

Chapter 3: Site description

Introduction

3.1 The proposed site comprises land immediately south of the villages of Thorley and Wellow, in the west of the Isle of Wight. The site is located in an undulating rural landscape between the B3401 to the north and the B3399 to the south. Broad Lane, linking Shalcombe to Thorley, provides the site's western boundary, whilst to the east, beyond the site boundary, lies open farmland of a similar nature to that found on-site. The proposed turbine positions lie approximately 3km south-west of Shalfleet, 3km east of Freshwater, 1.5km south-east of Yarmouth and 1km south of the villages of Thorley and Wellow. Figure 1.1 shows the site in context with its surroundings, whilst figure 4.1 shows the site layout.

Site context

3.2 The closest dwellings to the turbines are listed in table 3.1. To the east are Churchills Farm and open farmland between Churchills Farm and Dodpits Lane (a minor road linking the B3401 near Newbridge with the B3401 at Chessell). To the south are Stone Quarry (a small active quarry), the B3401, the B3399 and the hamlets of Chessell and Shalcombe. There are also several farmsteads and individual properties in the immediate environs, but none within the site boundary.

3.3 The distances from the closest turbine to the properties in the immediate area are presented in table 3.1.

Property	Distance from property to closest turbine (m)
Hartshole Cottage	820 - north
Dodpits House	1,280 – north-east
Churchills Farm House	550 – east
No. 8 Tapnell Cottages	750 – south-west
Dog Kennel Cottage	720 – north-west
Chessell Pottery	1,300 – south-east
Shalcombe Cottage	1,040 - south

Table 3.1: distance from closest turbine to closest property or dwelling

Proposed development site

Site history

- 3.4 The first edition of the Ordnance Survey map of 1866 shows that the site consisted of open fields with designated boundaries. There were no structures of any nature within the site boundary at that time.
- 3.5 The current open landscape is the result of the removal of most of the field boundaries at the site during the 1960s and 1970s. Between 1909 and 1946 a small building was constructed to the south of Hummet Copse, but this was subsequently removed between 1994 and 2000.
- 3.6 Apart from this minor development, the land has been in purely agricultural use for at least 140 years.

Current site

- 3.7 The site comprises a north facing, low, shallow ridge. Several small streams issue from the site and flow northwards towards Thorley Brook and ultimately the Yar Estuary. The site also includes four small areas of woodland in the shallow valleys.
- 3.8 The Isle of Wight Unitary Development Plan (UDP) identifies a locally listed site of importance for nature conservation (SINC) south of the proposed wind turbine positions. This is Hummet Copse, a small piece of ancient woodland. No national or international nature conservation designations occur within the site, although Prospect Quarry, a site of special scientific interest (SSSI), is situated close to the southern boundary. The SSSI is notified both for its geological and biological qualities.
- 3.9 The site is crossed by five public rights of way: The Hamstead Trail long distance footpath; two bridleways; and two local footpaths.
- 3.10 A 33kV overhead electricity line (wooden pole mounted) cuts across the north-west corner of the site. To the south-west and west of the site is Broad Lane, a single track minor road with passing places, that links the B3399 at Shalcombe to the B3401 at Thorley.

Physical constraints

- 3.11 There is a distinct absence of built features on the site due to its long history of farming practices. The only other features are the electricity poles and the Seaclean pipeline that lies beneath a narrow strip of land in the north-western part of the site (figure 3.1). This is a wastewater pipeline, part of the Island's recently upgraded sewerage infrastructure. Its presence could influence the route of the underground electricity cabling that links the turbines to the switching station.