



Department
of Energy &
Climate Change

[Addressee]

(by e-mail only to:)

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Your ref:

Our ref:

19 January 2016

Dear

HECKINGTON FEN ONSHORE WIND FARM

Your e-mail of [date] 2015 refers.

On 8 February 2013, the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change granted consent under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 (“the section 36 consent”) to Ecotricity (“the Developer”) for the construction and operation of a wind turbine generating station at Six Hundred Farm, Six Hundred Drove, East Heckington, Lincolnshire (“the Development”).

On 6 February 2015, the Developer submitted an application under section 36C of the Electricity Act 1989 for a variation to the section 36 consent for the Development (“the Variation Application”). The Variation Application was accepted for publication on 13 March 2015. In summary, the Variation Application requested that the following changes should be made to the Development by way of variations to the existing section 36 consent:

- amendment of the onsite access track along two sections within the Development site;
- relocation of, and increase in, the footprint of the onsite substation and provision of an underground cabling corridor from the turbines to the onsite substation;
- relocation of the temporary construction compound to an area of existing hardstanding;
- provision of temporary auxiliary crane pad areas;

- amendment of the turbine rotor diameter from 90m to a maximum rotor diameter of up to 103m. (The Variation Application seeks to increase the blade diameter within the maximum height of the vertical turbine blade as permitted by the existing section 36 consent. The section 36 consent would remain unchanged in terms of the maximum number of turbines, the maximum installed generating capacity and the maximum height of the turbines.)
- provision of a 10 metre radius micro-siting allowance around each turbine location where onsite constraints allow; and
- finally, in condition 5, the replacement of the words, “*No development shall commence unless and until a Radar Mitigation Scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Secretary of State.....*” with the words “*No construction of a wind turbine shall commence unless and until a Radar Mitigation Scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Secretary of State.....*” (The change of wording would allow any part of the development permitted by the section 36 consent, except for construction of a wind turbine, to commence before a Radar Mitigation Scheme [RMS] has been approved.)

In accordance with regulation 5 of The Electricity Generating Stations (Variation of Consents)(England and Wales) Regulations 2013, the Variation Application was published and its publication advertised to bring it to the attention of those persons who would have an interest in it. A number of consultation responses were submitted to the Secretary of State, including from statutory consultees and members of the public. The published Variation Application and consultation responses can be found on the Developer`s web-site:

<http://www.ecotricity.co.uk/our-green-energy/our-green-electricity/from-the-wind/wind-parks-gallery/heckington-fen-north-kesteven> .

While there were responses which did not raise any issues with or objection to the Variation Application, others did raise concerns about it. In summary, the concerns raised were in relation to the following:

- the proposed increase in turbine rotor diameter (blade length) which implies a 30% increase in swept area and which would, in the view of Lincolnshire County Council and some local people -
 - cause a greater landscape and visual impact,
 - invalidate any previous noise assessment, and
 - cause a significant increase in risk to radar;
- the proposed increase in the size of the sub-station and the proposed change of location for it;

- the potential for ground works (including the sub-station) to be left as stranded kit if construction was allowed to proceed before there was agreement on radar mitigation and the mitigation was not subsequently forthcoming;
- the proposed change allowing the development (other than the construction of a turbine) to proceed before approval of an agreement on radar mitigation (rather than any development being unable to proceed before approval of an agreement on radar mitigation);
- the Variation Application being for changes to the Development that are, in the view of some consultees, of such significance that they should be subject to a public inquiry, a new application or refused outright.

In determining the Variation Application, the Secretary of State will have regard to any relevant representations received including those from the local community. The Department of Communities and Local Government Written Statement of 18 June 2015 regarding onshore wind highlights the need to consider and address relevant planning concerns raised by local people as it provides that *“following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has their backing.”*

This letter seeks views on how the concerns raised in the responses to the first consultation have been addressed. In particular, we invite the Developer to respond to the specific concerns raised by Lincolnshire County Council and local people. We also invite any further comments from those persons who responded to the first consultation on the Variation Application and anybody else who may wish to comment on it. Please note that we are seeking comments on the Variation Application rather than on the existing section 36 consent. Any representations about the Variation Application should be supported with appropriate reasons and evidence, as necessary.

I should be grateful for comments to be sent to me by e-mail at the following e-mail address: deccnic@decc.gsi.gov.uk or by post to the address at the top of this letter. Comments should be submitted by no later than 10 February 2016.

Yours sincerely

KEITH WELFORD