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Dear Jonathan,

Thank you for your letter of 24 January to Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, about the Bicton Wind Farm planning appeal.

I understand that an inquiry has been programmed to commence on 17 June 2014 at a venue to be arranged. It is expected to last for up to two weeks.

I further understand that at application stage the Council received 385 letters of objection and 9 letters of support, and that English Heritage have objected, due to the impact the turbines could have upon Kimbolton Castle. At appeal stage, the Planning Inspectorate has received about 100 objections. Consequently it is clear that there is much local opposition.

I note your concern at the resources that have been expended on the development of this site over the last few years. However it is open to persons to apply to develop land as they wish and a person has every right, following a refusal of planning permission, to submit a fresh application which seeks – as far as they are concerned – to overcome the reasons why the earlier application was refused. Of course, I make no comment on the merits of the latest appeal, but I could not endorse its recovery on the grounds that it has arisen from a repeat refusal issued by the local planning authority.

I have however decided that the appeal should be recovered as I have given weight to the extent of local feeling in this particular case, together with the concerns of English Heritage. I have therefore asked the Planning Inspectorate to take the necessary action.

I must stress however that my decision to recover the appeal can in no way be seen as a precursor to how it will eventually be decided. The Secretary of State will carefully consider the Inspector's report when he receives it in due course, and he will make his decision on the facts of the case.

KRIS HOPKINS MP