

Application Recommended for Delegation

Cliviger with Worsthorne Ward

APP/2009/0758

Full Planning Application

Reforming wind farm including dismantling and removal of 24 no. wind turbines and associated earthworks. Erection of 8 no. wind turbines with a maximum height to blade tip of 110m. Upgrading of access from the Long Causeway, upgrading of existing and construction of new on-site access tracks, construction of control building, erection of 1 no. power performance mast, construction of temporary construction compound and associated works.

COAL CLOUGH WIND FARM THE LONG CAUSEWAY BURNLEY

Background:

The application relates to the site of the existing wind farm which has been in place since the early 1990's. The present proposal would see its above ground structures removed and replaced by a lesser number of larger turbines.

An appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations was carried out in 2012. This ascertained that the proposed development would have no adverse impact on the South Pennine Moors Special Protection Area (a species habitat site of European significance) which adjoins the site across Long Causeway, provided conditions are imposed requiring the implementation of identified measures of mitigation.

The application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) for the purposes of the *Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999 (as amended)*. The regulations require the ES to assess the likely effects of the project objectively; the full ES and Non Technical Summary is available of the Council's planning website.

Traffic generated by the proposed development is a material consideration in determining the application as is the impact of such traffic on the amenity of areas receiving that impact. This consideration extends to temporary construction traffic and the delivery of components to the site. Consideration should, however, be proportional and reasonable, taking account of the amount and character of the traffic, and whether it is temporary or an operational feature of the development.

Summary of Reason for Recommendation:

The development is generally in accordance with the Development Plan, in particular the policies listed below. Provided the matter raised by the Metoffice can be resolved by conditions and/or a scheme of mitigation measures, there are no other material considerations to indicate that planning permission should not be granted:

Relevant Policies:

Burnley Local Plan Second Review

E18 - Scheduled Ancient Monuments

E19 - Development and archaeological remains

E2 - Nature conservation locally important sites

E20 - Views

E27 - Landscape, character and local distinctiveness in Rural Areas and Green Belt

E28 - Protecting agricultural land and businesses

E3 - Wildlife links and corridors

E31 - Wind Farms

E5 - Species protection

TM5 - Footpaths and walking within the urban boundary

TM6 - Walking and horse riding in the countryside

National Planning Policy Framework

Site History:

90/0851: Erection of temporary 30m mast for a period of one year - Granted

91/0387: Construction of 24 turbine wind farm together with electrical sub-station, roads and ancillary works – Refused

91/920: Construction of 24 turbine wind farm together with electrical sub-station, roads and ancillary works – Granted

2000/0064: Extension to existing wind farm, comprising 3 additional wind turbines; two alternative siting options are presented for consideration - Refused

2005/0867: Modification of Condition 3 of planning permission 91/0920 to provide for a 10 year period extension - Granted

2009/0603: Proposed erection of 1no. meteorological mast with a maximum height of 70m for the temporary period of two years - Granted

2011/0520: Variation of condition 1 of planning permission APP/2009/0603 to allow retention of meteorological mast for a further two years – Granted

Consultation Responses:

Highway Authority – No objections. Recommend the imposition of a condition requiring submission for approval of a traffic management statement regarding the following matters:

- Construction vehicle routing
- the management of junctions with and crossings of the public highway
- The timing of delivery /construction vehicle movements including turbine delivery vehicles
- Details of banksmen/escorts for abnormal loads
- Temporary warning signs
- Proposed accommodation works and where necessary a programme for their subsequent removal and the reinstatement of street furniture, where required along the route
- Traffic management on the existing highway network.
- Car parking arrangements for construction personnel both at the wind turbine site and also for the access track off Red Lees Road
- Wheel Wash facilities at all locations where construction traffic enter the public highway from site.

Natural England (NE)

Concern expressed about the need to make assessments in relation to statutorily protected nature conservation sites as follows:

- South Pennine Moors Special Protection Area (SPA) (EC Birds Directive) - Appropriate assessment needed to consider impact (if any) [*This has now been concluded*]
- South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation (SAC) - concur with the conclusions of the submitted Environmental Statement.
- South Pennine Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – comment that local planning authorities are required to take reasonable steps with regard to

conservation of interests within an SSSI [*This would be achieved through design and planning conditions*]

RSPB

Comments regarding the relationship of the site to the South Pennines SPA and the need for a Habitats Assessment to ascertain that there would be no adverse impact on the integrity of the SPA. [*An Appropriate Assessment has ascertained that there would be no adverse impact*]

LCC (Ecology)

Comment that the application detail should demonstrate that there would be no adverse impacts on the South Pennine Moors SPA [*This has now been done in the Appropriate Assessment*] and the extent of impacts on blanket bog within the application site should be clarified. [*The application details now reflect this consideration*].

Recommend imposition of conditions relating to monitoring of bat activity, bird breeding season, badger protection, blanket bog, species protection, and treatment of watercourses.

Lancashire Wildlife Trust

Object to the proposal on grounds relating to lack of (need for) assessment in relation to the SPA and request that a management plan be implemented for existing and compensatory habitats and species. [*An assessment has been carried out; conditions are recommended relating to habitats and species*].

Burnley Wildlife Conservation Forum

- Objection on the basis that there would be adverse impact on upland birds as the site is next to the SPA.. [*The Habitats Assessment concludes that there would be no adverse impact subject to imposition of the identified conditions*].
- Consider that the base-line for assessment should not include the presence of the existing wind farm

Regional Bridleway Officer for the Northwest

Objections to the initially submitted scheme as follows:

- One turbine too close to the bridleway
- Any temporary diversion during construction work should be off-road due to horse un-friendly nature of Long Causeway.
- Foundation work for turbines should avoid water erosion of the bridleway.

Burnley Bridleway Association

Objections summarised as follows:

- One turbine too close to the bridleway
- Temporary disruption or closure of the bridleway should not result in use of Long Causeway due to traffic hazard to riders and horses.
- The placing of hard surfaces is likely to have a negative impact on water run-off, causing unduly wet and marshy areas along the bridleway route.

Burnley and Pendle Ramblers

Comment that the wind farm construction should cause the least damage possible to the countryside.

Full publicity should be given to temporary footpath closure/diversion. [*There is a legal requirement for that purpose*].

Cliviger Parish Council

- Concern about arrangements in Overtown during movement of turbine delivery vehicles (TDV).
- Sweeping survey seems vague and intimates vehicles mounting footways to complete the route.
- Already difficult access on to Red Lees Road would be further disrupted during TDV movement.

Campaign to Protect Rural England – Comments (summarised) as follows:

1. Dramatic increase in visual and landscape effects from increased turbine height; the existing turbines should not be taken as a base-line for landscape assessment as they were granted for a temporary period.
2. The site is in a sensitive location, being adjacent a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
3. Questions the need for a new access road within the site and further welfare building for site operatives, rather than extend the existing one. [*The details of on site buildings are indicative at this stage and full details should be reserved by a condition*]
4. Metal pylons would not be suitable for grid access [*Not proposed*]
5. Importing material may be preferable to sourcing from borrow pits on site as local peat, landscape and ecology may be preserved. [*Using on-site borrow pits would reduce the vehicular movement to the site*].
6. Questions why Scottish Planning Guidance on noise was followed despite the site being in England. [*The submitted noise information concludes that operational noise would be within limits defined in the relevant nationally recommended code (ETSU-R-97). A planning condition is recommended to ensure practical adherence to the relevant noise levels*]
7. Effects on site hydrology should be investigated [*This was done in preparing the application*]
8. Turbine operation may cause vibration thereby causing peat movement and erosion.
9. A 'tarnished landscape' would result from incomplete removal of existing (redundant) turbine bases. [*Bases would be removed to one metre below ground level*]
10. There would be negative effects of removing peat, causing CO² release should be assessed [*This is part of the Environmental Assessment*]
11. Concern that existing redundant foundations are not to be removed in full rather than to a depth of one metre. [*There would be significant energy consumption in removal of deep-set foundation, including heavy vehicle movement. On balance, the 'bury in-situ' solution appears preferable*]

Todmorden Moor Restoration Trust – Objection on the grounds of cumulative visual impact. This would be, in particular, with wind farms at Crook Hill and Reaps Moss.

Electricity North West

Information for the developer relating to existing electricity infrastructure.

Neighbouring Residents (Cliviger valley) - Objections as follows (summarised):

1. Increased noise impact expected from the larger turbines as the existing ones are audible.
2. Detrimental visual impact on the countryside as the turbines will be visible for miles around. Increased turbine height detrimental to/carbuncle on the landscape; adverse visual impact on Cliviger Gorge.
3. Ground works will damage the local eco-system; local game birds, birds of prey and wildlife would be in danger.

Neighbouring Residents (Kebs Road)

Comment that whilst the existing turbines are not excessively noisy, the increased height of the proposed turbines may increase noise levels. [*Achieving noise levels within the accepted industry guidance is part of the application; a condition is recommended to ensure this operates in practice*]

Concern about adverse impact on the horse keeping and the habitat on their land.

Neighbouring Resident (Long Causeway)

Existing turbines can be heard; concern that the larger turbines may be noisier. [See comment above].

Neighbouring Resident (Long Causeway)

Objection on the grounds of adverse effect on the landscape and possible noise nuisance.

Neighbouring Residents (Shore, Todmorden) – Objections as follows (summarised):

1. The increased size would diminish visual amenity.
2. Cumulative visual impact with adjacent wind farm proposals.
3. Noise impact

Neighbouring Residents (Cliviger Area)

Upwards of 200 residents of Cliviger including Overtown, Southward Bottom, Mereclough, Walk Mill and Holme Chapel have made written objections in response to consultation on the separate planning application (APP/2012/0318) for an access track to facilitate delivery of large components to the wind farm site. A proportion of the letters make representations (43 specifically and several by inference) about the turbine delivery vehicle (TDV) aspect of the windfarm project as described fully in the ES including the Additional Information (October 2012). These representations are pertinent to this application and are summarised as follows:

- Traffic disruption at Overtown and along the TD route.
- Alternative route avoiding Overtown, should be sought; alternative route possibilities not adequately considered; possibility of helicopter transport of components not adequately considered.
- Possible damage to underground services.
- Possible damage to property from vibration affecting foundations, or direct impact of large vehicles.
- Coupling lay-by arrangement would adversely affect Mereclough.
- Increased danger to pedestrians including children and old people.

Friends of Overtown

An alternative route avoiding settlements would be preferable.

Rossendale Borough Council

Comments as follows (summarised):

- The turbines would be visible from a large part of Rossendale's upland areas – including the Pennine Bridleway, the Rossendale Way and numerous other rights of way, although they would not be visible from the urbanised valley bottom areas.
- The scenery and wildness of Rossendale's uplands are assets in delivery of the Boroughs strategy aiming to increase status as an outdoor pursuits destination. Although less in number, the replacement turbines would be visible over a larger area than the existing turbines.
- Consider that before they can be supported it should be established that the potential visual impact is not greater than that of the existing Coal Clough Wind Farm.
- (Response to re-consultation in 2012) Further assessment should be carried out to take account of change of circumstances (including new wind farm proposals; new public access footpaths; a more recent study of wind farm capacity in the area).

Calderdale Council

Comments as follows (summarised):

- Cumulative impact with existing, consented and planned wind farms should be considered, taking note of the Landscape Capacity Study (2009) and the increased height of the proposed replacement turbines.
- Financial contribution to local bridleways sought.
- Need for an appropriate assessment under Habitats Regulations is indicated. [*This has been done*].

Ministry of Defence (Meteorological Office – weather prediction radar)

Holding objection pending mitigation arrangements [*see comments below*]

Environmental Health

- Noise – Satisfies general industry guidance; advise that conditions be imposed to deal with unforeseen noise problems.
- Shadow flicker – advise the imposition of a condition to deal with unforeseen shadow flicker problem.
- Construction site working hours – advise restriction of working hours to:
 - Monday-Friday 08:00 to 18:00;
 - Saturdays 08:00 to 12:00
 - No work on Sundays or Bank/Public Holidays.
 - Delivery vehicles restricted to those hours.
 - Private water supply

[*The applicant has agreed with traffic movement restricted as above, but asked that construction on site be allowed between 0700 - 1900 Mondays to Fridays and 0700 – 1600 on Saturdays. Given that there is no residential property adjacent the site this appears reasonable*]

Environment Agency

- No objection.
- Agree with the ES proposals for minimising disturbance and providing mitigation.

- Advise imposition of conditions to secure implementation of mitigation measures.

Planning and Environmental Considerations:

The existing Coal Clough wind farm was granted permission in 1991. It comprises 24 turbines - 50m to blade tip/32m to hub – together with transformers, substation building and access roads.

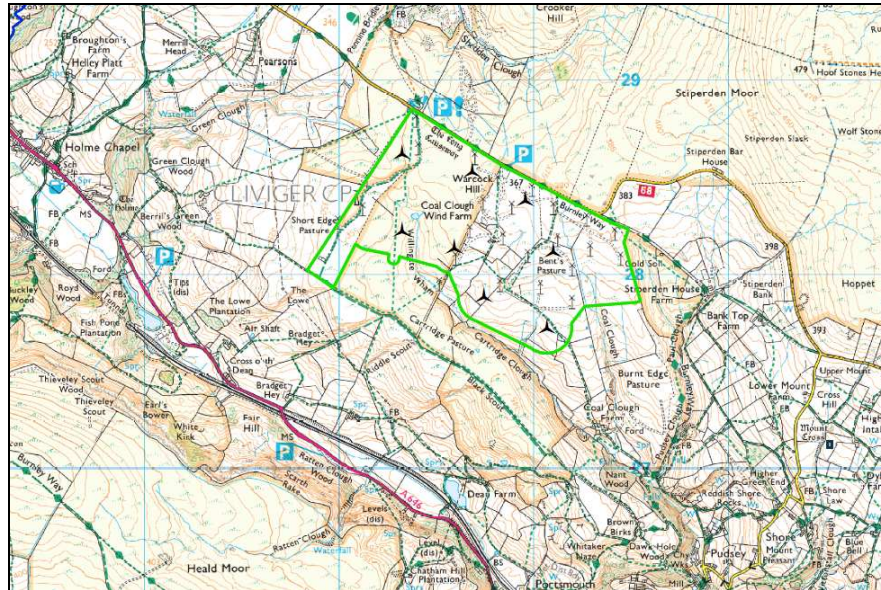
The present proposal is to replace the existing wind farm and is described in the Design and Access Statement submitted with the application. A summary is as follows::

- 8 turbines 110m to blade tip/70m to hub;
- Up-graded site access from Long Causeway;
- New or up-graded access tracks within the site;
- On-site borrow pits for materials;
- Additional control building;
- Underground cabling (linking turbines to the control building);
- Permanent performance monitoring mast;
- Site signage.

The project is an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development for the purposes of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999 (as amended) and the application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement. This evaluates environmental impacts of the development in detail, and includes the following:

- Site selection and layout design - considering key factors including, landscape and visual impacts, ecologically sensitive parts of the site, ground stability, noise, recreational routes.
- Landscape and Visual Effects –
- Ecology
- Ornithology
- Hydrology
- Cultural Heritage
- Noise
- Traffic and Transportation
- Land-Use, Tourism & Recreation and Socio-economics
- Miscellaneous Issues

An appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations has concluded that the proposed development will have no adverse impact on the South Pennine Moors Special Protection Area (a species habitat site of European significance) which adjoins the site across Long Causeway, provided conditions are imposed requiring the implementation of identified measures of mitigation.



Site location

Summary of ES findings

Landscape

- There will be **significant effects** on the landscape in an area of 2-3km from the nearest turbine.
- There would be **significant effects** in:
 - the settlement of Shore;
 - a small elevated part of Portsmouth;
 - a short distance of the Long Causeway, National Cycle Route 68 and the Burnley Way;
 - the A646 road between Portsmouth and Holme Chapel, including Cliviger Gorge;
 - railway line Walk Mill to Portsmouth;
 - Pennine Bridleway over the 2.5km stretch between Holme Chapel and the Lime Hushings, through Green Clough.
- No significant effect on designated landscapes – Forest of Bowland (AONB), Peak District, Yorkshire Dales, and Registered Parks and Gardens in the study area, including Towneley Hall.
- Not result in significant cumulative effect.

Ecology

- Careful positioning and mitigation has avoided the majority of potential effects.
- Enhancement of the modified bog habitat of local significance in the context of the wider South Pennine Moors SAC, SPA and SSSI.

Ornithology

- No significant impact predicted.

Hydrology and Hydrogeology

- Following implementation of mitigation measures and a Pollution Prevention Plan the project would have minor significance or lower.

Cultural Heritage

- With the implementation of an archaeological watching brief leading to preservation by record of any remains encountered, the effects would be not significant.
- No significant effects on settings of features of cultural heritage.

Noise

- Construction and decommissioning noise assessed as not significant
- Operational noise would not exceed limits defined in industry code, therefore would comply with planning policy
- Decommissioning noise (to be re-assessed in terms of current relevant guidelines) in terms of present standards would not be significant.

Traffic and Transportation

- Decommissioning and construction will increase traffic on local roads.
- Actual volumes of traffic predicted are well within practical operating capacity of these roads.
- Environmental effect would not be significant assuming mitigation measures, such as a robust Traffic Management Plan, are implemented.

Land-Use, Tourism & Recreation and Socio-economics

- Reduced number of turbines visible from bridleways and footpaths within the site during operation and increased separation distance between routes and turbines.
- No significant effects during operation.
- With mitigation measures implemented, no significant impact during construction and decommissioning.

Miscellaneous Issues

- Consideration of electromagnetic interference, air quality and climate, health and safety considerations, and shadow flicker
- With appropriate measures of mitigation and management (where relevant) there would be no significant impact.
- There are no properties within the distance relevant to shadow flicker.

The main planning issues relate to the acceptability of the identified significant impacts on the landscape and visual amenity; the acceptability of ecology mitigation measures; and the impact of turbine delivery, construction and decommissioning traffic expressed as a major concern of residents.

Policies and assessment

The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** sets the context that supporting the delivery of renewable energy infrastructure is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development (part 10).

Burnley Local Plan Second Review sets relevant criteria as follows:

E31 – WIND FARMS

The development of wind farms and related development will be approved, provided that:

- (a) there is no unacceptable impact on the character of the landscape or on the visual amenity of the area by reason of the siting, number, design, colour or layout of the wind turbines;

Comment

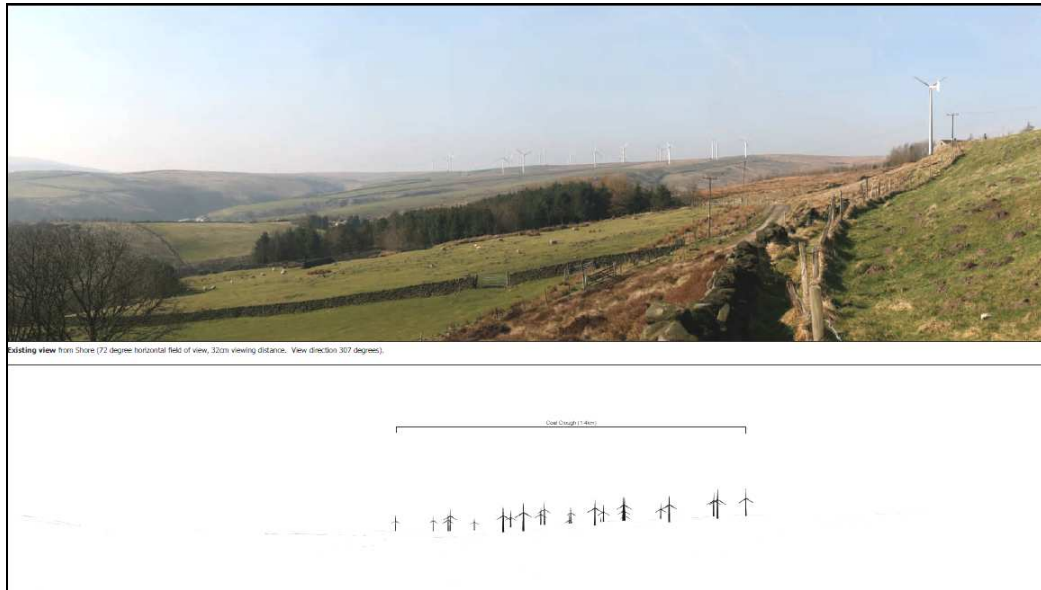
The images below are copied from the landscape and visual impact assessment.



Existing windfarm



Repowered windfarm (simulation)



View from Shore, Todmorden (existing)



View from Shore, Todmorden (repowered)

A large number of images are submitted in the Environmental Statement.

These are available of the Council's planning website at Application search facility, using APP/2009/0758 and opening the document titled Environmental Statement Volume I Written Statement and Figures December 2009.

It should be noted that the above images are copied in black and white and have lost clarity in reduction and reproduction.

The reader is advised to view the originals on the website or at the Development Control Team office via the Contact Centre, Parker Lane.

Comment

The repowered windfarm would be significantly higher and more widely visible. But, at the same time significantly less in number - arguably a more imposing but less cluttered appearance.

The repowered wind farm, because of increased height, would be significantly more visible, to nearby settlements, routes and open land. It would (but with lesser impact) have an extended range of visibility.

However, by reducing the number of turbines it would have a more open appearance. Whilst remaining a group, it would have clear space between turbines from many views. This is not presently the case with the existing wind farm.

As a re-powering project, taking account of the existing wind farm, it would be more a change in visual character than a new imposition in the landscape.

(b) there is no unacceptable effect on the setting of buildings and sites of architectural and historic interest and sites of archaeological importance;

Comment

There are no designated buildings or sites in the vicinity. The requirement for implementation of an archaeological watching brief can be made by a condition.

(c) there is no unacceptable effect on sites of nature conservation value or biodiversity action plan priority habitats or species;

Comment:

With mitigation measures in place as proposed in the application, and implementation required by planning condition, there would be no unacceptable effects on ecology within the development site.

It has been ascertained that, subject to conditions identified in the assessment, protected ornithology interests on the adjoining South Pennines Special Protection Area would not be adversely affected.

The existing windfarm originally granted in 1991 for 15 years, was granted for a further 10 years in 2005. The planning officers report cites the advice of Natural England at that time that there was no evidence that the windfarm had resulted in any further damage upon the ecology of moorland plant and animal

communities. Current ecology assessments have included the presence of the existing windfarm in the baseline and have concluded that, given the design of the development and the conditions to be imposed on it, there would be no adverse impact on ecology.

(d) there is no unacceptable effect on the amenity of local residents

Comment:

There are residential properties around the periphery of the site, however, the nearest dwelling is in excess of 500m from the turbine site

Visual Amenity

Given the separating distance, the turbines, whilst visible from dwellings, or their immediate environs, are unlikely to appear significantly more dominating than the present turbines.

Noise Impact

There is no statutory minimum distance that a turbine has to be from a dwelling. The siting of turbines is predominantly influenced by whether an individual turbine or a cluster of turbines meets the noise limits set by The Working Group on Noise from Wind Turbines (1996): Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms (ETSU-R-97). The turbines have been located so that they meet these criteria, with maximum noise levels specified in respect of nearby dwellings. If permission is granted a condition should be imposed requiring adherence to these maxima.

Shadow flicker

Given the position of property in relation to the development, shadow flicker is unlikely, however a condition is recommended on a precautionary basis in case unforeseen effects occur.

Construction period

A condition is recommended to minimise impact on residents from construction noise and disturbance.

(e) the proposal is close to the electricity distribution network and the length of any overhead electricity connection cables is minimised;

Comment:

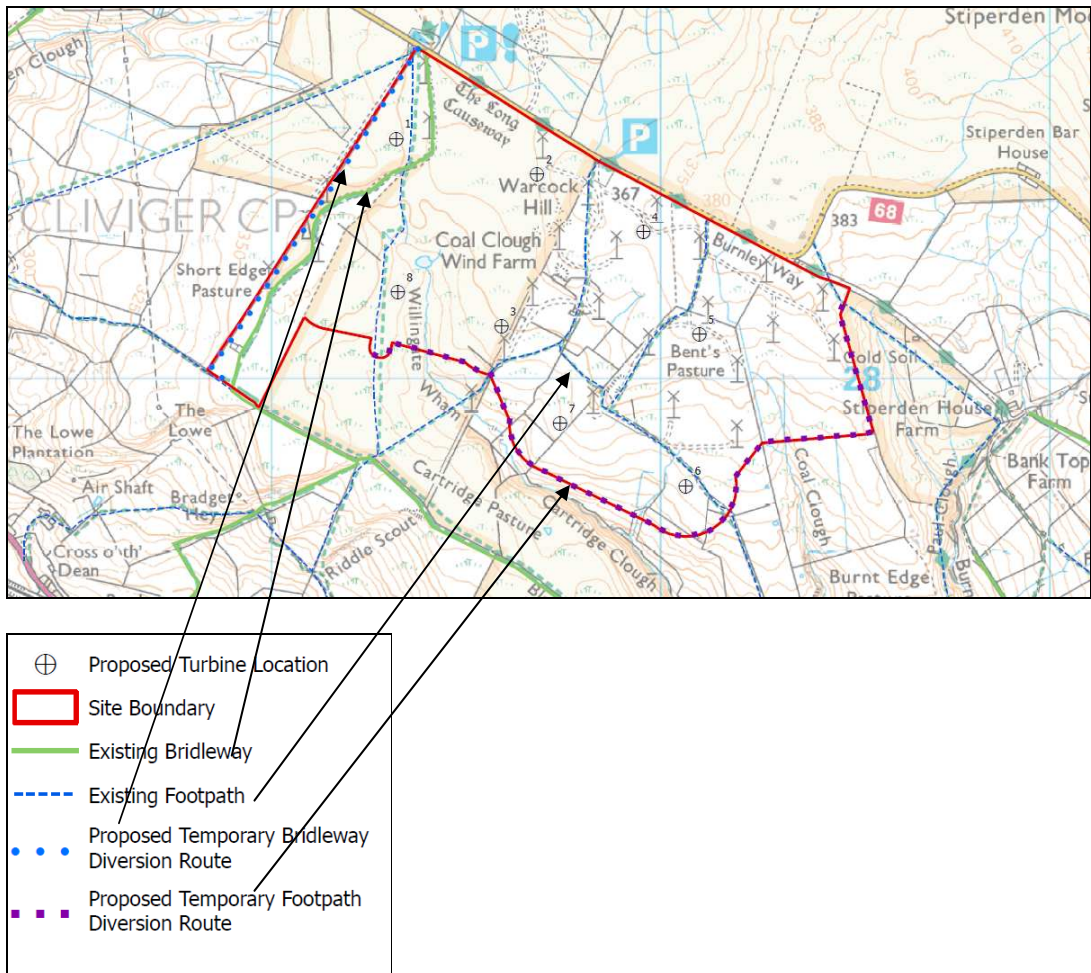
The present arrangement would be unchanged – underground connection to the existing substation position and overhead connection to the nearby pylon line.

(f) it does not adversely affect any recreational facilities and routes;

Comment:

The moors around Burnley are used for a variety of recreational uses. There are footpaths and bridleways that cross, or are adjacent to the site and they allow access to the open country for residents of the Borough on foot and by cycle or horseback.

The routes and proposed temporary diversions are shown on the plan copied below.



For people on foot or riding bicycles, the impact of the wind farm is mainly visual. How much the visual impact spoils their perception of the character of the landscape will vary. However the windfarm has been established as a feature in the landscape now for 20 years and many users of the area will be accustomed to it. The larger/fewer arrangement of the repowered windfarm would be visible from more distant routes but give more spacing between turbines, in the manner described above.

The intention is to temporarily divert the footpath routes along the inside of the western, southern, and eastern site boundaries. Temporary closure would be necessary when construction works take place within 200m of the route. The aim is to minimise closures by careful construction programme management.

Equestrian use

It is a different consideration for horses being ridden on the bridlevays in the area around the windfarm. Although the rider may be used to the turbines, there is potential for horses to be startled by sudden movement, shadows, or noise.

Bridleway no.112 crosses the site in a north-south direction near its western boundary. Wind turbines are an existing feature along the route of the bridleway. The issues arising from representations are considered as follows:

Turbine close to Bridleway

There are two existing turbines 5m and 13m from the bridleway with turbine blades over-sailing it. The proposed turbine arrangement would place one turbine along the bridleway route, outside the radius of the 40m blades.

Temporary disruption

The proposed temporary diversion route would be along the western boundary of the site, thereby avoiding additional use of Long Causeway. Temporary closure would be necessary during construction works close to the bridleway.

Ground conditions

The applicant has indicated the intention to investigate all existing public rights of way and bring them to a suitable condition before works commence; and, ensure restoration at the end of the construction period.

The extensive drainage work to mitigate surface water run-off (see Annexe 2) is designed to achieve a greenfield level of run-off, and avoid significant water erosion or increase in surface saturation arising from the development.

(g) any electromagnetic disturbance on existing transmitting or receiving systems is minimised;

Comment:

Wind turbines have the potential to interfere with the operation of radio communication equipment such as point to point links, television reception and radar systems.

A condition is recommended as a precaution requiring action against unforeseen disturbance of domestic television operation

The Metoffice have objected to the proposal on the grounds that the turbines would interfere with weather prediction radar operating from Hameldon Hill. The applicant has put forward the scoping of mitigation measures that could be developed to overcome the problem effects. This would probably involve information technology development of which the applicant has indicated willingness to cooperate directly with the Metoffice.

Further comments are awaited from the Metoffice about how this could be put into effect.

(h) applications are accompanied by a scheme for removal of any associated structures, and reinstatement of the site to its former use in the event of the site becoming non-operational.

Comment: A condition is recommended to deal with this matter.

Development that would have a negative cumulative impact in relation to existing wind turbines or extant approvals for these, will not be permitted.

Comment:

The original 2009 Environmental Impact Assessment included a Cumulative Assessment; this was up-dated after the normal 'cut-off' date to include (at that time) quite rapidly changing circumstances.

The Supplementary Cumulative Assessment (September 2010) now forms part of the Environmental Statement and can be viewed in full on the website identified above.

It identifies the development as within Moorland Fringe: Trawden Fringe and within the High Moorland Plateaux, South Pennine Moors which includes several operational and consented wind farms (Ovenden Moor, Scout Moor, Crook Hill and Reaps Moss) as well as re-powering of Coal Clough and Ovenden Moor, and Todmorden Moor (at that time at application stage).

The assessment concludes that, as a result of this development, there will be a slight increase in cumulative effects, but these effects will not be significant. The key points of conclusion are:

- There would remain adequate separation to maintain the development and other operational and consented wind farms as distinct entities in the western periphery of this part of the South Pennines.
- The development would not add a new cumulative effect (as presented by a new wind farm) but instead would modify the nature of the existing cumulative effect on landscape character.
- The 24 turbines would be replaced by 8 turbines and have turbines of a commensurate height to other wind farms in the area.
- The location of the development is such that there would remain a clear space and distance between each windfarm cluster in the South Pennines.

The applicant (citing industry guidelines about 'cut-off' dates) has held fast against the representation from Rossendale BC that the cumulative impact be reassessed in light of more recent wind farm proposals. It would not be reasonable to expect further information at this stage.

Traffic Considerations

Access is along public roads. Traffic generated by the proposed development is a material consideration in determining the application. This extends to temporary construction needs, but consideration should be proportional and reasonable. Weight should be given proportionally taking account of the amount and character of the traffic, and whether it is temporary or an operational feature of the development.

The vehicle movement in relation to the development is summarised as follows:

- **Temporary** windfarm decommissioning/construction (and future decommissioning) vehicles – normal road vehicles, delivering construction personnel and materials to the site.

Comment

Volumes of general decommissioning/construction traffic are predicted as well within practical operating capacity of the local roads. A management plan should be in place to control the times and general features of movement (for instance: wheel cleaning; load covering). A condition is recommended to require this, and similarly in relation to future decommissioning.

- **Temporary** Turbine Delivery Vehicles – abnormal load vehicles, moving under special highway arrangements, delivering the large towers, generators and blades.

Comment

Movement of abnormal loads is regulated under highways legislation. Each movement will be a carefully managed highway event, capable of causing delay due to slow, controlled movement. However, a finite number of trips is involved for the purposes of wind farm reconstruction.

This report considers that the short periods of disruption should be given minor weight considered against the long term renewable energy benefits of the development.

- **Operational**

Comment

Traffic generated during the operation and maintenance of the windfarm is expected to be minimal and not likely to have adverse impact.

De-commissioning and restoration

The proposed wind farm is intended to operate for a period of 25 years from coming into operation. At the end of that period it would be decommissioned under the terms of a scheme prepared in advance of that time taking account of then current legislation, guidance and best practice. A condition is recommended to put that into effect.

Conclusion

The **NPPF** requires Local Planning Authorities in determining applications:

- Not to require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy: even small scale proposals contribute to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and,
- To approve the application if its impacts are or can be made acceptable.

The EIA application has demonstrated the effects of the proposed development.

It is clearly a matter of judgement whether the changes to landscape character and to its visual amenities are acceptable when balanced against the needs to develop renewable sources of energy to reduce carbon emissions.

The wind farm, because of increased height, would be significantly more visible, to nearby settlements, routes and open land. It would (but with lesser impact) have an extended range of visibility and form an addition to the cumulative impact of wind farms in the South Pennine area. In doing so, it would have a more open, less cluttered appearance, being more a change in visual character than a new imposition in the landscape.

Other impacts are avoided by design of the development or can be managed and mitigated under the terms of binding planning conditions.

The recommendation is made on that basis.

Recommendation: That provided the objection from the Metoffice can be resolved satisfactorily the Head of Housing and Development Control be delegated to grant permission subject to relevant and necessary conditions and any other condition to mitigate or manage the development arising out of consultations or otherwise.

