

My ref: CJD/JMW  
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12 June 2013

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SofS  
Onshore Wind  
PREP- Steph  
hurst

Dear Eric

#### **ONSHORE WIND IN LINCOLNSHIRE**

I would like to confirm that we welcome your announcement last week that communities will have a much greater say in the planning system over unwanted onshore wind developments.

Our county has for some time been targeted by aggressive developers wishing to build inappropriate developments, not because of any desire to do the right thing but out of a desire to farm the over generous subsidy regime that has still not had the reform it requires.

Whilst we welcome the announcement, the proof will be in the pudding as a great degree of scepticism has taken hold in our communities over the localism agenda. This council and our District colleagues will be watching carefully to see whether the spirit of your announcement is delivered in practice. When local authorities and communities unite to say 'No' to an application and that opposition is consistent, my role and, with the greatest respect, yours, should be to provide the support to communities that has been sorely lacking over recent years.

I wish to draw your attention to a number of local matters of importance. Firstly, the entire coastal area is inundated with turbine applications. You will also be aware of the huge offshore applications and the associated infrastructure that is adding further pressure to the situation. The coastal tourism economy is worth £450 million per annum and our plans for tourism enhancement, strengthening growth and investment in it are under serious threat. We have already taken more than our fair share and any more will create long term instability for investment and enhancement of our local economy. I seek your assurance that the tourism economy will be given the priority it deserves, alongside other material considerations when matters are determined.

The day before your announcement we received notification from Mark Boulton at PINS that the Orby Wind Farm Appeal was to be recovered for determination by yourself. The reason for the direction, 'that the appeal relates to proposals of major significance for the delivery of the Government's climate change programme and energy policies' hardly instils public

confidence in your announcement. The background to this is that the current application is for 9 x 81 metre high turbines, so hardly important.

This site has been in planning for over a decade, it went to District Planning, was refused, went to appeal and was dismissed by the Inspector. The applicant then went to Section 36 but was forced to withdraw. The current application went to planning, was refused and is now in appeal. Sadly, the Inspector Mr Trevor Cookson died suddenly before he could take the final day's evidence. For over a decade there has been consistent and sustained opposition from this council, from the district council, from the parish councils and the communities concerned. This is the local test for whether a community's right to say 'No' will be upheld.

I would hope that the guidance you publish to PINS is clear, concise and unequivocal. If we find that local communities still get to carry the brunt of a confused and disjointed energy policy, then you will leave the localism agenda dead in the water and local communities searching for politicians who can overhaul the system so they get what they are promised. The stakes generally are very high and I hope you can confirm that the guidance you intend to issue to PINS will deliver what communities now expect to see happen on the ground.

I also seek your views on infrastructure requirements for Offshore Wind. We would urge that in this regard companies are directed to find engineering solutions so that Offshore Wind can be carried onshore into the most appropriate grid connection that can be supported by local government and communities. We have concerns that RWE, who are proposing the Triton Knoll offshore development, are failing to listen to us concerning our favoured grid connection for this development which is at Great Grimsby/Killingholme, when they are trying to push for 60 kms of cabling through our county to a new substation in open countryside at Bicker Fen. It would appear that the only rationale for this is that their option is £50 million cheaper but in a scheme costing £3.6 billion, cost should not be allowed to be a factor, particularly as our residents will be paying for this development through increased charges on their bills.

I look forward to hearing your further comments on how we can work together to protect our communities from development they do not want whilst we play a full part in delivering a low carbon economy using the technology and mechanisms most appropriate to our great county.

Yours sincerely



**Councillor Colin Davie**  
**Executive Councillor for**  
**Economic Development, Environment, Planning & Tourism**

cc Nick Boles MP, Under Secretary of State for Planning  
Edward Leigh MP  
Stephen Phillips MP  
Mark Simmonds MP  
Karl McCartney MP  
John Hayes MP  
Sir Peter Tapsell MP