

- S1. In section One, I set out my qualifications and experience in the last 37 years in town planning, and my involvement in 41 wind farm cases that have been taken to public inquiry, as far afield as Orkney, Wales, Kent and Cornwall, of which six are developments under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989. I then set out the scope of my evidence on the tests to be applied on applications made under the Electricity Act and the related issues of the weight to be given to the Development Plan. As a very material consideration to be weighed together with the development plan policies, we have the Government's energy policy and international commitments towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- S2 In Section Two, I refer briefly to the way in which the proposal was handled by the Councils and the Committee reports which led to an objection being raised by the Alnwick District Council.
- S3.1 In Section Three, I consider the planning policy implications of the Government's national energy policy, described in more detail by John Ainslie. I note the rapid growth in renewable energy sources around the world and especially in Europe. The wind resource in Britain is the best in Europe, and the industry is now moving towards much larger and more efficient machines which can provide many times the energy capture of the ones used just ten years ago. Recent reports to Parliament confirm the continuing importance of onshore wind in providing the impetus towards meeting the targets for renewables set for 2010. I also refer to the potential benefits of the development.
- S4.1 In Section Four, I cover the national planning policy framework, looking first at the sustainability objectives of PPS1, and the policy statements in PPS22 and PPS7 regarding renewable energy and the countryside. I refer to the role that PPS22 identifies for renewable energy sources in meeting the national energy commitments,

the role of regional targets and the need for a step change in the delivery of such schemes. I identify the eight key principles set out in PPS22 on the planning approach to renewable energy, and refer to the Companion Guide which has been published to support the PPS, giving advice on a range of potential criteria to be addressed and the individual technologies that make up the sector. I also refer to relevant advice elsewhere in the series of PPSs and PPGs, particularly PPGs 15 and 16 and the advice on aviation interests.

S5 I cover in Section Five the position with regards to the Regional Guidance, which now forms part of the Development Plan. There is a published RPG from 2002 which set out the framework for identifying Strategic Wind Resource Areas and criteria for dealing with proposals. Regional studies have led to the setting of specific regional and sub-regional targets which are set out in the emerging RSS which has now reached its stage of Proposed Modifications following the EIP. These endorse both the scale of the renewables targets (installed capacity) at 454MW for the region and 212 MW in the County and the Broad Areas of Least Constraint where developments of 10-25 wind turbines are most likely to be acceptable. I note the ARUP study of the North and South Charlton BALC which recommended in the region of 100MW of installed wind energy capacity. I also note the position to date in the region and the County as regards delivery of the 2010 targets. Here the figures achieved to date of 75MW against 454MW in the region and 12MW against 212MW in the County show just how short of the targets we are.

S6 I then turn to the main provisions of the Structure Plan adopted in 2005, and note its policies on renewable energy at M4 and M5, which set out criteria and identify the broad areas of least constraint within Northumberland. I also deal with issues relating to the capacity of each of the BALC. I then turn to the Alnwick Local Plan adopted in 1997, which has a criteria-based policy on renewables. I also refer to the Area of High Landscape Value designation in the plan which has not been carried

forward into the later structure plan. The LDF is awaiting the Inspector's report on its Core Strategy and as drafted supports wind energy within the BALC on the RSS.

S7.1 In Section Seven, I turn to the emerging pattern of decisions on wind turbine proposals in England, Scotland and Wales and the way in which the decisions have been taken on appeal or a call-in. I set out a series of findings from these cases about the effects they may have on the area and views, displacement of energy from fossil fuel power stations and the nature of wind farm development in the countryside. I then consider issues of site selection, highlighting the position in EIA terms when dealing with this particular type of development, where there are requirements for a number of such proposals, rather than a single site solution or some form of site sequential testing. I refer to the fact that throughout the region there would need to be a number of wind farm sites to meet the regional targets.

S8.1 Section Eight deals with all the policy issues relating to landscape and visual impact on which material has been provided in the ES and the evidence of Jeff Stevenson. I refer to the key policies in the development plan on this topic, while recognising the development-specific policies for renewable energy which apply in the RPG/RSS, the structure and local plans.

S8.2 I adopt the findings of Jeff Stevenson as regards the acceptability of the development in intrinsic landscape terms, and its effect on nationally designated landscapes, as well as cumulative effects. My conclusions are that there are no landscape impacts which are of such a nature that they warrant rejection of this proposal in terms of the Section 36 tests or planning policies. I refer to other visual effect topics including effects on residential amenity, referring to other appeal cases where Inspectors have addressed the issue of separation between wind turbines and residential properties.

S9 In Section Nine, I turn to the effects on cultural heritage. These appear in the Statement of matters and are one of the tests under Section 36. I set out in an

Appendix the detailed policy advice and guidance from recent appeal decisions on the effects of wind farms on cultural heritage features and conclude from this and the separate evidence of Jonathan Edis that there are no unacceptable effects on the settings of any features of cultural heritage significance.

- S10. In this section I address issues relating to tourism and recreation. I have prepared an appendix addressing the nature of the tourism industry in Northumberland and also reviewing studies and appeal decisions elsewhere. The conclusion is that there is no material evidence to show that wind farms, of which there are now dozens in the UK in areas which rely heavily on tourism, have led to any material decline in the number of visitors to any area.
- S11 I then refer to the issue of ecology, and to the evidence provided by Steve Percival. A Habitat Management Plan has been prepared in draft for the inquiry to enhance the ecology of the application site.
- S12 Section 12 deals with the issue of noise. Andrew Bullmore provides evidence for the applicants to demonstrate that the noise levels recommended in ETSU-R-97 can be met even allowing for the possible cumulative effects from any approval of the Wandylaw wind farm
- S13 In Section 13 I deal with issues relating to aviation. In this case it is an MoD objection rather than one from the civil sector, and I deal with the relevant policy issues arising from this. John Ainslie provides more detailed comment on the background to and possible solution of this issue.
- S14 I then deal with the issue of driver distraction from a policy perspective. I refer to the PPS22 background and several planning appeals where this issue has been addressed, but the detailed evidence is provided by Don Bennett.

- S15 I then refer briefly to other issues that have been raised in representations, including the general approach to wind energy, the request for a joint public inquiry into all wind farm proposals in the County and hydrology.
- S16 In Section 16 I refer to the Section 36 tests and then summarise the main development plan policy issues, having particular regard to the targets that have been set for renewable energy.
- S17 I then set out my overall conclusions that the tests in Section 36 of the Electricity Act have been met satisfactorily, and that there is no fundamental conflict with the development plan policies, such that the application should be approved and deemed planning permission issued.