

Villagers fear bid will lead to series of turbines

# Worries over 200ft wind mast scheme

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CONTROVERSIAL plans for a wind mast which objectors say will blot the South Cheshire landscape are set to be considered by councillors.

A site visit to Bickerton Hills, where the proposed 60 metre (196ft) wind monitoring mast is to be sited, has taken place and the application will now go before the next planning meeting when councillors will decide whether or not to give it the green light.

Bickerton residents set up a fighting fund in response to the plans so money could be put towards legal advice on opposing the plans.

Banks Development applied for planning permission to build the mast offland on Long Lane in October – the

first application of its type in the district.

The proposal seeks temporary permission for wind speed data to be collected for three years to check if the site is suitable for a wind farm.

Residents fear that the mast would just be the first step and that there could be as many as 15 turbines built.

Peter Callery, who submitted an objection to the plans on behalf of the South Cheshire Ramblers' Association, said the group's main concern was that approving the wind-monitoring mast would eventually lead to an application for a wind farm.

Mr Callery, who lives in Broughton Lane, Wistaston, said: "We don't have a problem with a meteorological mast but what we do have a problem with is a wind farm.

"A mast will be the first step and then after that if the data reveals the site is suitable, an application will go in for a wind farm, and that does worry us.

"From a planning point of view it is difficult to refuse the plans for the mast but this is just the thin end of the wedge."

Janet Blinkhorn, of Home Farm, in Beeston, also sent in a letter of objection to the council.

She said: "We live in an area of special interest and conservation and can't understand how these proposals can even be considered.

"The proposed mast will ruin views to the west from nearly all parts of the Peckforton and Bickerton Hills.

"If this mast leads to the development of the hideous

wind turbines, the risks to the local bird population will be huge.

"The proposed site for the mast is right in the middle of the Peregrines prime ridge hunting area.

"The prospect of an encounter between a blade tip and a Peregrin is just too terrible to contemplate."

The application was due to be heard before planning chiefs in December but was deferred for a site visit.

A spokesman for Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council said the application was likely to be heard at the next planning meeting on Thursday.

**What do you think of the plans for a wind mast?**

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