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Your Ref: 12/03019/FUL  
Our Ref: gb\_130812\_Cardington turbine obj

13 August 2012

**Planning application 12/03019/FUL Erection of one 11kW wind turbine with a hub height of 18.3m and a rotor diameter of 13m, Villa Farm, Cardington, Church Stretton, SY6 7HN**

Dear Sir/Madam,

The AONB Partnership is supportive of the promotion and implementation of a policy of renewable energy, but balanced with the very high quality of the Shropshire Hills AONB landscape. **The AONB Partnership objects to this planning application on the grounds of its negative visual impact within both the local and more distant landscape.**

Policy 35 of the 2009-2014 Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan states that the positioning of turbines should *"take account of factors including landscape character and visual amenity..."*. Guidelines with this Policy recommend that one or two turbines up to 12m to blade tip and within 100m of existing buildings are likely to be considered acceptable, while turbines in excess of 25m to vertical blade tip or closely grouped turbines are not likely to be acceptable within the AONB. Each application for wind turbine construction must however be assessed as an individual case, taking into account the particular aspects of the proposal and its location.

The proposed turbine with a maximum planned height of 24.5m is a substantial structure in the context of this location. The proposed site for the turbine lies at NGR SO503946 in old pasture land to the west of 'The Villa' (SY6 7HN) and in close proximity to the lane south from Cardington Village. This is a particularly unspoilt and tranquil part of the AONB landscape, close to the picturesque village of Cardington which has within it several listed buildings, a fine medieval church and a Conservation Area.

The site lies below Caer Caradoc Hill, some 2.5km to the WNW, the summit of which is surmounted by the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Caer Caradoc Hill Fort (SAM19158) and Robin's Tump barrow (SAM19171). Both of these sites are regularly visited by walkers, as are Cwms Common to the west and Hope Bowdler Hill to the WSW. These iconic hills are a significant part of the Shropshire Hills AONB and are criss-crossed with a network of public footpaths which are frequently used by visiting walkers. The proposed turbine would be clearly seen from many of the vantage points in these hills. More locally the short perspective views from the area of Cardington Moor, 750m to the SW, are likely to result in the turbine being seen as superimposed upon views of the more distant Cardington church tower.

Paragraph 115 of the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework states that; *"Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in.....Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas should be given great weight....."*

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Wind turbines by the nature of their positional requirements are often exposed and isolated within a landscape in order to maximise wind energy. In sensitive landscapes designated for quality and visual amenity this creates conflict. In this case there is a very clear negative influence upon the character and visual amenity of a very high status sensitive area within the designated Shropshire Hills AONB. The two examples quoted in the supporting documentation, Longville 11/00646, 3.9km to the east and Wall Under Heywood 3km to the south, should not be seen as setting any precedent for the acceptance of similar turbines. Each of these proposals were examined on an individual basis by the AONB Partnership as within the consultative process and were deemed to have a limited impact upon the landscape of the AONB.

The supporting documentation for the current proposal (12/03019) while comprehensive in general is rather limited in its Visual Impact Assessment, the extent of the envelope of visual influence is not well defined making the impact upon distant receptors difficult to accurately quantify, though a field visit suggests that this would be considerable.

In summary, while the AONB Partnership supports the concept of renewable energies, a balance between the advantages accrued and the negative impact of such infrastructure upon the landscape of the AONB is considered of paramount importance. In sensitive locations the AONB Partnership objects to the imposition of highly visible wind turbines and urges the consideration of other alternative technologies such as solar photovoltaic cell arrays where appropriate. Large agricultural buildings with shallow roof gradients can provide suitable sites for such installations.

Yours sincerely

G Barratt  
Planning & Landscape Officer  
On behalf of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership