



*Baydon
Meadow -
West
Berkshire's
First Wind
Turbine?*

by Matt Partridge

Me and Renewable Energy

- Fascination with renewable energy since 17 years old (A-levels)
- Growing awareness of environmental issues, particularly climate change
- Total of 15 weeks work experience with National Wind Power 1993-1994
- Accept offer of employment Easter 1994
- Now over 8 years at National Wind Power (last 4 plus years in Development Team)

Baydon Meadow

- Change of “hats” - Matt Partridge the individual (not National Wind Power)
- Desire to do something myself on a significant scale “to make a difference” - climate change
- Sought land for sale with what I felt were prerequisites for a successful small-scale development
- Baydon Meadow: windy, good access, high existing noise levels, good grid connection, “modified” landscape

Baydon Meadow - Initial Consultation

- Main issues for development, in my opinion, were: possible landscape effects (North Wessex Downs AONB) and possible impact on roads/road users
- Progressed as a “WindWorks” development
- Initial consultations with TVE were very supportive and helpful
- Initial consultations with West Berkshire DC were open-minded and constructive

Baydon Meadow - Policy Support (1)

- NATIONAL - Strong Government support for Renewable Energy - 10% by 2010 from <3% today (part of UK Climate Change Programme)
- REGIONAL - GO-SE Renewable Energy Assessment: 24-36MW on-shore wind power in Thames Valley *"isolated examples of deployment in designated areas...tightly controlled, small-scale"* (NB - *"The 10% Renewables Obligation target is more or less reached under the high targets proposed in the regional assessments, but not under the low targets"* [OXERA Report], ie. 36MW target needs to be adopted)

Baydon Meadow - Policy Support (2)

- LOCAL - Berkshire Structure Plan 1991-2006
Policy RE1: *“Development proposals which attempt to harness renewable energy sources will generally be given favourable consideration...”*,
“This general policy will be developed through the Berkshire Renewable Energy Strategy [1995]”:
“Within Berkshire, ETSU have calculated there is insufficient wind speed to sustain wind farms outside the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)...within the AONB there is theoretical potential for up to 35MW of electricity to be generated from wind farms.”

Preparing the planning application

- Following the initial meeting with WBDC, I sought a “screening opinion”
- Although WBDC indicated that no EIA was required, a comprehensive Environmental Report has been commissioned
- Further input/consultation has also been sought with Highways Agency, WBDC officers and WBDC’s Landscape Consultant
- Small site area and project size meant limited scope for flexibility

Environmental Report (1)

- Expert, professional assessments have been completed in respect of possible impacts on:
 - Ecology
 - Archaeology
 - Noise levels (residential)
 - Electro-magnetic Interference
 - Landscape and Visual amenity

Environmental Report (2)

- Further chapters have been completed in respect of:
 - Background to wind energy issues
 - Project description (incl. technical information, construction methods etc)
 - National Planning Policy Context
 - The Need for and Benefits of the Proposal
 - Health and Safety issues

Landscape and Visual Amenity

- Location in an AONB, but:
 - Government planning guidance accepts wind projects can be acceptable in AONBs
 - 5 wind projects in AONBs (up to 14 wind turbines) incl. a project on North Wessex Downs
 - approximately 1km from 152m Membury mast (wind turbine maximum height is 81m)
 - adjacent to M4 motorway
 - close to Membury motorway service areas
 - trees/woodland in the area offer “screening”

Landscape and Visual Assessment

- Scope of assessment agreed with WBDC and WBDC's Landscape Consultant
- ZVIs and site visit to determine viewpoints and to assess impact
- Meeting with WBDC's Landscape Consultant scheduled for next week
- Feedback from project's Landscape Consultant, who has worked on over 40 wind projects: *"the most visually screened project I've worked on"* (due to vegetation more than topography)
- So how would it look?

Provisional Photomontage #1



Provisional Photomontage #2



Possible Impact on Roads/Road Users

- Major road routes seen as an ideal location for wind turbines in some countries; area already “modified” and “de-graded” with the presence of the road and associated high traffic volumes
- It seems therefore that driver distraction is not an issue in these countries, incl. USA Netherlands and Denmark
- Investigated myself with trip to Netherlands









Highways Consultation

- Consulted formally with Highways Agency (re: M4) and WB Highways Department (re: local, non-motorway roads)
- Highways Agency: need to see application details but unlikely to object to application
- WB Highways Department: unlikely to cause driver distraction; wait to see application details but unlikely to object

Timetable/consultations

- Planning application to be submitted when Landscape and Visual Assessment complete
- Discussions planned with local parish councils
- Discussions planned with local councillors
- Discussions planned with people living near the proposal
- On-going and open dialogue with other individuals/groups/WBDC officers
- TVE will assist with visit for councillors to a similar, operating wind turbine in Norfolk

West Berkshire's First Wind Turbine?

- With great assistance from TVE, WBDC and WindWorks, I have been able to progress my dream - my own wind project!
- Environmental Report has confirmed and reinforced my initial view - this is an excellent site for a *small* wind energy project
- I recognise the application is likely to be controversial, but I am hoping for a fair hearing - initial impressions from WBDC give me comfort that this should happen
- If successful, West Berkshire's first wind turbine could be operational by end 2003!