



26 Beach Road, Emsworth Hampshire PO10 7JS

Councillor Ken Thornber CBE
Leader
Hampshire County Council
The Castle
WINCHESTER
Hampshire

Date 26th November 2012

Dear Councillor Thornber,

Reference Decision Report 4205 -large wind turbines on county council owned land dated 6th November 2012

We are writing to you in response to the above report proposing that Hampshire County Council introduces a new policy to ban wind farm development on land it owns. We are both surprised and disappointed by this proposal given the many commitments the council has made regarding reducing energy use and increasing renewable energy in the county.

Whilst not a Planning Authority, Hampshire County Council has a major leadership role to play as an exemplar in bringing about lower emissions across the county in order to minimise Climate Change. The county has previously demonstrated this by signing the Nottingham Declaration in 2001, being a pilot in Councils for Climate Protection and the Carbon Management Programme, helping to establish the South East Climate Change Partnership and leading the ESPACE European project. More recently Hampshire Friends of the Earth worked closely with your officers on developing behaviour change and engagement programmes for promoting a more sustainable Hampshire. Our groups and their allies throughout the county work with their local authorities on various environmental initiatives.

Banning wind farms sends out to landowners throughout the county a completely negative perception of renewable energy. It is also an unnecessary step because a) the county already has powers to decide on how it uses land it owns and b) the planning system already effectively governs the siting of wind farms.

National Planning Statement EN-1 provides overarching guidance to Planning Authorities on renewable energy schemes. We quote below some relevant

sections from the guidance as it sets out what individual Planning authorities have to consider when an application is made.

“3.3.10 As part of the UK’s need to diversify and decarbonise electricity generation, the Government is committed to increasing dramatically the amount of renewable generation capacity (see Section 3.4). In the short to medium term, much of this new capacity is likely to be onshore and offshore wind,

Onshore Wind – onshore wind is the most well-established and currently the most economically viable source of renewable electricity available for future large-scale deployment in the UK”

The UK has a target to achieve 15% of our energy needs from renewable sources by 2020 in the UK. Wind power should and could play a big role in delivering on this target.

It is important to note that we do need a mix of different types of renewable energy sources as no one technology can provide all the energy required by UK residents. However, as the government has stated (above), wind power is the most cost effective, market-ready technology which must be deployed soon if we are to get near to achieving our renewables targets and thus bring down greenhouse gas emissions.

Wind turbines save substantial amounts of carbon emissions. Onshore turbines are responsible for less carbon emissions per kWh over their lifetime than almost any other form of electricity generation. According to House of Commons Postnote 268, onshore wind is responsible for only 4.64g CO₂eq per kWh (mainly due to manufacture and construction), compared to around 500g CO₂eq per kWh for gas powered generation and double that for coal.ⁱ

Wind turbines over their 20 - 25 year lifetimes will produce far more energy than is consumed in manufacturing a turbine. Turbine manufacturers typically calculate 'energy payback' times in the range of 3 to 9 monthsⁱⁱ

Energy from renewable sources provides much greater energy security than from imported fossil fuels such as gas, oil and coal (or from imported uranium for nuclear power). The price of wind power is already similar to fossil fuels but the cost of electricity from wind is likely to fall over the next few years while the cost of fossil fuels is likely to rise.ⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱ <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/post/postpn268.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Centre for Sustainable Energy report 'Common concerns about wind power', May 2011, section 1, p5 www.cse.org.uk/news/view/1535

ⁱⁱⁱ CSE report, section 2, pp7-8

Friends of the Earth is aware that a key issue for some local residents is how intrusive the visual impact will be. We would be concerned if there were any major impacts on protected and designated sites from any project.

This is a highly subjective issue. Being visible is not necessarily the same as being intrusive. While some people express concern about the effect wind turbines have on the beauty of our landscape, others see them as symbols of a better, less polluted future.

The 21st Century landscape includes wind turbines in many countries. Large and small arrays of onshore turbines are becoming more common. Many people find these pleasing to the eye, restful and a symbol of caring for the environment. Hampshire County Council can play a role in ensuring that a balanced debate happens about this particular issue. Unfortunately, the proposal for a ban on wind power could reinforce negative attitudes to turbines on the basis of subjective views on aesthetics.

Wind turbines should be seen in a positive light as they are capturing a clean, free renewable resource, thus reducing our dependency on high cost and high polluting fossil fuels. We believe that the current planning system is the right place to determine individual applications for wind power and that making general statements against wind from the County Council can only harm Hampshire's prospects for reducing carbon dioxide emissions in the future. We urge you to withdraw this proposal at the earliest opportunity. Failing that we would at least expect a full council debate on such a controversial issue that would allow county councillors to speak up for their constituents.

Friends of the Earth believe the debate about wind power must be balanced and informed. We want to encourage wind farms which are appropriately sited, well designed and locally supported.

I look forward to hearing your views on this important matter.

Yours sincerely

Ray Cobbett on behalf of

Havant & East Hants Friends of the Earth
Havant Transition Network
Southampton Friends of the Earth
Winchester Friends of the Earth
Test Valley Friends of the Earth
Blackwater Valley Friends of the Earth
Portsmouth Friends of the Earth
Gosport & Fareham Friends of the Earth
New Forest Friends of the Earth
Winchester Action on Climate Change
Portsmouth Climate Action Network
South East Region Friends of the Earth