

Dear sirs,

REPRESENTATION TO THE ROSSENDALE LOCAL PLAN, DATED 5 OCTOBER 2018

REPRESENTOR ID: 1775

Please accept this as a representation to the Publication (pre-submission) Version of the Local Plan; this representation follows on from a previous representation dated 9 October 2017.

This representation is on behalf of a collective of individuals and community groups who came together to resist the Scout Moor Windfarm extension proposals (Rossendale), and the Rooley Moor Windfarm proposals (Rochdale) over the course of the last three years or so.

The group's serious concerns towards the draft Rossendale Local Plan policies pertaining to wind turbine development remain, despite our well-founded and considered representations to the previous draft.

LPA'S RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REPRESENTATIONS

We are disappointed to note that the LPA has chosen not to provide comment or response to representations made to earlier iterations of the plan. We can only make the following comments by inference therefore.

We are pleased to note that it appears that the four policies in the previous iteration of the plan (the then ENV4, ENV8, ENV9 and ENV10) which referred to and ostensibly supported wind turbine development have been reduced down to just one policy (the new ENV7) following our representations; we comment on ENV7 below, but highlight the LPA's evident willingness to promote a pro-turbine Local Plan: even to the extent that earlier drafts of the Local Plan clearly made superfluous policy provision for pro-turbine development.

We presented evidence to the Scout Moor Call-in Inquiry to demonstrate Rossendale council's financial reliance on developing wind turbines on its landholdings on Scout Moor (deriving rental income from Peel Holdings' aspirations to extend the current wind farm); evidence included public statements from the council's chief financial officer, recorded on council minutes, imploring members to support the development of turbines as a source of income. We will again make this evidence available to the Local Plan hearings. Whilst this is not strictly a planning matter per se, we fear that this, and the over-exuberant use of pro-turbine policies in the previous draft Local Plan, illustrate an LPA seemingly motivated by financial return, rather than sound planning. There would also appear to be a serious lack of democratic judgment, given the officer's report to the Scout Moor proposals recorded that 97% of consultation responses to the proposals were objections (including the area's MP, who organised a petition).

DRAFT POLICY ENV7

The majority of new wording of draft policy ENV7 is unclear and extensively contradictory: as drafted the policy is wholly inadequate. We would make the following observations as an example:

- Use of the phrase 'community led' is evidently unclear: does the *community* include the pro-turbine council, a local developer and owner of the existing wind farm such as Peel Holdings, or a farmer looking to expand existing turbine development on his land?
- The areas of search include areas where the Secretary of State refused proposals in 2017 for additional turbines on Scout Moor, citing landscape impact as the reason for refusal. The council's evidence base relies on an out of date (2014) council-commissioned landscape study, which pre-dates the development of many new turbines locally, and the Secretary of State's

recent (2017) decision. The council's position is completely untenable. The Areas of Search should be deleted.

- Policy states that turbines outside of the Areas of Search would be resisted; which flies contrary to other parts of the policy which state "Community led proposals for wind turbines in all parts of the Borough will be supported"; this is unclear, and inadequate as policy.
- There is extensive and seemingly contradictory commentary on what will and will not be allowed in terms of turbine height.

Requested Modifications

We suggest that the areas of search should be deleted in their entirety. If the LPA can justify a need for them, then they should exclude Scout Moor, given the Secretary of State's findings.

We broadly support the list of criteria set out *at the end* of draft policy ENV7, which we replicate at the foot of this representation. Indeed, it would appear that this wording should suffice as the Local Plan turbine policy, without the policy text that precedes it. As such, policy ENV7 needs a re-draft along the lines of the text at the foot of this representation.

We would suggest the addition of the following text to the criteria to ENV7:

"the turbines and associated infrastructure should avoid areas of blanket bog" as referred to elsewhere in the current draft ENV7.

"and a commitment to funding the entire decommissioning of the turbine and all associated infrastructure".

Yours sincerely,

Tom Whitehead MRTPI MCIPR

Acting pro-bono on behalf of community groups

Signed on behalf of:

- Rooley Moor Neighbourhood Forum
- Holcombe Society
- Bury Rural Inequalities Forum
- Ramsbottom Heritage Society
- Prickshaw & Broadley Fold Area Community Group
- Rossendale Harriers club
- Friends of Rooley Moor
- Whitworth Residents
- Turn Village Residents
- Townsend Fold Residents
- Affetside Society
- Lane Head residents group
- Edenfield Village Residents Association
- Rochdale & Bury Bridleways Association committee
- Rural Rossendale Trust Accommodation Providers
- Norden Area Forum

Follows...

Proposed text for ENV7 (taken from current draft ENV7)

“Proposals for commercial wind farms and individual turbines (including repowering of existing schemes) within Areas of Search shown on the Policies Map will only be supported if the following criteria are addressed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority:

- The impacts identified by the local community have been taken into account and fully addressed;
- The scale, height and siting of the turbine(s) and all supporting information is appropriate to the area taking into account:
 - o The vertical height and horizontal expanse of the topography;
 - o The degree of openness of the landscape;
 - o The scale of adjacent landscape features, buildings and walls;
 - o The proximity to designated and non-designated built heritage assets;
 - o The proximity to distinctive landforms, such as a ridgeline, knoll or rock outcrop, which makes a key contribution to local landscape character;
 - o The presence of existing settlement or field patterns; and
 - o The opportunities to screen or reduce the visual impact of the development;
- It would not result in the loss of, or significantly detract from, key views of scenic landmarks or landscape features;
- The design, colour, layout and arrangement of turbines are appropriate to their setting;
- The proposal would not result in unacceptable visual clutter in combination with other existing structures with cumulative impacts fully assessed to the satisfaction of the Council;
- There would be no unacceptable harm to neighbour amenity, protected species or the use of public rights of way or bridleways or a severe impact on highway safety;
- Shadow and Reflective Flicker impacts on buildings and Public Rights of Way are fully assessed with a precautionary approach taken to mitigation;
- The scheme would not result in unacceptable noise impacts, including amplitude modulation, on residential properties and other sensitive users;
- The impact on geology, including former mine workings, peat and hydrogeology is fully appraised and issues identified addressed including restoration plans as appropriate;
- No development is proposed on areas of peat of over 40cm depth;
- Impacts on designated species and ecological assets are avoided or minimised;
- The proposal does not cause unacceptable harm to any heritage assets and their setting;
- The impact on recreational assets is assessed and impacts on key routes such as the Pennine Bridleway and Rossendale Way are avoided or if this is not possible, mitigated;
- The scale, siting and design of any ancillary structures and access tracks are appropriate to the character of the area and the landscape setting;
- The submission contains a Construction Management Plan, including impacts on the Highway network, and incorporates proposals for managing the de-commissioning and removal of the turbines and the restoration of the site;
- Any landscape features removed or altered to enable the erection of the turbine are reinstated and the design, materials and scale of any new fencing or walling needed is appropriate to the character of the local area;
- Issues with respect to the following are appropriately addressed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority:
 - o Shadow and reflective flicker
 - o TV and phone reception
 - o Air traffic radar reception; and

- A de-commissioning scheme is included.

Adding:

- the turbines and associated infrastructure should avoid areas of blanket bog; applications affective these areas in any way shall be refused.
- a robust commitment to funding the entire decommissioning of the turbine and all associated infrastructure upon expiry of the planning permission