

**NON-OPERATION OF TURBINE NO. 6, LOWCA WINDFARM, PARKHOUSE FARM, LOWCA**

**Lead Officer:** Tony Pomfret – Development Services Manager

<b>To update Members of the situation in respect of an inactive wind turbine at Lowca Windfarm, Parkhouse Farm, Lowca</b>
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**Recommendation:** Members are recommended to agree not to take enforcement action in light of this report.

**Resource Implications:** Nil.

**1.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

1.1 Planning permission for 7 wind turbines at Park House Farm, Lowca was allowed on appeal in March 1999 (4/98/0486/0F1 refers). Construction commenced shortly after and the site, now run by E-On UK, has been operational since.

1.2 One of the wind turbines on the site (No. 6) has been inactive since January 2007. This is in contravention of Condition 3 of the planning permission which states:-

“If any turbine ceases to be operational for a continuous period of 6 months it shall be dismantled and removed from the site and that part of the site restored in accordance with a scheme which shall have the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.”

1.3 In response to this clear breach of the planning permission E-On UK, the energy company who own and operate the site, submit that they are seriously endeavouring to rectify the situation and summarise the problem and the ongoing work to remedy it as follows:-

- Turbine was taken out of service in January 2007 due to a fault in the gear box
- A safe method of repair could not be achieved on site and the decision then to remove the gearbox was hampered by difficulties encountered trying to undo the coupling which was unsuccessful.
- In August 2007 it was considered that all the 3 blades, gearbox and shaft would have to be removed in one piece but this would be a last resort due to the risks involved in undertaking such a major engineering operation.
- E-On now report that the coupling has been successfully separated insitu, repair work to the shaft is now underway and a new gearbox will be fitted shortly.

- Assurances have been given that the turbine will become operational within the next month. E-On state that they have been extremely frustrated by the failure of the turbine and are anxious that it resumes generation at the earliest possible date.
- 1.4 Whilst the alleged breach is not to be condoned it should be taken into account that the purpose of the condition is to protect the appearance of the area by ensuring that no turbines remain insitu after the end of their working life and fall into a state of dereliction and not to prevent or hinder genuine repair work. It is unfortunate in this instance that the repair required to this particular turbine has taken a lot longer to remedy than originally envisaged with the result that the condition was breached. It is equally unfortunate that the Council were not kept informed of events.
- 1.5 In view of the circumstances put forward and the reassurances provided by the site owners/operators it is recommended that no enforcement action be taken providing the turbine is operational by the end of February 2008.

**Contact Officer:** Heather Morrison, Senior Planning Officer

**Background Papers:** Letter to E-On dated 29 November 2007  
Letter from E-On dated 15 January 2008