

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM  
TO THE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**10 February 2009**

**Part 1 – Planning Application (Major)**

**MAER HILLS**

**CLAYMOSS PROPERTIES LIMITED. 08/550/FUL**

**The Application** is for full planning permission for development of 4 three-bladed horizontal axis wind turbines, each to a maximum height of 125 metres (410 feet) to blade tip and maximum height of 80 metres (262 feet) to hub, together with site access, access tracks, borrow pit, cable route, crane hardstanding areas, temporary construction compound, sub-station and control building and visitor car park. Planning permission is sought for the construction of the proposed wind turbines and their operation for a period of 25 years, prior to decommissioning. The application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement submitted under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations.

The site lies within the open countryside beyond the Green Belt and within an Area of Landscape Maintenance all as designated on the Local Plan Proposals Map.

The A53 is part of the Strategic Highway Network as designated on the Key Diagram of the Structure Plan. The A51 which connects to the A53 at the nearby Swan with Two Necks junction is also part of the same Strategic Highway Network.

Two rights of way on the Definitive Map run through the application site and there are other "claimed" rights of way within the site.

The 16 week statutory determination period for this application expired on 21 October 2008. The application was the subject of a Planning Committee site visit held on the 18 September 2008

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Refuse for the following reasons:**

- (i) The proposed development would have an adverse effect upon the operation of RAF Shawbury and would be contrary to the interests of national defence and aviation safety.**
- (ii) The development would have a serious impact on scientific observations made by the Jodrell Bank Observatory, and the scientific programme of the e-MERLIN/VLBI National facility.**
- (iii) The proposal is not supported by a noise assessment that enables proper consideration to be given to the potential noise impact of the proposal on residential amenity.**

**Reason for Recommendation**

There is very strong and consistent planning policy support for renewable energy projects. The scheme has significant benefits in this respect, which are considered to outweigh concerns relating to landscape and visual impact. Similarly there is not sufficient harm to the setting of nationally designated historic assets, notably the Registered Park and Garden at Maer Hall such as to justify refusal. Ecological impact has been fully addressed and indeed the proposal brings with it some significant benefits in this respect. However the applicants have not satisfied Defence Estates that the proposal will not materially affect the use of RAF Shawbury, there are outstanding issues with regard to its impact upon a national scientific institution – Jodrell Bank Observatory – and at the time of writing there are significant concerns as to potential noise impact upon residential properties