Doncaster Local Plan Examination

Statement of Common Ground:

Matter 14, Question 14.5c - Proposed Area of Search for Wind Energy Development

Background

1. In response to the Inspector’s Preliminary Question 45 (Don INSP2 PQs), and representation by RWE Renewables UK (formerly E.ON), the Council has commissioned an update to the Landscape Character Capacity Study 2007\(^1\). The 2007 Study helped inform the selection of the Area of Search for Wind Energy Development proposed via Local Plan Policy 60, but RWE are concerned that the 2007 Study is out of date.

2. The Council have accepted that an update is necessary to better take account of changes to the landscape since 2007 and landscape sensitivity, this latter point reflects the change in emphasis in national guidance from assessment of landscape capacity to sensitivity.

3. Land Use Consultants Ltd have therefore prepared a selective update of the 2007 Study\(^2\). This has resulted in a new map showing areas of relative landscape sensitivity to wind energy development. It varies significantly compared to the 2007 Study. Essentially there is greater scope for wind energy development based solely on landscape sensitivity analysis.

4. The Council therefore propose to modify the area of search for wind energy development as set out in the Hearing Statement prepared in relation to Matter 14, Question 14.5c (dated Sep 2020). The proposed changes would mean the existing wind farm at Tween Bridge would now be located within the proposed Area of Search.

5. RWE’s Hearing Statement for Matter 14 was prepared without the benefit of seeing the Council’s proposed modifications.

6. RWE have commissioned influence, a chartered landscape architecture and environmental planning practice, to undertake a Landscape Character Assessment to specifically assess the landscape sensitivity of the Tween Bridge site.

7. The influence report, utilising the same criteria set out in the Council’s LCA Update, found that Land at the Tween Bridge Wind Farm Site and the surrounding area within LCA G2: Thorne and Hatfield Peat Moorlands: “is assessed as having a predominately low sensitivity to new wind energy development of three or more turbines over 100m, with pockets of more medium sensitivity.” This contrasts with the Council’s LCA Update which found that the LCA in which the Tween Bridge Wind farm is situated has moderate sensitivity. The main differences between the judgements reached

\(^1\) SDEB36 Doncaster Landscape Character Capacity Study 2007

\(^2\) AE16 - Doncaster Landscape Character Assessment Update - Sensitivity to Wind Energy Development August 2020
in these assessments are relative to the Study areas used.

8. RWE believe that the policy approach needs to be amended to reflect the reality on the ground and the now available updated evidence (the Council’s LCA Update and influence reports). RWE suggests the Area of Search should be amended to support consideration of further wind energy development at Tween Bridge. RWE also contend that the Area of Search should include all areas classified as Medium and Low to Medium sensitivity in the Councils LCA Update, including Green Belt Land.

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9. It is agreed that the Council’s proposed modifications, to extend the area of search to include the Tween Bridge site and surrounding land is appropriate and based on up-to-date evidence. As such, it is agreed this removes one of RWE’s principal objections that the Tween Bridge site was not included within the Area of Search.

10. It is agreed that the revised Area of Search now includes the existing Tween Bridge Wind Farm site and surrounding area.

11. It is acknowledged that the evidence base supporting both parties hearing statements to Matter 14, Question 14.5c, results in different opinions of landscape sensitivity for the Tween Bridge Wind Farm Site. However, it is agreed this difference of opinion does not affect the principle of including the existing wind farm site within the revised Area of Search.

12. As a consequence, it is agreed that the technical disagreement in terms of landscape sensitivity rating is an issue that can be considered as part of the determination of any future planning application. This would include an assessment against the criteria of Policy 60 and any Landscape and/or Visual Impact Assessment that may be submitted in support of any future specific development proposal.

**Signatures**

This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared, agreed and signed by both parties.

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>On behalf of</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Starky</td>
<td>RWE</td>
<td></td>
<td>21st October 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scott Cardwell</td>
<td>Doncaster Council</td>
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<td>20th October 2020</td>
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