

Policy Statement: Wind Turbines

Background

At present there are six operational onshore wind turbine sites in Norfolk, and one offshore, with a further offshore site under construction. A further three onshore sites have received planning consent and 14 further applications (three offshore) are currently being assessed. CPRE Norfolk's [cumulative impact map](#) illustrates the visual impact that would result if all of these applications were successful, and shows that there would be few places left in Norfolk from which a wind turbine was not visible. The environmental objective of developing renewable energy through wind turbines should not come at the expense of the beauty, character and tranquillity of Norfolk's countryside.

Key Points

- Wind turbines, almost uniquely for man made structures, are capable of altering the look of a landscape over a very large area of countryside. Modern commercial wind turbines are large industrial structures - mostly 125 metres or more in height (to blade tip). They dwarf all other landscape features - even Norwich Cathedral spire only reaches 96 metres and most Norfolk churches have towers that are around 20 metres tall. A mature oak tree has an average height somewhere between 15 and 25 metres. Therefore wind turbines have the potential to become the dominant feature in a landscape. 'Zones of visual intrusion' maps relating to wind turbines often show an impact over an area delineated by a 20km radius centred on a turbine site.
- Aside from visual intrusion wind turbines can produce a number of other detrimental side effects: noise, shadow flicker and light pollution. The MOD is increasingly requiring tall structures to be lit by navigation lights and these lights have a very negative impact when introduced in to previously dark rural landscapes.
- Wind turbine developments are accompanied by a considerable amount of supporting infrastructure including new access roads, buildings and the need for a grid connection and pylons (see separate statement). This infrastructure has a significant impact on landscape character.
- In an attempt to minimise the noise problems associated with turbines developers often seek sites in very rural locations - places that are generally shown to be the most tranquil on CPRE tranquillity maps. Such areas are becoming increasingly rare in our small densely populated island and should be protected from the kind of disturbance produced by wind turbines.

- There are also concerns about the potential threat that turbines pose to bird and bat populations especially in areas that contain Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

What CPRE Norfolk is campaigning for:

- **Greater weight for local landscape issues.** Renewable energy targets should not be allowed to override concerns about the damage wind turbines can do to the landscape. This view is supported by the High Court decision of Mrs. Justice Lang who ruled against Sea & Land Power & Energy Ltd's plans for four giant turbines near Hemsby: 'As a matter of law it is not correct to assert that the national policy promoting the use of renewable resources negates the local landscape policies or must be given 'primacy' over them' . CPRE Norfolk will continue to oppose proposals for wind turbines which threaten local landscapes through the planning consultation process.
- **Stronger local landscape policies in Local Plans:** It is of course important to protect conservation areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty from the negative impact of wind turbines. But the majority of Norfolk is undesignated landscape and it is here that most people enjoy their countryside as they walk the footpath network or cycle along by-roads. Much of this so called 'ordinary' countryside is very attractive and tranquil and equally deserving of protection from visual domination by tall industrial structures. Local Planning Authorities need to include strong local landscape policies in their local plans.

How you can help

You can join us in our campaign to prevent the local and cumulative impacts of wind farms in the county by:

- writing to your MP and your local council highlighting these issues
- responding to local council consultations on planning proposals
- becoming a member of CPRE Norfolk

More information at
Tel: 01603 761660

www.cprenorfolk.org.uk
Email: info@cprenorfolk.org.uk

The Norfolk branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE Norfolk) exists to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural Norfolk by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country. As an independent voice for the landscape, we engage with local and regional planning systems and campaign locally for positive solutions that will support the long-term future of Norfolk - one of England's most rural areas.

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