

Nottingham East Midlands Airport

Our reference: BOU-176-W-2006-A

Your reference: P/01400/06 – TCP/27774

Nottingham East Midlands Airport

Castle Donington

Derby

East Midlands DE74 2SA

United Kingdom

Tel: [REDACTED]
Fax: [REDACTED]
www.nottam-airport.co.uk

29th June 2006

Andrew Ashcroft
Head of Planning Services
Isle of Wight Council
Council Offices
Seaclose
Fairlee Road
Newport, PO30 2QS

Dear Mr Ashcroft

Erection of wind turbines, at Wellow

I write in reference to the objection by Bournemouth Airport, in regard to the proposed Wind Farm at West Wright.

Bournemouth Airport has a very well established environmental policy and is generally supportive of clean technologies and the generation of energy from renewable sources. However, wind turbines do have the potential to reduce the safety of aircraft operations and in this regard, there are two principal areas of concern.

Firstly, wind turbines are often tall structures and as such could present a hazard to low flying aircraft. In this instance though, the Airport is satisfied that the maximum proposed height of the structure should not generally present such a hazard. However, it is noted that low level helicopter traffic does operate in the coastal areas and such operations could be impeded by the development.

The second area of concern presents a more serious problem. Wind turbines reflect energy from Primary Radar and are thus likely to present a radar return. Depending on the location of the turbine this may obscure the view of the Radar Air Traffic Controller, which may then prevent the Controller from clearly identifying and tracking aircraft in the vicinity of the wind turbine. The degree of risk is subject to the location, size and aspect of the wind turbine. Modern radar systems have the capability of filtering out the majority of unwanted returns from structures, but this is not the case for structures such as wind turbines. This is due to the fact that the blades of the turbines are moving and therefore are interpreted as a moving target in much the same way as an aircraft. Consequently, the unwanted return from the turbine site is not filtered out and is presented on the Controller's radar display. This concern forms the basis of the Airport's objection to the proposed development.



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The following points have been taken into consideration when making our assessment of the proposal.


- ◆ The proposed wind turbine site is in an operationally sensitive area. Guidance on assessing the sensitivity of areas for wind turbines, in the vicinity of an airport, is published by the Airport Operators' Association. The Airport's view is generally consistent with this guidance.
- ◆ The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), as the national safety regulator, publishes safety standards with which airports are required to conform. In regard to wind turbines the Authority's standard (CAP 670) requires that "the Air Traffic Services (ATS) provider is responsible for ensuring, as far as is reasonably practicable, that such development does not impact on the safety of the ATS environment". The Airport concludes that the proposed development is not consistent with this requirement.
- ◆ Bournemouth ATS provides a Lower Airspace Radar Service (LARS) out to a range of 30nm. A high percentage of the traffic using this service is operating within or routing through the vicinity of the Isle of Wight. This sector of airspace to the south-east of the Airport already has relatively poor radar coverage. This is particularly the case for airspace beyond the Isle of Wight, where it can often be difficult for the Controller to maintain radar contact with the aircraft. Any further degrading of the radar performance could render it impossible to provide any radar service in this area. It is considered that the proposed development would adversely affect the radar performance by a significant degree, which would result in an unacceptable downgrading of the service that could be provided.

You will no doubt be familiar with the requirements of Planning Circular ODPM 1/2003. Sections 7 & 8 require any local planning authority that proposes to act contrary to the advice of a statutory consultee, to undertake a formal process of notification. The Circular requires that both the Airport and the CAA are advised and also stipulates the information to be included within the notification.

The Airport welcomes the opportunity to discuss proposals to develop wind turbines with developers and refers to the guidelines published jointly by the British Wind Energy Association and the aviation industry. We would be happy to meet with the applicant if this would be helpful.

If you have any queries please let us know. We can be contacted using the above address. Alternatively our telephone number is 01332-852971 and our e-mail is safeguarding@nottinghamema.com

Yours sincerely


Jenny Saville
Environment & Safeguarding Officer
CC: Mr Thompson, Terrance O'Rouke