

Your ref: PAW/0198
Our ref: 123/1/2/TW
Date: 12th April 2010
Contact: [REDACTED]
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Environment Services
Executive Director, John Onslow

Paul Sexton
Planning Services
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Countryside Access Team
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Dear Mr Sexton,

Re: Request for scoping opinion – Heydon Grange Wind Farm Development, Heydon

Thank you for consulting us regarding this possible development at an early stage.

Two public rights of way are affected by the proposals (see enclosed plan). Public Footpath No. 2, Heydon, runs north-west to south-east across the centre of the site, along the former course of the Heydon Ditch, an Anglo-Saxon monument of considerable archaeological significance. Public Bridleway No. 1, Heydon, runs along the northern edge of the site. Both public rights of way constitute receptors of the visual impact, noise, shadow flicker and other likely environmental effects of the proposed development.

These routes are important parts of the local countryside access network and offer Heydon and Chishill residents valuable opportunities for outdoor recreation. They also form part of two popular and well-promoted long-distance routes, the Icknield Way, which runs for 110 miles between Ivinghoe Beacon in Buckinghamshire and Knettishall Heath in Norfolk, and the Harcamlow Way, which runs between Harlow in Essex and Cambridge. These routes are well-used by walkers, horse-riders and cyclists.

As such, we have some concerns about the proposed development which would need to be addressed at an early stage of the planning process. We would remind the applicants and the planning authority that the effect of development on a public right of way is a material consideration in the determination of applications for planning permission (Defra Rights of Way Circular 1/09 para 7.2 (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/access/prow/>)).

For reasons of public safety, particularly in view of the fact that some horses can be nervous around wind turbines, it is important that there is sufficient spacing between the turbines and the public rights of way on and adjacent to the site. The recommended minimum spacing distance between turbines and existing public rights of way is set out in the Technical Guidance to Planning Policy Statement 22 as fallow height (in this instance, 126.5 metres maximum height to blade tip) or 200m, whichever is the larger. However, it should be noted that the British Horse Society requests a separation distance of four times maximum height to blade tip in the case of national trails and other long-distance routes. Given that the affected public rights of way are parts of two well-used long-distance routes, we would therefore like to see a separation distance of at least two times, and preferably four times, maximum height to blade tip *i.e.* a minimum of 250 – 500m.

Given the impact of the development on these routes, particularly on Public Footpath No. 2, which runs directly through the proposed wind farm, we would also expect to see some mitigation measures put in place to compensate the public for loss of amenity. Mitigation could include:

- 1) On-site environmental improvements to restore chalk grassland (in line with local authorities' statutory duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to consider conserving and enhancing biodiversity wherever possible).
- 2) A new circular bridleway around the perimeter of the site, using existing field margins or the new maintenance tracks, and with barriers to protect against illegal 4x4 use.
- 3) Section 106 money towards off-site improvements on neighbouring public rights of way for those members of the public who do not wish to go near the turbines.

Policy NE/6 (4) of the South Cambridgeshire LDF Development Control Policies DPD (adopted July 2007) supports the suggested mitigation measures: 'New development will have regard to the impact, either direct or indirect, of a proposal on people's opportunity to enjoy and experience nature on a site together with opportunities to improve public access to nature in addition to understanding local environmental characteristics.'

Further guidance notes for developers and planners in relation to public rights of way are available on our website at <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/environment/countryside/definitive/>.

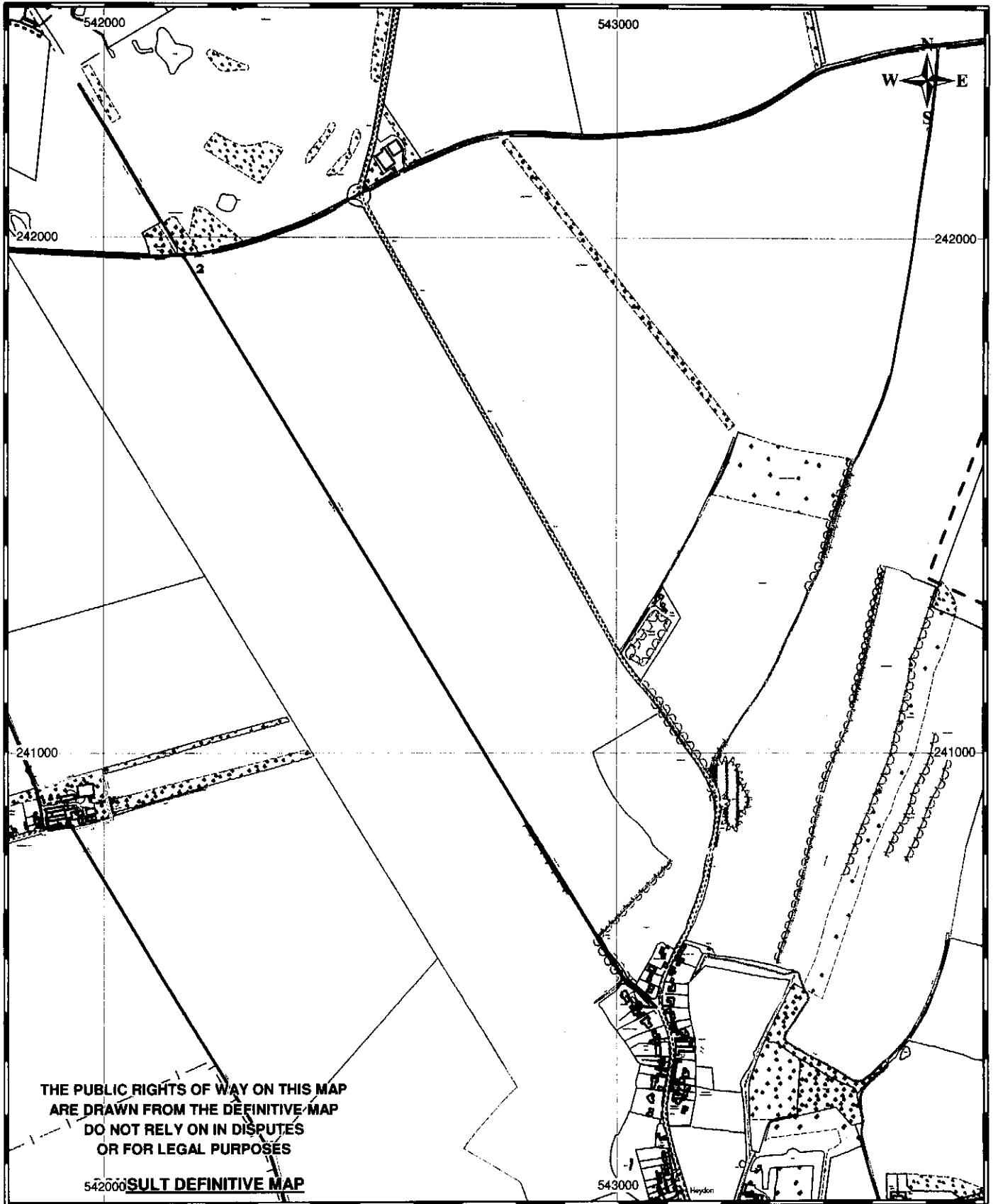
If and when an application for planning permission is submitted, we would request that the spacing and mitigation measures described above are included as planning conditions. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,



Thomas Woolhouse MA AIFA
Definitive Map Officer

Public Rights of Way - Heydon Grange



Scale: 1:10000
 Date: 12/04/2010
 By: fh435

Key - Drawn from the Definitive Map	
Public Footpath (purple)	—————
Public Bridleway (green)	—————
Byway Open to All Traffic (brown)	—————
Parish boundary (yellow)	—————
Permissive Footpath (red)
Permissive Bridleway (red)	- - - - -
Permissive Access (red)	▒
Potential Highway (orange)	~~~~~