



ARCUS

PLANNING STATEMENT

**HAVERIGG III WIND FARM LIFE EXTENSION
NORTH LANE, HAVERIGG, CUMBRIA**

WINDCLUSTER LTD

APRIL 2020



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Windcluster Ltd (“the Applicant”) seeks to vary Condition 2 of the extant planning consent (Ref: 4/02/0505/0) for the Haverigg III Wind Farm at the former Haverigg Airfield, Hemplands Farm, Haverigg, Cumbria (“the Site”). The current planning consent is temporary and will expire in 2025. This application seeks to extend the life of the wind farm by 15 years to enable continued operation until 2040. No new construction or alterations to the existing wind farm are proposed.

Windcluster Ltd and Thrive Renewables (Haverigg II) Ltd, the applicant for the proposed life extension of the neighbouring Haverigg II Wind Farm, have taken a collaborative approach to their life extension applications and pre-application consultations with Natural England, Copeland Borough Council and the local community.

The Haverigg III wind farm currently has an installed capacity of 3.4 MW. The existing infrastructure at Haverigg is in good condition and there is no technical/engineering reason why the wind turbines should not continue generating electricity until 2040.

Should the generation of energy at the wind farm cease in 2025 in accordance with Condition 2 of the existing consent, this would result in an unnecessary reduction in the overall UK supply of renewable energy. The loss of an existing source of renewable energy would be contrary to national and international climate change policies and legislation, such as the UK Net Zero 2050 target. This would also require the removal of the existing turbines and associated infrastructure and the restoration of the site to its previous condition in 2025.

The proposed extension of time would therefore make efficient use of existing productive infrastructure to continue contributing to the supply of renewable energy. In addition, the proposal would delay the decommissioning process, and associated traffic and noise, until 2040.

As demonstrated in the accompanying technical reports, the continued operation of the wind farm would not give rise to any significant impacts in terms of ecology, ornithology, landscape, highways and traffic, health and safety, or residential amenity. The continued operation of the wind farm in this location is in compliance with all relevant local and national planning policies.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This Planning Statement (“the Statement”) has been prepared in support of a planning application under Section 73 of the *Town and Country Planning Act (1990)* which has been submitted to Copeland Borough Council (“CBC”) by Windcluster Ltd (“the Applicant”) to vary Condition 2 of the extant planning consent (Ref: 4/02/0505/0) for the Haverigg III Wind Farm at the former Haverigg Airfield, Hemplands Farm, Haverigg, Cumbria (“the Site”).

This application seeks to extend the life of the wind farm by 15 years to enable continued operation until 2040. No new wind turbines or alterations to the existing turbines are proposed.

1.2 The Planning Application Submission

The following plans and drawings are submitted with the planning application:

- Planning Drawing 1 – Site Location Plan;
- Planning Drawing 2 – Site Layout Plan; and
- Planning Drawing 3 – Wind Turbine Elevation.

The following environmental and technical reports are appended to this Planning Statement:

- Appendix 1 – Statement of Community Involvement;
- Appendix 2 – Report to Inform a Habitat Regulations Assessment;
- Appendix 3 – Landscape and Visual Appraisal;
- Appendix 4 – Ecological Appraisal;
- Appendix 5 – Winter Ornithological Report;
- Appendix 6 – Breeding Bird Report;
- Appendix 7 – Turbine Inspection and Maintenance Plan;
- Appendix 8 – Site Photographs;
- Appendix 9 – Haverigg III Planning Consent (Ref: 4/02/0505/0)

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Request and Report has also been submitted as a standalone document.

1.3 The Applicant

Windcluster Ltd was founded in 1988 and is a privately owned company. Windcluster Ltd was established to develop small scale wind energy projects, and coined the term ‘windcluster’ to describe them. This idea was inspired by seeing local developments in Denmark, where small groups of turbines were thoughtfully integrated into the landscape.

Windcluster was one of the first wind energy development companies in the UK and its first project, Haverigg I was the second commercial wind project in the UK. The original Haverigg I windcluster was located at Haverigg airfield near Millom in Cumbria and comprised five Vestas V27 turbines, with a total rating of 1.125MW.

The project was commissioned on 5 August 1992. It was formally opened in December of that year by the then Minister for the Environment and Countryside, David Maclean at a ceremony hosted by the Haverigg Primary School. The Friends of the Lake District stated at the time that ‘Windcluster’s first development in Cumbria demonstrates that carefully located, small clusters of turbines can be acceptable in the environment.’

The V27 turbines were dismantled in 2004 to make way for the four larger V52 turbines, the 3.4MW Haverigg III windcluster. But old turbines never die, and the V27 workhorses have

found new homes. Three have gone to Gigha where they are called the Dancing Ladies: Faith, Hope and Charity. The two others are now running in the north east of England.

Now the main activity of the Windcluster Ltd is to manage the Haverigg III Wind Farm at Haverigg Airfield and to secure its long-term future.

1.4 Rationale for the Development

One of the most sustainable forms of energy production worldwide is the production of wind energy through the use of wind turbines. Wind energy generation does not require fossil fuels (or produce carbon emissions). In addition, onshore wind is the most cost-effective source of energy generated in the UK and is economically viable without Government subsidies¹.

The UK Government has committed to a legally binding target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 in order to prevent climate change. Renewable and low carbon energy developments such as the Haverigg III wind farm play a significant role in reducing carbon emissions to meet the net zero target as well as the UK's international commitments to reducing carbon emissions as detailed in Section 6.

The Haverigg III wind farm currently has an installed capacity of 3.4 MW. The existing infrastructure at Haverigg is in good condition and there is no technical/engineering reason why the wind turbines should not continue generating electricity until February 2040.

Should the generation of energy at the wind farm cease in February 2025 in accordance with Condition 2 of the existing consent, this would result in an unnecessary reduction in the overall supply of renewable energy in the UK. It would also require the removal of the existing turbines and associated infrastructure and the restoration of the site to its previous condition in 2025. The decommissioning process would give rise to additional vehicle movements including abnormal loads along North Lane and associated noise and disturbance.

The proposed extension of time would therefore make efficient use of existing productive infrastructure to continue contributing to the supply of renewable energy. In addition, the proposal would delay the decommissioning process, and associated traffic and noise, until 2040.

1.5 Relationship with the Local Community

Although there is no planning requirement for community benefits, Windcluster Ltd has engaged proactively with and contributed to the local community. It should be noted that Government guidance on community benefits associated with onshore wind farms states that community benefits are not a material consideration and are therefore not relevant to planning decisions².

Windcluster has provided sizeable financial contributions to the Haverigg Primary School in recent years. These contributions will continue for the operational life of the Haverigg III Wind Farm.

Windcluster is also in discussions with HMP Haverigg regarding the potential for the prison to source some or all of its electricity from Haverigg III. It is intended that the agreement

¹ BEIS (2016) *Electrical Generation Costs* [online] Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/566567/BEIS_Electricity_Generation_Cost_Report.pdf (Accessed 11/03/2020)

² Department of Energy and Climate Change (2014) *Community Benefits from Onshore Wind Developments: Best Practice Guidance for England* [online] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/363405/FINAL_-_Community_Benefits_Guidance.pdf (Accessed 11/03/2020)

to supply the prison with electricity will be finalised once this application is approved since it is only economically viable with an extended operational lifetime.

1.6 Haverigg II Wind Farm

The extant consent for Haverigg II Wind Farm to the east of the Site is due to expire in 2022 (Ref: 4/95/0553/0). A separate application for a life extension to Haverigg II has been submitted concurrently, on behalf of Thrive Renewables (Haverigg II) Ltd. Given the close proximity and similarities between the two sites, the Applicant has consulted with and co-operated closely with the applicant for Haverigg II on the proposal.

1.7 Pre-Application Consultation

The proposal to extend the life of the wind farm has been subject to a thorough pre-application consultation with Copeland Borough Council and the local community, as summarised in the sections below.

1.7.1 Consultation with CBC

The Applicant has engaged proactively with Copeland Borough Council over the past 5 years through a multi-stage pre-application consultation.

A request for pre-application advice regarding the future of the wind farm was submitted to the Council in May 2015. A meeting was held at the Copeland Borough Council offices in June 2015 to discuss the potential planning routes to a life extension and/or repowering, the environmental assessments required for an application and the format of community consultation.

A further pre-application enquiry was submitted in August 2017 and the second pre-application meeting was held in December 2017 in order to provide an update on the proposed life extension. The consenting approach and the scope of the planning submission were agreed at the meeting.

The third and final pre-application meeting was held jointly with Thrive Renewables (Haverigg II) Ltd, the applicant for the Haverigg II life extension, in February 2020 to update CBC on the outcomes of the environmental surveys and assessments completed, to co-ordinate the approach to the life extensions of both wind farms, and to finalise the application scope and consenting procedure.

The advice received from CBC has informed the public consultation approach, consenting route and the environmental/technical assessments undertaken to support the planning application. CBC have indicated that there is no objection to the principle of the development, subject to sufficient technical evidence and consultation with the local community.

1.7.2 Consultation with the Local Community

The Applicant is fully committed to public involvement and engagement and believes it is important to give local people an opportunity to view proposals and discuss the proposal with members of the project team at an early stage. Accordingly, a full consultation was undertaken prior to the submission of the planning application.

In light of the concurrent proposal for a life extension to the Haverigg II wind farm, the public consultations for the two wind farm extensions were run jointly in the interests of convenience and accessibility for members of the public and Town/Parish Councils.

Consultation letters containing an invitation to the consultation event and response forms were distributed to 861 properties in the vicinity of the development on October 7th 2019. Letters with invitations were also sent to Millom Town Council, Millom Without Parish Council

and Whicham Parish Council. A drop-in consultation event and exhibition was held at the Lighthouse Centre, Haverigg for six hours on October 23rd 2019.

11 local residents, including two members of Copeland Borough Council, attended the event and provided both verbal and written feedback on the proposal. Further written responses from residents were received via post and email. No comments were received from members of the Town and Parish Councils, aside from a query regarding funding for public spaces.

The main concern raised by consultees was that additional turbines could be constructed or that the existing turbines would be enlarged. It was made clear in the invitation letters and at the event that this proposal is for an extension of time only, with no built development proposed. Several expressions of support for the proposal were received, although concerns were raised regarding several issues including:

- Impact on the condition of North Lane (private road) – Addressed in Section 5.7 of this Statement;
- Impact on human health, including shadow flicker and noise – Addressed in Section 5.6 of this Statement;
- Impact on birds - Addressed in Section 5.4 of this Statement and Appendices, 2, 5 and 6; and
- Community benefits - Addressed in Section 1.5 of this Statement.

Full details of the community consultation process are set out in Appendix 1 - Statement of Community Involvement ('SCI') accompanying the planning application.

1.7.3 *Natural England Discretionary Advice Service ('DAS') Consultation*

During pre-application consultation with CBC, it was requested that the applicant consult directly with Natural England as a key statutory consultee in relation to the nature conservation designations in proximity to the Site. An initial pre-application meeting was held with Natural England on August 9th 2018 to introduce the proposals, and to agree the methodologies for ecological and ornithological surveys of the Site.

There has been ongoing dialogue with Natural England throughout the pre-application phase. Following completion of the surveys, the results were presented to Natural England for discussion and to inform the approach to the Habitats Regulations Assessment process for the Development. Natural England has subsequently reviewed the Report to Inform a Habitats Regulations Assessment (Appendix 2), with the advice received in relation to the mitigation requirements having been fully adopted by the applicant and agreed with Cumbria Wildlife Trust.

1.8 The Development and the EIA Regulations (2017)

An EIA screening opinion request and EIA Screening Report in relation to the Development has been submitted to Copeland Borough Council concurrently with this planning application.

The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017³ define an EIA development as either:

- Schedule 1 development; or
- Schedule 2 development likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location.

³ The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 [online] Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uk/si/2017/571/contents/made> (Accessed 15/04/2019)

PPG paragraph 018 states that EIA will only apply to a small proportion of projects and only those which are likely to have significant effects.

Wind energy development is not listed in Schedule 1 of the regulations.

Section 13 of Schedule 2 refers to changes and extensions, with paragraph (b) referring to changes and extensions to developments listed elsewhere in Schedule 2, "*where that development is already authorised, executed or in the process of being executed*". Schedule 2, section 3, paragraph (i) refers to wind farms which have more than 2 turbines or the hub height is more than 15 m, which includes Haverigg III.

The relevant clause is therefore Schedule 2, section 13, paragraph (b) which sets out that changes to Schedule 2 Development are themselves Schedule 2 Development if:

"Either—

(i) The development as changed or extended may have significant adverse effects on the environment; or

(ii) in relation to development of a description mentioned in column 1 of this table, the thresholds and criteria in the corresponding part of column 2 of this table applied to the change or extension are met or exceeded."

With regards to (i), "*the development as changed or extended*" will be physically the same as the development, which has already been constructed and is already operating, and which comprises the baseline (the "Do Nothing Scenario"). The only effects are therefore those associated with the change in timescales, none of which have been assessed as 'significant adverse', as outlined in the EIA Screening Report submitted with this application.

Turning to Paragraph (ii), the change proposed by the s73 application will be for a timescale only, and will not propose new wind turbines. The s73 application therefore does not meet or exceed the criteria, and therefore does not require EIA as a result of Schedule 2, section 13, paragraph (b)(ii).

Significant adverse effects are not likely as a result of the proposed extension of time and the proposed change therefore does not warrant an EIA. The operational phase duration extension of Haverigg III does not constitute EIA development and an EIA is therefore not required to support the s73 application.

2 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 Location

The Site is located on the former Haverigg Airfield, c. 2 km to the northwest of the main village of Haverigg. HMP Haverigg prison lies to the southeast, while the four-turbine Haverigg II Wind Farm lies to the northeast. The western boundary of the site is c. 300 m inland from the Irish Sea Coast and is separated from the beach by intervening sand dunes. The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is at a low risk of flooding⁴.

2.2 Site Description

The Site comprises flat low-lying open grazing land within the western part of the former Haverigg airfield. The boundaries of the former airfield are delineated by perimeter stock fencing and remnant hedgerows.

The Haverigg III Wind Farm comprises four Vestas V52 wind turbines with a height to blade tip of 76 m, associated crane pads, and a switchgear building. The four turbines are arranged in a curved line along the western and northwestern boundaries of the former airfield. The two northernmost turbines are located within the Haverigg Motocross Track, which occupies the northern portion of the former airfield. The Wind Farm is accessed via an existing track from North Lane, a private road to the west of Haverigg. The generating capacity of the wind farm is 3.4 MW.

The wind farm has been operational since 2005 and no complaints have been received during its lifetime in relation to its operation (e.g. noise, residential amenity, etc.).

2.3 Environmental Designations and Constraints

The southern boundary of the Lake District National Park and World Heritage Site lies c. 900 m to the northwest of the Site. The nearest designated heritage assets other than the World Heritage Site are the Grade II listed Bankspring Former Brewery and associated Limekiln (c. 1.7 km to the northeast of the Site) and the Grade II listed Haverigg War Memorial in central Haverigg (c. 2 km to the southeast of the Site).⁵

In terms of ecological designations, the Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary Special Protection Area ('SPA'), Morecambe Bay Special Area of Conservation ('SAC') and the Duddon Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest ('SSSI') and Duddon Estuary Ramsar Site lie immediately to the southwest of the Site.⁶

The Site is not crossed by any Public Rights of Way. The proposed England Coast Path from Silecroft to Silverdale would run to the west of the Site on a northwest-southeast axis. The proposed addition of this route to the England Coast Path was recently subject to a public consultation from January to March 2020 and it has not yet been formally established.

The nearest residential properties are at High Layriggs, c. 500 m north of the nearest turbine, and along Bank Head, c. 1 km to the east of the Site, adjacent to the prison.

2.4 Planning History

Planning permission was granted for the current development (Council planning ref: 4/02/0505/0) on the 15th August 2002 and it was subsequently constructed, with completion in 2005 (Appendix 9). The planning permission for operation is temporary in nature, and

⁴ Environment Agency (2020) *Flood Map for Planning* [online] <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/> (Accessed 10/03/2020)

⁵ MAGIC Map (2020) [online] <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/home.htm> (Accessed 10/03/2020)

⁶ *ibid*

expires in February 2025, 20 years from the date that electricity was first connected to the National Grid (February 2005).

The Haverigg III Wind Farm itself was a repowering of earlier wind energy scheme on the site, known as Haverigg I, that was granted planning permission in 1991 (Council planning ref: 4/91/0463/0).

In 2015, an application by Partnership for Renewables ('PFR') for a wind farm comprising 5 turbines with a maximum height of 100 m on land to the south of HMP Haverigg Prison was approved (Ref: 4/15/2022/0F1). However, the approved wind development was never built and it is understood that the consent has now expired.

3 THE PROPOSAL

3.1 The Relevant Condition

This application seeks to vary Condition 2 of the extant consent (Ref: 4/02/0505/0) (Appendix 9). The Condition currently states:

This permission is for a period not exceeding 20 years from the date that electricity from the development is first connected into the National Grid. Within 12 months of the cessation of electricity generation at the site (or the expiry of this permission, whichever is the sooner) all development shall be removed from the site and the land restored in accordance with a scheme which shall have the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

As Haverigg III first connected to the National Grid in February 2005, the extant planning consent will expire in February 2025.

3.2 Proposed Variation

This application seeks the variation of Condition 2 to enable the continued operation of the existing Wind Farm for a further 15 years, so that the consent would expire in February 2040, after which the development would be removed from the site and the land restored in accordance with a decommissioning scheme to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority. Suggested wording for the varied condition is:

This permission is for a period not exceeding 35 years from the date that electricity from the development is first connected into the National Grid. Within 12 months of the cessation of electricity generation at the site (or the expiry of this permission, whichever is the sooner) all development shall be removed from the site and the land restored in accordance with a scheme which shall have the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

The scope of this application is limited to the extension of time only, with no new turbines or amendments to existing turbines proposed.

4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 Introduction

This section of the Planning Statement reviews the key Development Plan policies and guidance which cover the Site and relate specifically to the proposal. The aim of this section is to establish the land use implications of the proposed extension of time, consider its compliance with the Development Plan, and identify other material considerations to be taken into account during the determination process.

4.2 Legislative Background

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Section 70(2) states that:

"In dealing with such an application the authority shall have regard to the provisions of the Development Plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations."

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 forms an amendment to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that:

"If regard is to be had to the Development Plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

The process for determining a planning application can be defined as:

- Identification and consideration of the key provisions within the Development Plan;
- Clarification of whether the Development is in accordance with the Development Plan;
- Identification and consideration of relevant material considerations; and
- Conclusions on whether planning permission is justified.

CBC has commenced work on a new Local Plan covering the period from 2017 to 2035 which will contain strategic policies, site allocations and development management policies. The Local Plan Issues and Options Draft⁷ has been published and was subject to consultation from November 2019 to January 2020. The next stage of the Plan, the Preferred Options Draft, is scheduled to be published in spring/summer 2020. The emerging Local Plan is at an early stage and is therefore not considered to carry weight in the determination of planning applications.

The relevant Development Plan for the Site consists of the following documents:

- Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028 Core Strategy and Development Management DPD⁸ ("the Local Plan"); and
- Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028 Proposals Map ("the Proposals Map") and Copeland Local Plan 2001-2016 'Saved' Policies ("the Saved Policies")⁹.

The National Planning Policy Framework ("the NPPF") sets out Central Government planning policies for England and was revised in February 2019. The NPPF advises that planning

⁷ Copeland Borough Council (2019) *Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035: Issues and Options Draft* [online] Available from: https://www.copeland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/issues_and_options_draft.pdf (Accessed 25/03/2020)

⁸ Copeland Borough Council (2013) *Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028: Core Strategy and Development Management Policies* [online] Available from: <https://www.copeland.gov.uk/attachments/core-strategy-and-development-management-policies-0> (Accessed 25/03/2020)

⁹ Copeland Borough Council (2013) *Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028: Proposals Map and Copeland Local Plan 2001-2016 'Saved' Policies* [online] Available from: https://www.copeland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/proposalsmapsavedpoliciesdoc13_28.pdf (Accessed 25/03/2020)

permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The NPPF will thus also form an important material consideration in the determination of this planning application.

The principle of the Development in relation to the relevant Development Plan policies is set out below. A review of the Development Plan has also highlighted a wide range of environmental and amenity issues that require to be considered when considering the compliance of the Development with the Development Plan. These issues are therefore also considered below, with reference to the Development Plan policies to which they relate. The Saved Policies of the 2001-2016 Local Plan mainly relate to housing and employment development and are not relevant to this proposal.

Table 1 below summarises the relevant planning policies against which the Development has been assessed.

Table 1: Local Plan Policies relevant to the proposal

Policy	Addressed in Section
Core Strategy Policies	
ER2 – Planning for the Renewable Energy Sector	5.1
ER3 – The Support Infrastructure for the Energy Coast	5.1
ENV1 – Flood Risk and Risk Management	5.1
ENV2 – Coastal Management	5.1
ENV3 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity	5.4, 5.5
ENV4 – Heritage Assets	5.3
ENV5 – Protecting and Enhancing the Borough’s Landscapes	5.2
Development Management Policies	
DM2 – Renewable Energy Development in the Borough	5.1
DM11 – Sustainable Development Standards	5.1
DM25 – Protecting Nature Conservation Sites, Habitats and Species	5.4, 5.5
DM26 – Landscaping	5.2
DM27 – Built Heritage and Archaeology	5.3

The Core Strategy emphasises the importance of energy generation in Copeland, which forms part of the Energy Coast. The *Britain’s Energy Coast West Cumbria Initiative* aims to support economic opportunity and regeneration by creating further knowledge and energy-based opportunities.

Policy ER2 – Planning for the Renewable Energy Sector: This policy states that new renewable energy generation proposals which maximise renewable resources and minimise environmental and amenity impacts will be supported, subject to the criteria set out in **Policy DM2.**

The explanatory text for Policy ER2 refers to the 2011 *Cumbria Renewable Energy Capacity and Development Study*¹⁰ which assesses the renewable energy potential for the region between 2011 and 2030. The Study indicates that commercial wind is the source of virtually all renewable energy in Copeland and that wind is likely to provide the majority of Copeland's renewable energy in the future. There is scope to increase the amount of renewable energy generated in Copeland from 17MW to 46MW in 2030. The Local Plan supports the aspiration to deliver 46MW from renewable sources by 2030.

Policy ER3 – The Support Infrastructure for the Energy Coast: This policy indicates that the Council will support energy development which meets a number of criteria, including:

- Minimising the impact on the landscape and natural environment and on the health and amenity of residents and visitors;
- Supporting the implementation of *Britain's Energy Coast: A Masterplan for West Cumbria*;
- Selecting sites which are consistent with the Core Strategy and minimise undesirable impacts; and
- Mitigating or compensating for negative impacts on the locality.

Policy ENV1 – Flood Risk and Risk Management: This policy sets out the Council's approach to development is not prejudiced by flood risks. These measures include limiting new build development to locations which are not at risk of flooding and ensuring that new development does not contribute to increased surface water run-off through the use of sustainable drainage systems.

Policy ENV2 – Coastal Management: This policy seeks to reinforce the Coastal Zone's assets and opportunities via several measures including supporting energy generating developments that require a coastal location along the undeveloped coast, provided that the potential impacts on biodiversity, landscape and heritage assets are carefully assessed against the benefits.

Policy ENV3 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity: This policy sets out measures that the Council will take to contribute to the implementation of the *UK and Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan*, including improving the condition of designated sites, ensuring that developments protect and enhance biodiversity interest and protecting populations of priority/protected species.

Policy ENV4 – Heritage Assets: This policy seeks to maximise the value of the Borough's heritage assets. It states that listed buildings, conservation areas and other townscape and rural features of value will be protected. The policy is supported by **Policy DM27**.

Policy ENV5 - Protecting and Enhancing the Borough's Landscapes: This policy states that the Borough's landscapes will be protected and enhanced by:

- protecting landscapes from inappropriate change;
- ensuring that any impacts on the landscape are minimised through adequate mitigation, preferably on-site; and
- supporting proposals which enhance the value of the Borough's landscapes.

¹⁰ SQW (2011) *Cumbria Renewable Energy Capacity and Deployment Study: Final report to Cumbria County Council* [online] Available from: <https://www.copeland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/cumbrenewencapanddeplotstudy11.pdf> (Accessed 25/03/2020)

Policy DM2 – Renewable Energy Development in the Borough: This policy indicates that renewable energy proposals will be supported where they satisfy detailed criteria in relation to stakeholder involvement, visual effects, effects on landscape or townscape character and distinctiveness, biodiversity and geodiversity, nature and heritage conservation, environmental health impacts, waste and site restoration. Mitigation measures to minimise potential impacts and to deliver community benefits should be employed where possible.

Policy DM11 – Sustainable Development Standards: This policy aims to ensure that development proposals reach high standards of sustainability. Developments are encouraged to achieve high standards of energy efficiency and to incorporate renewable energy generating technology.

Policy DM25 – Protecting Nature Conservation Sites, Habitats and Species: This is a detailed policy which seeks to ensure that development proposals protect and/or enhance biodiversity and natural habitats. Developments which would have an adverse effect on biodiversity or geodiversity will not be permitted unless several criteria are met, such as ensuring that the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the impacts and that any effects are mitigated or compensated.

Policy DM26 – Landscaping: This policy states that proposals for development will be assessed in terms of their potential impact on the landscape, with reference to the Cumbria Landscape Character Assessment and Cumbria Historic, Landscape Characterisation documents. The proposals will be assessed in terms of visual impact, scale, character, amenity value, local distinctiveness and the cumulative impact of developments. Landscape schemes should retain existing landscape features and mitigate any adverse visual impacts.

Policy DM27 – Built Heritage and Archaeology: This policy states that development proposals should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the character of historic sites and their settings. The policy contains detailed criteria for proposals which would affect a scheduled ancient monument, conservation area, listed building or site of archaeological importance.

4.3 National Planning Policy Framework, February 2019

4.3.1 Introduction

The NPPF¹¹ sets out Central Government's planning policies for England and how these are to be applied. The NPPF reiterates that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF also identifies that national planning policy is a material consideration when making decisions on planning applications. The most relevant aspects of national planning policy contained within the NPPF are as follows:

4.3.2 The Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

The NPPF sets out the economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. Central to these main themes is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and that development should be planned positively.

4.3.3 Renewable Energy

The NPPF is clear that planning has a key role in supporting renewable energy, and identifies this is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable

¹¹ MHCLG (2019) *The National Planning Policy Framework* [online] Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf (Accessed 25/03/2020)

development. Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) need to recognise the role of all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable sources, in order to increase the use and supply of renewable energy.

Paragraph 148 states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

Paragraph 151 states that to help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should:

- provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts);
- consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development; and
- identify opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers.

The NPPF also clarifies at Paragraph 154 that there is no requirement for applicants to demonstrate the need for renewable energy development, stating that LPAs should not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

Local authorities should approve applications for renewable energy where the impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.

Footnote 49 to Paragraph 154 states that, except for applications for the repowering of existing turbines (which includes life extensions, as detailed at Paragraph 5.1 below), a proposal for wind turbines should not be considered acceptable unless it is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in the development plan and it can be demonstrated that the proposal has the backing of the local community. Footnote 49 does not apply to the repowering of existing turbines and is therefore not applicable to this application.

4.3.4 Environmental Considerations

The NPPF contains policies on a number of environmental issues in achieving sustainable development and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Meeting the challenge of climate change is at the core of the NPPF and it sets out how planning plays an intrinsic role in supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy developments.

Paragraphs 170 to 202 emphasise the importance of preservation and enhancement of the built and natural environment. They set out detailed requirements for the assessment of the impact on the landscape value, biodiversity and habitats, and the historic environment. These requirements have been considered throughout the relevant assessments accompanying the Application and have been addressed, to demonstrate compliance of the Development in Section 5, Assessment of the Development.

It should be noted that Paragraph 117 of the NPPF promotes the effective use of land, including making as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land.

5 ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSAL

5.1 The principle of retaining the wind farm

The Haverigg III Wind Farm has been generating renewable energy since 2005 without any significant impacts on the environment and residential amenity. The principle of development for wind energy at the Site is clearly established by the extant planning consent.

The consideration of this application should be based on a comparison of the proposed extension of time with the 'do-nothing' scenario, in which the existing wind farm would continue to operate until February 2025, followed by decommissioning and restoration of the Site.

The turbines are currently in good condition and, following inspection by independent experts, have been confirmed to be suitable for continued operation until at least 2040, subject to measures in the Inspection and Maintenance Plan at Appendix 7.

If, as per the existing planning consent, the wind farm is decommissioned in 2025, the existing turbines would be taken out of use prematurely in comparison with their potential operational lifespan. Decommissioning the wind farm in 2025 would also result in the unnecessary loss of an existing source of renewable energy, the production of which is essential for reducing carbon emissions and preventing climate change. Furthermore, the decommissioning process, which is similar to that of construction, would result in temporary environmental and amenity effects, such as increased disturbance to the site, noise and vehicle movements with abnormal loads.

The proposed extension in the operational lifespan of the wind farm until February 2040 would therefore have significant benefits as follows:

- Continued production of renewable energy for an additional 15 years;
- The efficient use of existing infrastructure a previously developed site without the need for construction/new development; and
- Delay in decommissioning effects (e.g. traffic and noise) for 15 years.

At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The proposed extension of time clearly fulfils the NPPF definition of sustainable development, as it is compatible with the environmental, economic and social objectives therein. The proposal is therefore in accordance with NPPF **Paragraphs 8 and 11** and Local Plan Policy **DM11** with regard to sustainability.

The NPPF is clear that the planning system has a fundamental role in ensuring that Government objectives for energy and climate change policy are fulfilled, stating at Paragraph 154 that applications for renewable energy development are to be approved if impacts are, or can be made, acceptable. The impacts of the extension of time, as detailed in Sections 5.2 to 5.8 below, are minimal. The proposal therefore fulfils the requirements of NPPF **Paragraph 154**.

With regard to Footnote 49 to NPPF Paragraph 154, the application is not a proposal for new turbines but an extension to the operational lifespan of an existing wind development, which is commonly referred to as 'repowering'. The recent appeal decision regarding the proposed life extension of Kirkby Moor Wind Farm (Ref: APP/M0933/W/18/3204360) confirms that the reference in the footnote to 'repowering' incorporates life extensions, even where no changes to the existing wind turbines are proposed. The proposed life extension is therefore exempt from the requirements under Footnote 49 which apply only to applications for new turbines, such as identification of the Site within a Local Plan and demonstrating the support of the local community.

Turning to the local planning policy context, the retention of the turbines would contribute to the aspiration for Copeland to deliver 46 MW of energy generated from renewable sources

by 2030, as set out in the *Cumbria Renewable Energy Capacity and Development Study* (2011)¹² and supported in the Local Plan. The extended lifespan of the wind farm would secure the continuation of renewable energy generation which maximises renewable resources and minimises environmental and amenity impacts, as supported by Local Plan Policies **ER2**, **ER3** and **DM2**.

The Site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is not subject to any allocations or local policy designations as shown on the Proposals Map. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Local Plan Policies **ENV1** and **ENV2**.

5.2 Landscape and Visual Impact

A Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the Development has been prepared and is included with this Application at Appendix 3. The report provides a comparison of the baseline used to assess the original application in 2002 to the current baseline, identifying any changes and potential landscape and visual effects, and considers the continued operation of the turbines for a further 15 years to 2040.

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) indicates that areas from which the wind farm are potentially visible are mainly within 10 km of the Site, with longer distance views restricted by rising topography away from the coast. The wind farm is only visible from small areas of the Lake District National Park, mainly the southern slopes of Black Combe and the A595.

The turbines are modest in scale and although they form a noticeable vertical feature, they are not uncharacteristic of the landscape and are set within the context of other large-scale man-made features such as HMP Haverigg. Any adverse visual impacts associated with the turbines are medium term but reversible.

Taking into account the existing character and quality of the landscape, the visual amenity of receptors, SPD guidance and the Site's value at a community level, it is considered that the landscape is able to continue accommodating the wind farm without undue adverse landscape or visual effects. In addition, no adverse cumulative landscape or visual impacts are predicted. The Development therefore complies with Local Plan Policies **ENV5** and **DM26**.

5.3 Heritage

The southern boundary of the Lake District National Park and World Heritage Site lies c. 900 m to the northwest of the Site. The nearest designated heritage assets other than the World Heritage Site are the Grade II listed Bankspring Former Brewery and associated Limekiln (c. 1.7 km to the northeast of the Site) and the Grade II listed Haverigg War Memorial in central Haverigg (c. 2 km to the southeast of the Site).¹³

The retention of the turbines would not result in harm to the setting or character of the Lake District World Heritage Site, given the distance from its boundaries and the very limited areas of visibility of the turbines within the Lake District, as shown on the Zone of Theoretical Visibility in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal. Similarly, the proposed extension of time would have a negligible impact on the setting of the Bankspring Former Brewery and Limekiln or that of the Haverigg War Memorial.

The proposed retention of the wind farm therefore meets the criteria of Local Plan Policies **ENV4** and **DM27** with regard to heritage.

¹² SQW for Cumbria County Council (2011) *Cumbria Renewable Energy Capacity and Deployment Study* [online] Available here <https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/planning-environment/renewable-energy/renewableenergystudy.asp> (Accessed 28/03/2020)

¹³ MAGIC Map (2020) [online] <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/home.htm> (Accessed 10/03/2020)

5.4 Ornithology

Prior to the submission of this application, an extensive consultation was undertaken with Natural England to agree on the scope of surveys required and the methodology to be followed in relation to the impact on Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary Special Protection Area ('the SPA') and its associated bird populations.

Ornithological surveys including wintering birds, breeding birds, flight activity and carcass searches have been completed, and reports of these are included at Appendices 5 and 6. A Report to inform a Habitat Regulations Assessment has been undertaken and is provided at Appendix 2.

The survey findings indicate strongly that, while there was some evidence of collision with turbines (1 herring gull and 1 lesser black-backed gull), numbers affected are extremely low, despite high level of flight activity by both species across the Site.

It was also found that a range of other species also occasionally collide with the turbines, including some raptor and wader species of conservation concern. However, numbers were considered too low to have a significant impact on local populations of any species.

Given the low numbers involved and large SPA breeding populations, it is unlikely that extending the operational life span of the Development would have a significant negative impact on breeding populations of either species.

On a precautionary basis, mitigation in the form of predator-proof fencing at South Walney Nature Reserve (to provide increased breeding opportunities for gulls) will be provided by the applicant via a contribution to Cumbria Wildlife Trust. This will fully ensure that the negligible and low magnitude impacts identified on herring gull and lesser black-backed gull as SPA species are mitigated.

Based on survey findings, the current operation of the wind farm is not having a significant effect on any bird species. Given this, the effect of the extension of the operational life of the wind farm is assessed as not significant. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Local Plan Policies **ENV3** and **DM25** with regard to ornithology.

5.5 Ecology

An Ecological Appraisal has been prepared and is included with this submission at Appendix 4. No potential effects from extending the operational phase of the wind farm were identified on any form of non-avian ecology except bats.

A desk-based assessment to search for records of bats within 10 km of the Site identified no statutory sites designated for bats within 10 km of the Survey Area. 128 bat species records were returned within 10 km of the Survey Area.

A survey of the site was undertaken in April 2019 which assessed habitats for their potential to support commuting, foraging and roosting bats. The Survey Area was found to have negligible suitability for bats as no trees are present and the majority of the Survey Area comprises sheep-grazed grassland with no linear features that could be used by commuting bats. The buildings on site provide limited bat roosting potential.

No bat carcasses were discovered during the carcass searches. Collision risk for bats has been assessed as low due to the limited foraging potential, limited connectivity to good quality habitat and no evidence of mortality. The life extension of the wind farm is considered to have a negligible effect on bats. The proposed life extension is therefore in accordance with Local Plan Policies **ENV3** and **DM25** with regard to ecology.

5.6 Residential Amenity and Environmental Health

The wind farm is located c. 500 m from the nearest residential property at High Layriggs and c. 1km from the group of residential properties at Bank Head, which lies to the east of HMP Haverigg. Given the distance between the residential properties and the wind farms, it is not anticipated that their continued presence would have a discernible impact on residential amenity in terms of noise or shadow flicker. As such, the application for Haverigg III was deemed acceptable, including consideration of noise and shadow flicker. No complaints have been received from any residents during the operation of the turbines as part of the existing development.

The extension of the operational lifespan of the wind farm would delay the temporary increase in noise and vibration associated with the decommissioning process by 15 years from 2025 to 2040.

In light of the above, it is not considered that the retention of the turbines would give rise to any significant impacts on residential amenity.

5.7 Access, Transport and Traffic

The wind farm is accessed via North Lane, a private road which is shared with HMP Haverigg and a number of residential properties. An access track runs around the perimeter of the former airfield and further tracks cross the middle of the site (as shown on the Site Layout Plan), the use of which is shared by the Haverigg II and Haverigg III wind farms. The proposed extension of the operational lifespan will not have an impact on access arrangements for the Site.

The number of vehicle trips associated with the operation of the existing wind farm is very low as the wind farm is operated remotely with no on-site staff. The only vehicle movements generated by the wind farm are those associated with occasional site visits for inspection and maintenance. The proposed extension of time would not result in any new construction traffic or changes to the current operational traffic levels.

The decommissioning of the Site will result in a temporary increase in traffic along North Lane, including HGVs and abnormal loads. In the do-nothing scenario, the decommissioning will take place in 2025, whereas with the proposed extension of time, the increase in traffic associated with decommissioning will be delayed until 2040.

The extension of time would therefore have a negligible impact on the local highways network.

5.8 Inspection and Maintenance

An Inspection and Maintenance Plan for the turbines and associated infrastructure at Haverigg III has been prepared by Bridge Wind Management Ltd and is included at Appendix 7.

The Haverigg III wind farm is operated in accordance with all relevant UK legislation and regulation. The principal legislation relating to health and safety risks for onshore wind energy projects in England, Scotland and Wales is the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (HASWA) 1974. In addition, industry-specific regulation on electricity generating, transmission and distribution equipment, the Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations (ESQCR) 2002, is applicable to wind farms. As a result of the above, a range of safety measures are applied at the wind farm to comply with specific requirements set out in regulation and to fulfil their broader health and safety duties.

The Inspection and Maintenance Plan sets out the measures that will be implemented for the duration of the wind farm's lifespan in order to ensure that it can continue to operate safely and effectively. These include a programme of 6-monthly, annual and 4-yearly maintenance checks; regular visual inspections; annual statutory inspections of anchor

points; ladder fall arrest systems and emergency equipment; and SCADA system which automatically sends alerts when faults occur.

Windcluster Ltd engages competent contractors to manage the site, monitor performance and carry out routine reactive and proactive maintenance. Where necessary, it brings in third-party specialists to carry out inspections required by regulation or statute, make specialist repairs and provide additional advice. Maintenance and inspection schedules and corrective actions are monitored by WPO (<https://wpo.eu/>), as Windcluster's appointed asset manager.

6 OTHER RELEVANT MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Cumbria Wind Energy Supplementary Planning Document (2007)

The 2007 *Cumbria Wind Energy Supplementary Planning Document*¹⁴ (“the SPD”) provides guidance on new wind energy schemes and extensions to/ re-powering of, existing schemes of under 50MW. The SPD was prepared to support the implementation of national, regional and local policies which have been revoked or replaced (e.g. Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy, Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West of England and The Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan 2001-2016). The SPD should therefore be afforded limited weight where it is in accordance with the policies in the NPPF.

6.2 Planning Practice Guidance

The National Planning Practice Guidance¹⁵ (“the NPPG”) provides web based and constantly updated advice across a variety of planning matters. The NPPG section ‘Renewable and Low Carbon Energy’ identifies the important role that the planning system has in increasing renewable energy, whilst also setting out that need does not automatically override environmental protection. The NPPG also advises LPAs not to rule out renewable energy through inflexible rules on buffer zones and separation distances.

The NPPG also sets out a number of criteria for wind turbine proposals, which seek to ensure that wind energy proposals are subject to community engagement and assessments in terms of noise, safety, heritage, ecology, shadow flicker and cumulative landscape and visual impact.

The NPPG, whilst providing useful advice, does not change national planning policy, which remains the NPPF.

6.3 Net Zero – The UK’s Contribution to Stopping Global Warming

In May 2019 the Committee on Climate Change published *Net Zero – The UK’s Contribution to Stopping Global Warming*. The report recommends a new emissions target for the UK: net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The Report highlights the falling cost of key renewable technologies including battery storage and advises that flexibility in the energy supply (e.g. demand response, storage and interconnection) should be encouraged by policy and regulatory frameworks.

On 27 June 2019, the *Climate Change Act 2008* was amended to introduce a target for at least a 100% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990 levels) in the UK¹⁶ by 2050. This ‘net zero’ target is likely to affect and increase future Government renewable and low carbon energy targets and create a more positive policy environment for energy storage and management development.

The United Nations *Paris Climate Change Agreement*¹⁷ (“the Paris Agreement”) at the COP21 Summit further reinforces global commitments to combat climate change. The Paris Agreement is a legally binding treaty that requires all countries to reduce carbon emissions from 2020. Its central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above

¹⁴ Cumbria County Council (2007) *Cumbria Wind Energy Supplementary Planning Document* [online] Available at: <https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/planning-environment/renewable-energy/windEnergy.asp> (Accessed 25/03/2020)

¹⁵ MHLG (2019) *National Planning Practice Guidance* [online] Available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/> (Accessed 15/04/2019)

¹⁶ UK Government (2019) *The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 (2019 No. 1056)* [Online] Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2019/1056/made> (Accessed 19/08/2019)

¹⁷ United Nations Framework on Climate Change (2015) *Adoption of the Paris Agreement* [online] Available at: <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/l09r01.pdf> (Accessed on 15/04/2019)

pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

6.4 UK Renewable Energy Roadmap

*The UK Renewable Energy Roadmap (2011)*¹⁸ ('the Roadmap') sets out the UK Government's commitment to increasing the use of renewable energy. The Roadmap identifies the National Policy Statements as a potential means of improving the delivery of renewable energy development through their advice on need, mitigation and delivery in a sustainable manner.

*The UK Renewable Energy Roadmap Update (2013)*¹⁹ ('the Roadmap Update') reports on the progress that has been made in the renewable energy sector since the publication of the Roadmap. The Roadmap Update re-iterates Central Government's commitment to renewable energy (Paragraph 1):

"The Government strongly supports renewable energy as part of a diverse, low carbon and secure energy mix. Alongside gas, low-carbon transport fuels, nuclear power and carbon capture and storage, renewable energy offers the UK a wide range of benefits from economic growth, energy security and climate change perspective."

The Roadmap Update indicates that tools to help balance the supply and demand of electricity, including energy storage and management, are required to remove constraints on the level of renewable energy which the grid can support.

The Roadmap Update also recognises that a number of barriers continue to present challenges to delivery, including pre-consent delays.

6.5 Reducing UK Emissions – 2019 Committee on Climate Change Report to Parliament

The 2019 *Committee on Climate Change Report to Parliament*²⁰ was published in July 2019 and provides a review of Government efforts over the previous 12 months with regards to Climate Change. This Report highlights that the UK is not on course to meet the 2050 Net Zero commitment or the legally binding fourth and fifth carbon budgets and the policy gap has widened further this year as an increase in the projection of future emissions has outweighed the impact of new policies.

6.6 UK Clean Growth Strategy: Leading the Way to a Low Carbon Future

*The UK Clean Growth Strategy (2017)*²¹ ('The Strategy') builds on the UK's carbon emissions reduction progress. The report conveys the Government's objective of achieving clean growth, whilst ensuring an affordable energy supply for businesses and consumers. The strategy is in-line with the 2015 Paris Agreement where 195 countries agreed to stretch national targets to keep the global temperature rise below 2C degrees. Therefore, further

¹⁸ Department of Energy and Climate Change (2011) *The UK Renewable Energy Roadmap* [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/48128/2167-uk-renewable-energy-roadmap.pdf (Accessed 14/05/2019)

¹⁹ Department for Energy and Climate Change (2013) *UK Renewable Energy Roadmap Update 2013* [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/255182/UK_Renewable_Energy_Roadmap_-_5_November_-_FINAL_DOCUMENT_FOR_PUBLICATION_.pdf (Accessed 14/05/2019)

²⁰ Committee on Climate Change (2019) *Reducing UK Emissions – 2018 Progress Report to Parliament* [Online] Available at: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/CCC-2019-Progress-in-reducing-UK-emissions.pdf> (Accessed 24/01/2019)

²¹ UK Government (2017) *Government reaffirms commitment to lead the world in cost-effective clean growth* [Online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-reaffirms-commitment-to-lead-the-world-in-cost-effective-clean-growth> (Accessed 14/05/2019)

actions and investment will be needed to ensure the shift to clean growth in the coming years, where the clean growth plays a central role in the UK's Industrial Strategy.

To meet the fourth and fifth carbon budgets (2023-2027, and 2028-2032), there will be a need for a significant acceleration in the pace of decarbonisation, while ensuring energy security supply at minimum cost to both industry and domestic consumers. One of the 'Clean Growth Innovation Challenges' identified within the Strategy is to develop smart energy systems so that clean technologies can integrate smoothly in the energy supply network.

6.7 Assessment of Relevant Material Considerations

International and national energy policy confirms that there is a clear and urgent need to be taken with respect to tackling climate change and reducing carbon emissions. The UK is legally bound by the Climate Change Act (2008) to reduce carbon emissions and by the Renewable Energy Directive 2009/28/EC during the transitional period, to increase energy consumption from renewable energy sources. Recent commitments through the 2030 Climate and Energy Framework only serve to re-emphasise the need to increase installed renewable energy capacity, including solar development.

The material considerations are considered to weigh heavily in favour of the Development.

7 CONCLUSION

The Haverigg III Wind Farm has been generating renewable electricity in this location with minimal impacts on the wider environment or residential amenity over the past 15 years. The proposed extension of its operational lifespan is an opportunity to make efficient use of the existing turbines to secure the continued provision of emissions-free renewable energy until 2040 without the need for any new construction.

The proposal has been subject to extensive consultation with Copeland Borough Council, the local community and Natural England. As set out in Section 5 above and the accompanying technical reports, the continued operation of the Wind Farm will not give rise to any significant impacts in terms of ecology, ornithology, landscape, highways and traffic, health and safety, or residential amenity. No new construction is proposed and no changes in operational traffic levels would result from the extension of time.

It is integral to planning decision-making that a balancing exercise should occur in respect of considering the benefits of development against the impacts. In this case, the significant benefits of continued renewable energy provision clearly outweigh the minimal impacts.

Taking into account all of the relevant planning policies relevant and material considerations, the proposed extension of time condition variation is in compliance with these policies and considerations, and planning permission should therefore be granted. It is therefore respectfully requested that the Council approve this planning application without delay.