community Involvement, September 2006.

The Regional Spatial Strategy

- 3.1.4 RSS 12 was published in December 2004 and is based upon a selective review of Regional Planning Guidance 12 that preceded it. It is based on the draft revised RPG produced by the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly in June 2003, representations on that draft and the sustainability appraisal, the report of the Panel who held a Public Examination in February 2004, and representations made in response to the Proposed Changes in July - September 2004. The document has three policies of key relevance to renewable energy generation; Policy R12 aims to secure regional and sub regional targets for renewable energy generation; Policy S5 aims to help reduce the regions greenhouse gas emissions and Policy S6 seeks sustainable use of physical resources to assist with the targets outlined in Policy R12.

The Barnsley Unitary Development Plan

- 3.1.5 The Barnsley Unitary Development Plan was adopted in December 2000 and contains four policies relating to wind energy generation. Policy ES 12 lists a range of criteria that wind energy proposals will be assessed against; Policy ES 12A requires the use of appropriate coloration of turbines; Policy ES 12B requires restoration of sites upon cessation of wind energy generation and Policy ES 12C seeks to safeguard reductions in local wind speeds within the vicinity of existing wind energy installations.

The Barnsley Statement of Community Involvement

- 3.1.6 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) explains how and when members of the public get involved in the planning process. It sets out how the Council will engage with the public when preparing the Local Development Framework (LDF) and in the consideration of planning applications. Appendix 4 provides guidance to developers on how they should engage with communities when making applications for large developments including ‘Schedule 2 Development’ as defined in the Environmental Impact Assessment regulations which is of relevance to Blackstone Edge
- 3.1.7 In September 2006 Barnsley Council carried out the Submission stage consultation. This involved sending a copy of the SCI to the Secretary of State and consulting on the document for a final six week period. Following this, an independent Planning Inspector was appointed to examine the SCI and assess it against the nine tests of soundness. As a result of the examination, the Inspector found the SCI to be sound.

3.2 Sustainable Development

Relevant Sections: RSS Key Objectives; RSS Policy S1, UDP Strategy

- 3.2.1 The key objectives of the RSS are defined in the context of the Regional Chamber’s “Advancing Together into the Millennium” (1998) and the Regional Sustainable Development Framework (February 2001, updated 2003). The objectives are based on the 15 key aims in the RSDF and focus on matters that can be influenced within the remit of the RSS. They are mapped around the four central objectives of sustainable development and summarised as;
- Maintenance of High and Stable Levels of Economic Growth and Employment;
 - Social Progress which Recognises the Needs of Everyone;
 - Effective Protection of the Environment;
 - Prudent Use of natural Resources.
- 3.2.2 The above are broken down into various objectives under each heading with key themes including *inter alia*, regeneration, social inclusion, protecting and enhancing natural resources, addressing climate change and encouraging the use of Renewable Energy. The Regional Sustainable Development Framework states “*the challenge of sustainable development is to improve the economic and social well being for everyone in the region whilst improving the environment and safeguarding natural resources*”, in achieving this the RSS makes four commitments:-
- Not to cause irreversible damage to the natural systems that support life;
 - To aim for no net loss overall in environmental assets that are valued for maintaining biodiversity and enhancing the quality of life; and
 - To make progress towards all economic, environmental and social objectives.
- 3.2.3 Policy S1 of the RSS seeks to implement the sustainable development principles by encouraging that the RSS objectives be considered in development plans, strategies and proposals.

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- 3.2.4 The overall strategy of the UDP does not focus so heavily on sustainable development as it was written at a time when Barnsley was experiencing the most fundamental and economic changes in its history due to the decline of the coal mining industry. As a result the key goals which the UDP aimed to achieve centred around economic restructuring and improving the quality of life for the residents of Barnsley.
- 3.2.5 Despite this the strategy of the UDP recognises the pressing need for sustainable development in order to not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Para 2.8 lists a range of objectives in order to meet the principles of sustainable development which include maximising energy generation from renewable resources.
- 3.2.6 The Proposed Development contributes inherently to sustainable development as it helps to meet both national and regional targets for renewable energy supply. The ES identifies the sustainability of the development in its assessment of the degree to which the development would reduce reliance on fossil fuels and lead to the prevention of greenhouse gas emissions and reduced air pollution. Furthermore, it indicates that the development does not create any significant adverse residual effects with regard to the landscape, visual effects, public amenity, hydrology, hydrogeology or land quality, ecology and ornithology, cultural heritage, traffic and transport. The proposal could be used as an educational resource for local schools and the public exhibitions held on the proposals have encouraged public involvement. Furthermore, the Development would provide the local landowner with a guaranteed income which would support the continued viability of the existing rural business.
- 3.2.7 The ES demonstrates that the Proposed Development would not lead to significant adverse effects upon the environmental features of the local, and wider area and it calculates that its operation could turbines could generate enough to power up to 3,355 homes and would see a reduction in emissions of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide (CO₂) of around 6,780 tonnes per year. The Proposed Development would increase renewable energy generation which would make use of the natural wind resources of the area, while contributing to economic growth.
- 3.2.8 The Proposed Development therefore accords with the principles of sustainable development as set out in the Development Plan, through the sustainability objectives of the RSS, Policy S1 of the RSS and the strategy of the UDP.

3.3 Renewable Energy Generation

Relevant Policies: RSS S5, S6, R12, UDP; ES12, ES12A & ES12B

- 3.3.1 The Regional Economic Strategy commits the region to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% below 1990 levels by 2010. This target stems from the national target as part of an obligation to promote an international response to a global problem. The baseline figure for the region which Policy S5 of the RSS is based on estimates that the total emissions in 1990 were equivalent to 87.7 million tonnes of CO₂. In order to reach the 20% reduction target of 70.2 million tonnes by 2010, a reduction is required of almost 1.3 million tonnes per year between 2001 and 2010, this equates to more than double the rate achieved between 1990 and 2001.

- 3.3.2 Policy S5 relates to climate change and provides the impetus for Local Authorities to formulate policies and proposals to help achieve the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions outlined in 3.3.1. Policy S6 relates to the sustainable use of physical resources and is an important tool in helping to address the impacts outlined in relation to S5. Part e) of Policy S6 requires Local Authorities to include policies and proposals to help achieve the regional renewable energy targets set out in Policy R12. These targets aim to ensure that by 2010 Yorkshire and the Humber will have an installed renewable energy generation capacity of 674MW increasing to 1850MW by 2020. Policy S6 states that these targets will ensure that at least 9.4% of electricity consumed in Yorkshire and the Humber is from renewable sources by 2010 and 22.5% 2020.
- 3.3.3 The UDP recognises in its strategy the importance of encouraging and maximising energy generation from renewable resources. Policies ES12, 12A & 12B all relate to proposals for wind energy generation listing a range of criteria and requirements which must be met in order to make individual proposals acceptable. The supporting text of Policy ES12 recognises the fact that the most significant resource of renewable energy in Barnsley is from wind particularly in the western half of the Borough on the fringe of the Peak District National Park where high annual wind speeds are achieved.
- 3.3.4 The proposed Blackstone Edge Wind Farm would comprise of the installation and operation of a cluster of three wind turbines, each with an assumed rating of 2MW. The output from three such turbines could generate enough to power up to 3,355 homes. Using an assumption that electricity from wind power would offset that produced in the UK from the current energy mix, this would see a reduction in emissions of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide (CO₂) of around 6,780 tonnes per year. Such savings in emissions may change depending on the generating mix. In addition the operation of the scheme would reduce the emissions of the gases sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, which contribute to the production of acid rain. The outcome of the procurement process may see turbines of slightly larger power output secured, in which case the benefits described above would increase
- 3.3.5 The Proposed Development would not adversely effect sensitive sites, is close to a suitable grid connection and it is considered to be appropriate in the landscape.
- 3.3.6 The ES and the other assessments referred to in this Statement show that there would be no significant, adverse environmental, economic or social effects. The Proposed Development would accord with Policies S5, S6 and R12 of the RSS and Policies ES12, ES12A & B of the Unitary Development Plan and therefore complies with the Development Plan.

3.4 Community Engagement

Relevant Policies: SCI; Appendix 4

- 3.4.1 The Statement of Community involvement requires early communication with the Local Planning Authority, local residents and any other stakeholders likely to be interested in the proposal. The SCI provides guidance to developers on the methods required to involve people in the process of making a planning application which include letters to residents, public meetings and exhibitions, local surgeries, press releases and the use of websites.

- 3.4.2 The applicant has undertaken an extensive consultation process with all stakeholders, namely the Local Planning Authority, consultees, local residents and other interest groups. Further details of these consultations can be found in Section 2.4 above but briefly comprise meetings with the planning authority and consultees, letters to local parish councils/residents, newsletters, a website and a public exhibition.
- 3.4.3 The proposal is in full accordance with guidance in Appendix 4 of the Statement of Community Involvement and therefore complies with the Development Plan.

3.5 Green Belt

Relevant Policies: RSS P2, UDP GS7, GS8 & GS9

- 3.5.1 The Blackstone Edge site lies within the Green Belt as defined in the proposals map of the UDP and therefore warrants special consideration in the context of the proposed development. The Green Belt around Barnsley was established in the 1960's and has been modified and extended in the old South Yorkshire Structure Plan and Local Plans. The approach to development and the extent of the Green Belt broadly reflects Government guidance contained within PPG2 – *Green Belts* by checking the unrestricted sprawl of the main urban area of Barnsley and preventing the coalescence of the towns and villages in the Borough.
- 3.5.2 Policy P2 of the RSS recognises the valuable role of the Yorkshire Green Belts in supporting urban renaissance and concentration as well as conserving the countryside. Policy in the RSS mainly relates to the extent of the Green Belt rather than individual development but of note is that the RSS recognises that the release of Green Belt land may be acceptable if it is necessary to meet the wider principles of sustainable development.
- 3.5.3 Policy GS7 of the Barnsley UDP reflects guidance in PPG2 and seeks to ensure that development within the Green Belt is not permitted which would impinge on the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Policy GS8 adopts the policy test outlined in PPG 2 that new buildings in the Green Belt should only be allowed in very special circumstances but does state exceptions to this such as uses of land that preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. It is clear from the development plan that very special circumstances need to be demonstrated in order to justify the development of a wind farm at Blackstone Edge.
- 3.5.4 Of key relevance to the question of very special circumstances is Government guidance published in 2004 within *Planning Policy Statement 22*. Paragraph 13 states that renewable energy projects may be considered inappropriate development in the Green Belt due to their impact on openness. However, it states that when justifying very special circumstances for development within the Green Belt, the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources may constitute such circumstances.
- 3.5.5 The Blackstone Edge Wind Farm has the ability to contribute up to 7MW of renewable energy per annum toward the current regional target of 674MW installed capacity by 2010. In addition the site demonstrates wider environmental benefits through generating enough power for 3,355 homes and a reduction in emissions of greenhouse

gases of around 6,780 tonnes per year. Both these elements of the scheme are considered as significant benefits wholly in accord with the principles of sustainable development. Harnessing renewable energy reduces the nations reliance on fossil fuels and therefore contributes toward the aim of prudent use of natural resources whilst reducing emissions of greenhouse gases thus reducing environmental impacts associated with climate change contributing toward the aim of effective protection of the environment.

- 3.5.6 The proposed development will inherently raise the issue of impacts on the openness of the Green Belt and there are a number of matters to consider specific to Blackstone Edge and the surrounding area. The western rural area of the UDP is dominated by Green Belt with almost all land between settlements designated as Green Belt and as Areas of Borough Landscape Value. Preliminary investigations undertaken by the Applicant indicated that the western edge of the Borough is one of the few locations in the Barnsley area capable of supporting a viable wind energy scheme due to the average wind speeds gauged from meteorological data and the distance from dwellings. This is recognised in the supporting text of UDP Policy ES12 at paragraph 3.226 which states that *“in Barnsley the most significant source of renewable energy is from wind because the more elevated areas, especially in the western half of the Borough on the fringe of the Peak District National Park, have sufficiently high annual mean wind speeds to make wind turbines viable.”*. It goes on to state at paragraph 3.228 that *“in principle elevated rural areas may be acceptable for wind power developments, provided that the harm to the environment is carefully examined and minimised.”* This indicates a recognition of the viability of the western edge of the Borough for wind energy development and its inherent impacts on openness in the knowledge of Green Belt and ABLV designations. The question is therefore whether the proposal has been carefully designed to minimise impacts particularly on openness.
- 3.5.7 The UDP recognises that the proliferation of large scale wind turbines within a landscape may contribute to a loss of openness. The perception of loss of openness in relation to wind turbines comes from the loss of views due to the erection of the turbines and the creation of the associated infrastructure including the site tracks and substation building. A loss of openness may also involve the severance of access to open countryside and Green Belt land. This will ultimately increase if there are a number of wind energy developments in the locality such as the Royd Moor scheme and recently consented (subject to Government Office approval) Hazelhead scheme. The landscape impacts have been carefully considered within the Environmental Statement and the EIA has played an integral role in the design of the site to ensure that these potential impacts have been minimised.
- 3.5.8 The key factors considered which have minimised the impact on openness are site design that has responded to local landscape character in terms of scale, layout and visual composition. The scheme aims to achieve a simple, balanced, rational and coherent image that will be viewed as an acceptable or positive component of the visual composition of the locality. In addition the scheme aims to minimise views as much as is possible for local residents and from recreational areas and routes and popular hilltops. All these elements of the design contribute toward minimising the impacts on openness and should be considered in the context of the wider environmental benefits of the scheme which ultimately support Government aims of sustainable development.

- 3.5.9 It is therefore concluded that the proposal is potentially contrary to Policy GS7 in that there will be impacts on openness of the Green Belt inherent in renewable energy development. However, GS7 allows the application of policies such as GS8 which allows the demonstration of very special circumstances. It has been demonstrated that such circumstances exist in the wider environmental benefits of the scheme. The proposal also accords with Policy GS9 which seeks to protect the visual amenity of the Green Belt. In reaching this conclusion it is pertinent to consider the Barnsley Landscape Character Assessment which was published in 2002 as a result of the UDP Inspectors Inquiry report requiring an assessment of the Borough Landscape as part of an exercise to establish appropriate sites for new housing in the Unitary Development Plan. The site is within the area designated as 'Ingbirchworth Upland Farmland' which the LCA states is one of the most sensitive in the borough, it concludes that "*landscape sensitivity to built development is judged to be high and landscape capacity (to accommodate development) is considered to be low.*" It should be noted that despite the sensitivity the Royd Moor wind farm is recognised as a feature of the area stating that its 'graceful turbines' are visible from many miles around. It is therefore argued that the area is capable of accommodating further wind turbines that will add to the existing feature of Royd Moor, in addition impacts have been minimised through the careful design of the site which has ensured that impacts on the visual amenity of the Green Belt and Landscape Character Area have been minimised.
- 3.5.10 The Proposed Development is in conformity with Policy P2 of the RSS. It is contrary to Policy GS7 but in accord with Policy G8 as very special circumstances have been demonstrated and also accords with Policy GS9 and therefore complies with the Development Plan.

3.6 Landscape and Visual Assessment

Relevant Policies: RSS N3; UDP ES12, GS9, GS13

- 3.6.1 Development Plan policies aim to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area subject to development, in order to maintain and enhance the quality, diversity and local distinctiveness of the character of the landscape. Of particular relevance at the local level is the sites designation as an Area of Borough Landscape Value under the provisions of Policy GS13. Policy GS9 seeks to protect the visual amenity of the Green Belt. Policy ES12 requires the consideration of cumulative impacts and the subsequent effect on the visual amenity of the area.
- 3.6.2 The closest national designation is the Peak District National Park which is located 2.2km to the south and west of the site, the impacts of this have been considered in chapter 7 of the ES which presents the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and cumulative LVIA.
- 3.6.3 The proposed turbines would be located within the Southern Yorkshire Pennine Fringe open landscape, which has a demonstrated capacity for wind farm development. The wind farm would generally be visible from parts of the open, upland farmland and neighbouring moorland. The proposed turbines would not change the open, agricultural/moorland character of the views.

- 3.6.4 Significant cumulative visual effects would be limited to within approximately 2.5km of the site. This would include potential significant visual effects on the locally designated landscape of the Area of Borough Landscape Value and Peak District National Park areas within approximately 2.5km of the site due to the medium - high sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptors within the area. These effects would not be adverse because the proposed turbines would not be new landscape features and they would be viewed alongside existing turbines. Furthermore, the cumulative impacts presented in the ES are a worst case scenario that will change over time. In accordance with the guidelines in the Scottish Natural Heritage guidance titled “*Cumulative Effects of Windfarms*”⁸, the assessment has considered built and consented wind farms in the locality, which comprise the built Royd Moor wind farm and the consented Hazelhead wind farm. The cumulative impacts will reduce once the Royd Moor wind turbines are decommissioned which is scheduled to be in 2018 although in reality this may well happen sooner due to the ageing nature of the turbines. There are no plans to re-power the Royd Moor site as modern wind turbines require greater distances from properties, greater separation between individual turbines and also greater distances from roads; as such the Applicant considers that there is no scope to re-power Royd Moor in its existing scale and layout. The cumulative impacts will become more acceptable when Royd Moor has been decommissioned and the area will consist of two clusters of three turbines with the same turbine heights which will provide a balanced grouping within the landscape.
- 3.6.5 The ES concludes that the turbines could be accommodated alongside the existing Royd Moor and the consented Hazelhead Wind Farm within the existing scale and character of the landscape and would bring about an acceptable change or evolution to the landscape character and general views. This helps to ensure minimal impacts on the visual amenity of the Green Belt.
- 3.6.6 The Proposed Development is therefore compliant with RSS Policy N3, UDP Policies ES12, GS9 and GS 13, and therefore complies with the Development Plan.

3.7 Public Amenity

Relevant Policies: UDP ES 1, ES12

- 3.7.1 Development Plan policies exist to ensure development does not give rise to excessive levels of pollution either within the site or its surroundings. The policies seek protection of visual amenity including electro magnetic effects and the impacts of shadow flicker or flashing from turbine blades.
- 3.7.2 The ES includes chapters on Noise (Chapter 6), Radar and Communications (Chapter 14), People, Safety and Public Access (Chapter 15) and Shadow Flicker (Chapter 13). The issues covered by these chapters have the potential to affect the amenity of the people who use the area, including local residents.

⁸ Scottish Natural Heritage: Cumulative effects of wind farms. Version 2 Revised 13th April 2005.

Noise

- 3.7.3 Policy ES1 of the UDP requires that development which may give rise to excessive levels of pollution such as noise not be permitted. Policy ES12 states that wind energy development will be addressed with particular regard to residential amenity and noise.
- 3.7.4 An assessment of the likely noise effects, generated during the construction and operation of the proposed wind farm has been undertaken and is reported within the accompanying ES. In order to take account of the cumulative effects of the proposal with nearby existing Royd Moor Wind Farm and the permitted Hazelhead scheme, the ES has modelled noise inclusive of contributions from all three schemes.
- 3.7.5 The ES demonstrates that in respect of noise, the Proposed Development can be constructed and operated well within the limits established in relevant guidance (ETSU-R-97 as endorsed in PPS22) such that any discernible noise would not have any significant effect on the amenity of local residents. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not lead to the emission of noise pollution, and would not be detrimental to the amenity of the public. The Proposed Development complies with planning policies UDP ES1 & ES12 and therefore complies with the Development Plan.

Telecommunications, Infrastructure, Aviation and Public Safety and Shadow Flicker

- 3.7.6 Policies ES1 and ES12 of the UDP are aimed at protecting residential and public amenity, inclusive of shadow flicker and flashing from turbine blades. Policy ES 12 in covering a broad range of topics also covers the potential for electro magnetic effects from wind energy development. All of these matters are addressed independently in the ES and have been considered in respect of the proposed wind farm at Blackstone Edge. Impacts on telecommunications and aviations were scoped out of the ES assessment as no constraints were identified through the EIA and consultation process. However, the impact on television reception was scoped in after consultation with the BBC revealed potential impacts.
- 3.7.7 In relation to public safety part d) of the Policy ES 12 requires the consideration of effects relating to the safety of road users and in particular motorists. To ensure this can be achieved a safety buffer has been applied around, roads, footpaths and bridleways based on the topple distance of a wind turbine plus an additional safety margin of 10%.
- 3.7.8 The ES concludes that there will be no significant effects on existing infrastructure, telecommunications, television reception, civil aviation, defense radars, and safety. The only concern expressed in relation to these issues came from National Air Traffic Services in relation to potential effects on the Claxby radar. As outlined in paragraph 2.4.8 a study by Pager Power revealed that the potential for significant objection is considered to be low.
- 3.7.9 The phenomenon known as shadow flicker may theoretically affect two properties known as Spicer House (for up to a maximum of 16.5 hours in a full year) and New Maythorn Farm (for up to a maximum of 33 hours in a full year). The ES concludes that given the relatively short duration of flicker events and their limited frequency as well as the ability to shut down turbines at appropriate times the effects are considered to be low. Any mitigation that might be required could be secured by planning condition.

- 3.7.10 The Proposed Development has considered effects on existing infrastructure, telecommunications, civil aviation and safety. Impacts on infrastructure and telecommunications have been scoped out whilst the effects on public safety, aviation, television reception and shadow flicker have been concluded as low and, where relevant, fully capable of effective mitigation secured through planning conditions. The Proposed Development therefore complies with policies ES1 & ES12 which aim to protect public amenity within the Development Plan.

3.8 Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Land Quality

Relevant Policies: RSS R3; UDP Policy ES3 & ES7

- 3.8.1 UDP Policy ES3 seeks to prevent the pollution of all surface and underground water and will seek to improve their quality. Policy ES6 seeks to ensure appropriate assessment if a development raises the question of unstable land. RSS Policy R3 relates to water resources and drainage and seeks to avoid development which will have adverse consequences on water supply and quantity.
- 3.8.2 Land use on the site is agricultural, and there is no evidence from historical mapping that there has been any industrial use of the site. Quarrying has taken place within the vicinity of the site and an old quarry which has been used as a Category 4 Landfill lies adjacent to the site boundaries. Mining has taken place underneath the site at a depth of 145m below ground surface. The closest coal seam to the surface is at 50m below ground level and so historical surface mining on the site is very unlikely. A conjectured fault runs in a north westerly direction through the site, to the west of the turbine locations.
- 3.8.3 Mitigation measures for this site have been developed to protect surface and groundwater quality and surface water quantity. Measures include the use of SUDS techniques in the drainage design for the site, including the encouragement of infiltration rather than run-off through discharge to vegetated areas or infiltration trenches as appropriate and the lining of access tracks with vegetated areas for drainage. Storage, maintenance and re-fuelling operations will not take place on the areas where the sandstone layer is uppermost and construction method statements will include measures for pollution prevention and control of spillages and leaks, in line with EA and CIRIA guidance.
- 3.8.4 Geotechnical site investigations will be undertaken before construction commences to ascertain vertical and lateral bearing capacities of the solid deposits, in the light of recent and historical quarrying and mining activities. They will also consider potential faulting in the area and the potential for disturbance of the nearby landfill by site works.
- 3.8.5 The ES has fully considered the predicted effects on Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Land Quality and found there to be no significant effects.
- 3.8.6 The Proposed Development therefore complies with Development Plan policies RSS R3 and UDP Policies ES3 & ES7.

3.9 Ecology and Ornithology

Relevant Policies: RSS N1; UDP GS15, GS16, GS17, GS18, GS20, GS22, WR13

- 3.9.1 Development plan policies seek to protect important areas of conservation, biodiversity and protected species from direct and indirect damage. It is also the aim of the development plan to conserve and enhance existing features of nature conservation interest to create new nature conservation areas. Local policy contained within the UDP states that any development which may adversely affect a Natural Heritage Site will not be approved unless the case for the development outweighs the harm. There are 6 Natural Heritage sites within the locality which are as follows;
- WR13/3 – Whitley Edge
 - WR13/4 – Broadstone Reservoir
 - WR13/5 – Ingbirchworth Reservoir
 - WR13/6 – Royd Moor Reservoir
 - WR13/7 – Scout Dike Reservoir; and
 - WR13/8 – Small Shaw and High Bank
- 3.9.2 The nature conservation assessment in the ES finds that the site is not close to any statutory designated wildlife sites but there are several non-statutory wildlife sites in the local area. Densities of breeding birds on the site have been found to be low while three common bat species were found at the site in small numbers.
- 3.9.3 Future baseline conditions are not expected to change as a result of the development and no significant negative effects on nature conservation are expected. The overall impact of the development on nature conservation will be positive due to a financial contribution made toward the conservation of the lowland heathland in the local area and the planting of approximately 900m of species rich hedgerows on-site.
- 3.9.4 The Proposed Development therefore complies with Development Plan policies RSS N1 and UDP Policies GS15, GS16, GS17, GS18, GS20, GS22 and WR13.

3.10 Cultural Heritage

Relevant Policies: RSS N2; UDP BE2, BE3 & BE4

- 3.10.1 Development plan policies aim to protect the historic environment of the region and the locality, particularly from development that may give rise to adverse effects on listed buildings or archaeological remains.
- 3.10.2 The assessment in the ES of the Development Site identified that the site is within the location of a former WWII bombing decoy and there are a number of designated features in the wider area, including scheduled monuments and listed buildings.
- 3.10.3 On the basis of the ES findings, the potential for significant previously unrecorded archaeological remains of any period within the Development Site is considered to be relatively low. Even this limited potential is addressed through mitigation incorporated

within the proposal design. The scheme design has also avoided the potential for effects on designated cultural heritage features.

- 3.10.4 No significant effects on designated cultural heritage features, including Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Historic Parks and Gardens and Registered Historic Battlefields, have been identified by the EIA assessment.
- 3.10.5 The ES concludes that there will be no significant effects upon the cultural heritage of the Study Area resulting from the Development. The Proposed Development therefore complies with the Development Plan policies RSS N2, UDP BE2 & BE3.

3.11 Traffic and Transport

Relevant Policies: RSS T1; UDP T2

- 3.11.1 Development Plan policies on traffic and transport, which are considered relevant are Policy RSS T1 and UDP Policy T2. These policies seek to ensure that the development is not detrimental to the amenity of road users and highway safety. They also require development to make the best use of existing transport infrastructure and where required proposals are encouraged to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment.
- 3.11.2 The ES chapter on traffic and transport finds that the main transport effects of the Proposed Development will be associated with the movements of commercial Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) to and from the Development Site during the construction phase of development.
- 3.11.3 The traffic assessment has identified that there are some traffic and transport effects predicted from the construction of a wind farm at Blackstone Edge. The principal effects identified include the potential for disturbance to pedestrians and road users due to HGVs delivering plant and materials to the Development Site. Careful development of the access proposals to the site and mitigation which includes dedicated transport routes, appropriate timing of deliveries and the escorting of abnormal loads overcomes any potential effects from the HGV movements associated with the construction phase.
- 3.11.4 No significant effects are likely following mitigation and therefore local amenity and highway safety would not be adversely affected. The Proposed Development therefore complies with planning policies RSS T1 & UDP T2 of the Development Plan.

3.12 Socio-Economics

- 3.12.1 *Relevant Sections: RSS Key Objectives & Themes 1 - 3; Policy S1; UDP Strategy – Goals A & C*
- 3.12.2 The aims of the Development Plan, and the principles of sustainable development described in it, are to facilitate development which will encourage economic regeneration, promote social inclusion and promote an urban and rural renaissance, without compromising the quality of the environment or quality of life of future generations.
- 3.12.3 UDP Strategy Goal A is heavily focused on economic restructuring due to the decline of the coal mining industry and seeks to encourage greater industrial and commercial

activity in the Borough to increase the scale and range of job opportunities. Included within this goal under A7 is an aim to encourage growth and diversification of the rural economy.

- 3.12.4 The ES describes how a range of mitigation measures have been incorporated into the scheme design to minimise the amount of land take and subsequent loss of agricultural land and ensure safe stand offs from roads and other constraints such as the closed and extant quarries within the vicinity of the site. In socio economic terms the areas that have been considered as having potential effects relate to the local and wider economy and the labour market, current and future residents and regular visitors to the area.
- 3.12.5 No adverse effects on existing businesses, either in the immediate vicinity or more widely in the tourism industry are envisaged during either construction or operation of the proposed wind farm. Where possible local labour will be used during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases inclusive of the sourcing of local contractors whilst future mitigation regarding tourism and visitors may come through measures such as educational facilities.
- 3.12.6 The wind farm will be fully funded and managed by E.ON UK plc. Local communities near to the Blackstone Edge wind turbines will benefit from an annual income from the project, educational materials and energy efficiency advice and measures.
- 3.12.7 The developer is committed to providing an annual community fund of around £10,000 per year for the lifetime of the wind farm. The fund can be spent as the community wishes, for example on community leisure facilities, local restoration projects, books for schools or social enterprise projects.
- 3.12.8 On commissioning of the wind farm, a one-off low carbon package would be provided to the local community, benefiting local homes and community buildings through the use of energy saving technologies.
- 3.12.9 An important part of the project development is the building of links with local schools to improve awareness and understanding of environmental issues and renewable energy among children. E.ON's Energy Experience is a major new programme for teachers to help them teach young people about energy. E.ON will ensure that local schools can make the most out of this curriculum based and energy focused educational programme by offering classroom packs and training to schools.
- 3.12.10 The above community benefits can contribute to a variety of local and community projects, instigating a range of economic, social or environmental benefits. This fully accords with guidance outside of regional and Local Policy contained within PPS 22 which states in the companion guide at Paragraph 4.21 that maximising the local benefits of renewable energy schemes will be an important consideration for local planning authorities. It goes on to state at para 4.29 that community-led initiatives can generate considerable benefits for local people, as well as providing 'green' energy. PPS recognises that an opportunity to engage in the development of a renewable energy generation scheme can offer local people the chance to develop new skills and confidence.
- 3.12.11 The Proposed Development therefore complies with the key objectives and themes of the RSS and Policy S1. The proposal also contributes toward the Goals in the strategy of the UDP.

3.13 Conclusion of the Development Plan

- 3.13.1 The Proposed Development is considered to be of a sustainable nature, would help to meet national, regional and sub-regional targets for renewable energy supply and to be in an appropriate location for such a scale of development. It is not considered to create any significant adverse effects with regard to the landscape, visual effects, public amenity, hydrology, hydrogeology or land quality, ecology and ornithology, cultural heritage, traffic and transport or socio-economics. The Proposed Development complies with the aims, principles and policies of the Regional Spatial Strategy, the Barnsley Unitary Development Plan and Statement of Community Involvement, which collectively constitute the Development Plan.

4. Material Planning Considerations

4.1.1 The previous section has demonstrated that the Proposed Development is in conformity with the Development Plan. However, other considerations, including national planning policy and emerging Development Plan policy, are material and provide further confirmation that the application should be approved. Those which are considered to be of most significance are:

- Meeting the energy Challenge - A White Paper on Energy (2007);
- National Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes;
- The Draft RSS for Yorkshire and the Humber; and
- The emerging Local Development Framework from Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council.

4.2 Meeting the Energy Challenge – A White paper on Energy (May 2007)

4.2.1 The Energy White Paper sets out a framework for action to address the challenges facing the country in relation to climate change, cutting greenhouse gas emissions and the need to ensure secure energy supplies.

4.2.2 Part of the framework includes an aim to ensure large scale energy investments and that companies have a wide range of low carbon options available to retain a diverse energy mix and to ensure security of supply. This is cited as the reason for strengthening the Government's support for renewable electricity whilst reforms are proposed to the planning system to ensure that planning applications are handled in a more efficient way for both developers and the public.

4.2.3 The White Paper reiterates previous commitments made in the 2003 Energy White Paper and Planning Policy Statement 22 on Renewable Energy on the importance of renewable generation and the supporting infrastructure. It is stated that renewable energy as a source of low carbon, indigenous electricity is central to reducing emissions and maintaining the reliability of energy supplies when indigenous reserves of fossil fuels are declining more rapidly than expected. Of importance in the Renewables Statement of Need (Box 5.3.3) is the following, that;

“New renewable projects may not always appear to convey any particular local benefit, but they provide crucial national benefits. Individual renewable projects are part of a growing proportion of low carbon generation that provides benefits shared by all communities both through reduced emissions and more diverse supplies of energy, which helps the reliability of our supplies. This factor is a material consideration to which all participants in the planning system should give significant weight when considering renewable proposals. These wider benefits are not always immediately visible to the specific locality in which the project is sited. However, the benefits to society and the wider

economy as a whole are significant and this must be reflected in the weight given to these considerations by decision makers in reaching their decisions.”

- 4.2.4 The proposed development complies with the Energy White Paper aims of reducing greenhouse emissions and increasing the level of electricity generated by renewable sources.

4.3 Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes

PPS 1 - Delivering Sustainable Development

- 4.3.1 PPS1 sets out the framework of the national guidance and provides the basis for the Government's approach to sustainability. This advice sets out as one of its key principles the need for the Development Plan system to contribute to global sustainability by, amongst other things, promoting the development of renewable energy resources. The use of renewable energy is also set out in paragraph 20 as an environmental issue which policies in Development Plans need to assess as part of the mitigation of effects of, and adaptation to, climate change. It appears again under the section on the prudent use of natural resources.

- 4.3.2 A proposed Planning Policy Statement which will be a supplement to PPS1; Planning and Climate Change, is currently being consulted on. The Consultation Draft sets out how the spatial planning system can contribute to reducing emissions, stabilising climate change and take into account the unavoidable consequences. With regard to Energy Supply, the Consultation Draft includes that Planning Authorities should:

- *look favourably on proposals for renewable energy, including sites not identified in development plan documents;*
- *not require applicants to demonstrate either the overall need for renewable energy and distribution or for a particular proposal for renewable energy to be sited in a particular location;*
- *avoid policies that set stringent requirements for minimising impact on landscape and townscape if these effectively preclude the supply of certain types of renewable energy, and therefore other than in the most exceptional circumstances such as within nationally recognised designations, avoid such restrictive policies.⁹*

- 4.3.3 The Proposed Development is in accordance with the principles of sustainable development and therefore complies with PPS1. The supplement paper, Planning and Climate Change, is considered to support the Proposed Development.

PPS 22 - Renewable Energy

- 4.3.4 PPS22 confirms that the development of renewable energy will make a vital contribution to the aims of the national energy policy set out in the 2003 White Paper. Increased development of renewable energy sources is thus seen as essential to the delivery of the commitments on climate change, and the PPS goes on to state that

⁹ DCLG, Planning and Climate Change Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1. Consultation Draft, 2006

positive planning which facilitates renewable energy developments can contribute to all four elements of the Government's strategy on sustainable development. A key change of approach in the planning context is the stress that is laid on promoting and encouraging renewable energy developments rather than taking a restrictive approach to them. Also stressed is the need to take into account the much wider benefits that have to be weighed, both environmental and economic, as opposed to the more local environmental issues that have tended to dominate the debate so far.

- 4.3.5 In relation to development in the Green Belt the PPS recognises that many renewable energy projects will constitute inappropriate development which may impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Developers are therefore required to demonstrate very special circumstances that outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness. Of key significance is that the PPS states that such special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources.
- 4.3.6 On landscape and visual effects, the PPS points out that while wind turbines are likely to have relatively greater effects as compared with other forms of renewable technologies, these will vary depending on the scale of a development and the type of landscape involved. It also points out that these effects may be temporary, as such sites are capable of being decommissioned. On noise, the PPS formally advises that the 1997 report by ETSU for the DTI should be used to assess and rate noise from wind energy development. There is also a companion guide to the PPS dealing with the development of policies and good practice examples of renewable energy generation.
- 4.3.7 The provisions of PPS22 support the Proposed Development.

PPG2 – Green Belts

- 4.3.8 The fundamental aim of PPG2 is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open through protecting openness. PPG 2 secures protection of the countryside and aims to contribute toward sustainable patterns of urban development. PPG2 states that inappropriate development is, by definition harmful to the Green Belt and it is for the applicant to demonstrate very special circumstances to justify development. Another important policy theme is the protection of the visual amenity of the Green Belt and that development should not prejudice the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.
- 4.3.9 Whilst elements of the scheme will inherently impinge on openness it is considered that in accordance with guidance in PPS 22, very special circumstances exist to justify development in the Green Belt.

PPS7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

- 4.3.10 PPS7 refers to renewable energy, in one of the five objectives for planning authorities in preparing Local Development Documents and making planning decisions:
- (iv) provide for the sensitive exploitation of renewable energy sources in accordance with the policies set out in PPS22.*
- 4.3.11 The PPS then goes on to deal with local landscape designations, and here it indicates that there should be sufficient protection under criteria-based policies, based on such tools as landscape character assessment to avoid the need for rigid local designations

that may unduly restrict acceptable sustainable development and important economic activity in rural areas.

- 4.3.12 The Proposed Development complies with the development criteria relating to the landscape in the Development Plan (see section 3.5) and therefore the Proposed Development complies with PPS7.

Other Significant Planning Policy Statements and Guidance

- 4.3.13 PPG8 on telecommunications explains that the possibility of interference from new developments, including wind turbines, on telecommunications signals, can be a material consideration. It states that Local Planning Authorities must satisfy themselves that the potential for interference has been fully taken into account and if necessary, mitigation such as repeater stations or cable supply, has been considered. The Proposed Development can adequately mitigate against any such interference, has fully considered the issue and therefore complies with PPG8.
- 4.3.14 PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation contains a number of objectives, of which the following are relevant in this case - to ensure biological diversity is conserved and enhanced, to sustain and improve the quality and extent of natural habitats and the naturally occurring species which they support and to contribute to rural renewal. The new PPS9 retains much of the advice in the original PPG9. It identifies habitat protection as the key to the conservation of wildlife, and sets out the range of designations which have been applied to sites of different potential importance. However, it also stresses that wildlife interests depend on the wise use and management of all the land resources and that nature conservation interests should be taken into account wherever relevant to the decision-making process. The Proposed Development has considered all nature conservation interests, has not identified any significant effects and therefore complies with PPS9.
- 4.3.15 PPG15 addresses issues relating to the built environment and heritage. PPG16 explains that where nationally important archaeological remains or their settings are affected by development, there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation. However, cases involving remains of lesser importance are stated not to be so clear-cut and the decision has to weigh the importance of archaeology against other factors such as the need for a development. It is considered an appropriate weight has been given to the archaeological and heritage features encountered and a suitable response put forward. The Proposed Development therefore complies with PPG15 and PPG16.
- 4.3.16 Policy guidance on tourism is contained in Good Practice Guidance on Planning for Tourism, published by the DCLG in July 2006. This sets out the general principles for planning on tourism, which are to maximise the benefits of tourism, identify optimal locations, to integrate development with its surroundings and to avoid adverse effects from developments. The guidance also identifies that, in rural areas, tourism can be a key element of diversification, can help to revitalise market towns and villages, can support important rural services and facilities and can underwrite environmental schemes and improvements to the built and natural environment. No adverse effects on tourism have been identified and the Proposed Development is therefore in conformity with the Good Practice Guidance on Planning for Tourism.
- 4.3.17 PPS23 on Planning and Pollution Control states that the precautionary principle should be adopted when determining applications that may have a polluting affect. It also

states that the relevant pollution control authority should be satisfied that any releases from a development can be adequately regulated and that account is taken of existing sources of pollution around a site so that the cumulative effects do not make the situation unacceptable. The design of the Development has taken a precautionary approach in terms of the proximity to sensitive pollution receptors therefore the Proposed Development complies with PPS23.

- 4.3.18 PPG24 on noise provides the general Government advice on this issue, but in practice the particular characteristics of wind turbines have led to the need for the definition of more detailed advice on how noise should be measured and controlled. Indeed, the need for this parallel advice was foreshadowed in PPG22 which pointed out that the then advice in BS4142:1990 on noise affecting mixed residential and industrial areas might not be specifically appropriate. As a result, the Department of Trade and Industry set up a Working Group on Noise from Wind Turbines, and its report in 1997 (ETSU-R-97) provided a detailed set of methods for the measurement of wind farm noise and conditions for controlling it. The report of the Working Group is now recommended for use by PPS22 as noted above. The Proposed Development has been assessed against these methods and noise emissions found to be acceptable. The Proposed Development therefore complies with Government advice on noise.
- 4.3.19 National policy recognises the important role that renewable energy projects can play in dealing with climate change and advises that the planning system should promote and encourage such developments. It is therefore considered that national planning policy is supportive of the Proposed Development and provides a suitable framework for the consideration of the application which acknowledges the seriousness of climate change and the urgent need for action.

4.4 Draft Regional Spatial Strategy – The Yorkshire and Humber Plan

- 4.4.1 The emerging Regional Spatial Strategy which will supersede RSS 12 was submitted to the Government in December 2005. An Examination in Public took place in September 2006 and the panel report was published in May 2007. Following on from this the draft revised RSS which incorporates the Secretary of States proposed changes was published for public consultation in late 2007 and therefore the emerging RSS carries significant weight in the determination of the planning application. Under the proposed provisions of Policy ENV5 the document adopts a regional target of at least 708MW of installed renewable energy capacity by 2010. This figure is broken down into a sub regional target for South Yorkshire of 47MW and indicates a Local Authority potential for Barnsley of 15.4MW. The Proposed Development represents an important contribution to the regional and sub-regional targets and represents a significant proportion of the indicative renewable energy potential identified for Barnsley. The installation of a potentially 7MW wind farm at the Development Site would contribute around 13% of South Yorkshire's 2010 target and contribute just under a half of the 15.4MW indicative potential outlined for Barnsley.
- 4.4.2 Policy YH2 seeks to help meet the Region's targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% below 1990 levels by 2010 and 25 % below 1990 levels by 2015,

Measures to achieve this include increasing renewable energy capacity. The proposal therefore contributes toward the aims of Policy YH2.

- 4.4.3 Further policies in the Draft Yorkshire and Humber Plan provide further details of how various environmental issues will be addressed in the Region and these policies are considered to be in accordance with the policies of the existing Development Plan, which have been assessed in the previous section.
- 4.4.4 The emerging RSS provides appropriate targets for both the Yorkshire region and South Yorkshire, in order to help achieve the national target of 10% of energy production to come from renewable sources by 2010. The Proposed Development would make an important contribution toward these targets. The Draft Yorkshire and Humber Plan is supportive of the Proposed Development and therefore the Proposed Development complies with the policies in the document.

4.5 Barnsley Local Development Framework

- 4.5.1 The Barnsley Local Development Framework was published for consultation in October 2005 and included the preferred options for both the Core Strategy and the Policies document. The LDF includes a vision to make Barnsley a successful, uniquely distinctive 21st century market town at the centre of a borough offering prosperity and opportunity for all. At this early stage in the production of the LDF its provisions carry little weight in the determination of planning applications, however, they are still a material consideration.
- 4.5.2 The core strategy includes a number of core aims for Barnsley including supporting renewable energy facilities to increase the amount of renewable energy produced in the borough. Policy EN1 of policies document states that development producing renewable energy will be allowed provided there are no significant effects on landscape character, living conditions and biodiversity. Other policies in the plan seek to protect the various elements of the environment including, transport, Green Belts, biodiversity, landscape and the historic environment. The emerging Local Development Framework is supportive of the proposed development and the proposal does not conflict with its emerging policies.

4.6 Overall Conclusions of Material Considerations

- 4.6.1 The material considerations in the Energy White Paper 2007 and national planning policy, stress that the importance of renewable energy schemes is of national significance; and that although the benefits of such schemes are not always obvious in the locality, the wider benefits need to be given sufficient weight when considering such proposals. The Submission Draft RSS provides the targets which should be met in the Yorkshire and Humber region in order to bring about the national targets, and are therefore a clear indication of nationally important benefits.
- 4.6.2 The Proposed Development would contribute around 13% of South Yorkshire's 2010 target and contribute just under a half of the 15.4MW indicative potential outlined for Barnsley. The Proposed Development is not considered to have any significant adverse effects resulting from its construction or operational phases, in terms of visual effects or

effects on landscape character, on nature conservation or bio-diversity, on agriculture or through any cumulative effects and is therefore compliant with national and emerging planning policy.

- 4.6.3 Taking these material considerations into account it is considered that the proposed development is capable of being granted planning permission.

5. Summary and Conclusions

5.1 Summary and Conclusions

5.1.1 The principal issues that arise from consideration of the Proposed Development are:

- The need to increase electricity generated from renewable sources and to reduce energy generation from the burning of fossil fuels, consequently reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. The proposed Blackstone Edge Wind Farm could generate enough electricity to power up to 3,355¹⁰ homes. Using an assumption that electricity from wind power would offset that produced from a coal fired power station, this would see a reduction in emissions of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide (CO₂) of around 6,780¹¹ tonnes per year.
- The proposed wind farm would have a capacity of up to 7MW which would make contribute toward regional and sub-regional renewable energy targets. The proposals would provide about 13% of the South Yorkshire 2010 target of 47MW in the emerging Regional; Spatial Strategy. It also contributes towards almost half of the 15.4MW indicative capacity for the Barnsley area outlined in the emerging RSS;
- These contributions would be achieved in one of few areas in the Borough that has a viable wind resource and has already demonstrated the ability to accommodate wind energy development;
- The design process has evolved to take into consideration comments, advice and issues which have arisen. This evolution is considered to have produced a proposal design which is appropriate for the Development Site, its environment and the local community;
- There are very special circumstances that justify the development of a wind farm in the Green belt, namely the wider environmental benefits of the increased production of energy from renewable sources.
- There would be no significant visual effects on the locally designated landscape of the Area of Borough Landscape Value due to the existing presence of wind turbines. The proposed turbines would be accommodated alongside the existing Royd Moor wind farm (which will be decommissioned in 2018 and no re-powering is considered possible) and the recently consented Hazelhead wind farm.

¹⁰ based on 30% load factor and average annual domestic usage of 4.7 MWh/year (Digest of UK Energy Statistics, 2004)

¹¹ grid electricity converting factor of 430kg CO₂/MWh (DEFRA)

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- The Proposed Development can be operated alongside other wind farms in the locality without breaching the noise limits outlined in the 1997 report by ETSU for the DTI relating to noise from wind turbines;
 - It is not anticipated that there would be any significant effects on existing infrastructure, telecommunications, television broadcasts, civil aviation and safety. No significant adverse residual effects are predicted due to shadow flicker;
 - Any residual effects on hydrology and hydrogeology are predicted to only be of minor significance due to the low sensitivity of the Development Site and the inherent mitigation measures proposed;
 - The proposed wind farm lies beyond the appreciable setting of any known features of historical value, and therefore there are no significant effects on designated cultural heritage features. There is only limited potential for any significant unrecorded remains to be encountered.
 - No adverse effects are predicted in terms of traffic and transport from the Proposed Development as none of the proposed traffic routes are considered sensitive and due to the mitigation proposed;
 - The proposed wind farm would help contribute toward locally sourced employment during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases. A community fund of up to £10,000 per annum and a one off low carbon fund for energy saving technologies in local homes and public buildings will be set up in association with the Development for the long-term benefit local communities.

5.1.2 The Proposed Development complies with all specific relevant policies of the Development Plan and with the Development Plan as a whole. Other material planning considerations, including central government planning policy and the national imperative to reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases weigh strongly in favour of the grant of planning permission. There are no other material considerations which indicate that the application should be refused planning permission. On the basis of this assessment, planning permission should be granted for the Proposed Development of a wind farm at Blackstone Edge.

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