

1 Introduction

STOP WOODLANE WIND FARM ACTION GROUP OBJECTION DOCUMENT

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This objection document is in response to application No. 2009/0393/FUL for Woodlane wind farm. Erection of 14 No. 125 metre high wind turbines, crane hard standings, meteorological mast, temporary construction compound, tracks, cabling and associated infrastructure.

Overview of Wind Farm Proposals

- 1.2 In the Selby area there are several proposals for wind farm development. These include plans for the Woodlane wind farm consisting of 14 wind turbines and associated works on land at Wood Lane, Birkin, which were revealed by the applicant at an exhibition in January 2009. Two days later the same Applicant revealed plans for another wind farm with 7 turbines at Bishopwood. The distance between the two sites is only 4km. See map below at Fig.1.1. On 27 and 28 May 2009 e-on revealed plans for a third wind farm with 9 turbines at Byram. This proposal is not yet subject to a planning application, but one is expected later this year.
- 1.3 In total these three proposals are for 30 turbines, each over 400 feet high, in an area of attractive, rural landscape. While they are separate proposals the turbines would appear as one group from a distance and would stretch for nearly 10 km across open countryside. All three wind farms and all 30 turbines would be visible from the villages and from roads in the area. The turbines are so large that they would be visible from the North Yorkshire Moors which are 45 miles away.

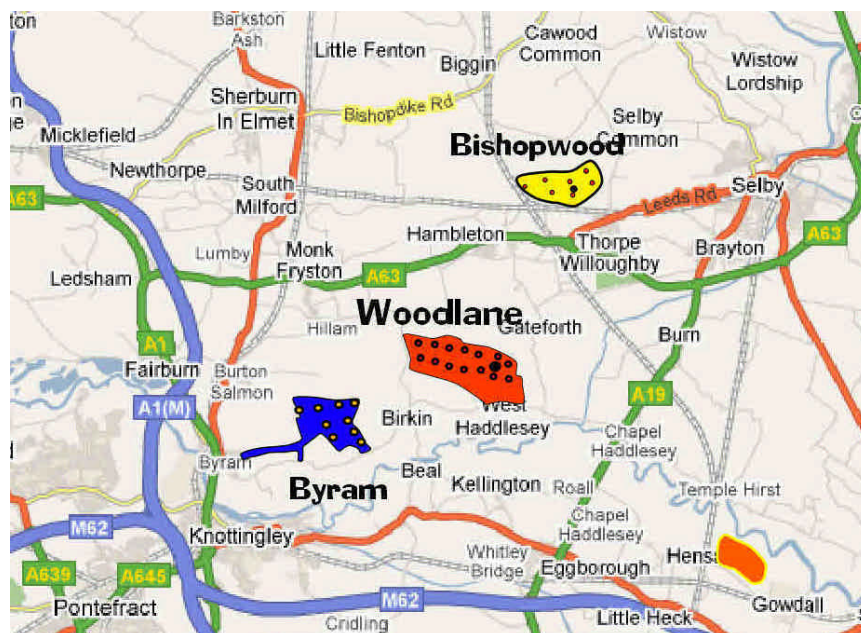


Fig 1.1 Illustrative map showing the proposed Woodlane, Bishopwood and Byram wind farms

Source: Woodlane and Bishopwood information - planning applications
Byram wind farm information - e-on scoping document
Map - Google Earth

STOP WOODLANE WIND FARM ACTION GROUP OBJECTION DOCUMENT

About Stop Woodlane Wind Farm Action Group

Aims

- 1.4 Stop Woodlane Wind Farm Action Group (SWL) was formed by residents after the plans for 14 wind turbines near to the villages of Gateforth, West Haddlesey, Birkin and Hillam were revealed.
- 1.5 SWL is opposed to all three proposals mentioned above, both individually and collectively. We discuss the impact of all three in our "Cumulative impact assessment" at Section 5 of this document.

Membership and Supporters

- 1.6 Members of SWL reside in Gateforth, Hillam, Monk Fryston, Birkin, Hambleton, West Haddlesey, Chapel Haddlesey, Kellington, Beal and Burton Salmon. All these villages and more are affected by the proposal.
- 1.7 SWL has over 250 members in the villages which are close to the proposed turbines. Among the membership are professional people resident in the area including engineers, civil engineers, property developers, power industry managers, consultants, lawyers and others with a wide range of skills. The membership also includes farm owners, people engaged in agricultural activity and in occupations in support of the local farming industry. Owners of land which is adjacent to the site are represented, as are people who have invested in the area and have supported projects designed to enhance the biodiversity. Finally SWL includes large numbers of people who have chosen to live in the area because it is an attractive, rural landscape rich in wildlife.
- 1.8 SWL also has extensive support in the local and wider community. At the time of writing, the objections lodged on the Selby Planning Portal show that 53% of people sending in objections have indicated their support for this document.

Public Awareness

- 1.9 SWL recognised the need for good consultation and communication with local residents.

Consultation

- 1.10 Public meetings have been held by SWL in:
 - ? Chapel Haddlesey
 - ? Gateforth
 - ? Birkin
 - ? Beal
 - ? Hillam / Monk Fryston
 - ? Hambleton)
 - ? Thorpe Willoughby) joint with the Stop Bishopwood Action Group
 - ? Burton Salmon)

Guest speakers at these meetings included:

- ? Nigel Adams, Conservative Parliamentary Candidate for Selby and Ainsty
- ? Mike Barnard, wind energy consultant

STOP WOODLANE WIND FARM ACTION GROUP

OBJECTION DOCUMENT

In total over 1000 people have attended the meetings organised by SWL. The Applicant was invited to the first meeting but declined the invitation.

Publicity

- 1.11 SWL has undertaken the following publicity to raise awareness:
- ? Website launched and kept updated – www.stopwoodlanewindfarm.co.uk
 - ? Articles written for village newspapers including front page coverage in three issues of Hillam News
 - ? Media briefings – regular articles in Selby Times
 - ? Leaflets delivered to every house in all villages
 - ? Briefings by e-mail to members of SWL
 - ? Advertisements in local publications
 - ? Radio interviews
 - ? TV news broadcast
 - ? Publicity events e.g. a helicopter fly-over

Public Opinion

- 1.12 In January 2009, following the consultative meeting by the applicant, SWL conducted a pilot survey. The results showed that there was a lack of knowledge by residents with 71% saying they did not have enough information to make a decision about the proposed wind farm. When asked how large they thought the turbines would be, the average reply was 100 feet, less than a quarter of the actual size. Clearly the true picture had not been picked up on by the residents from the Applicants single consultation meeting.
- 1.13 In February 2009, Nigel Adams, Conservative Parliamentary Candidate for Selby and Ainsty, conducted a survey by postal vote. This survey was carried out before the SWL public meetings listed above. The results showed that:
- ? a large majority of people was against the wind farm proposed for Woodlane. From 161 responses to the survey, 113 (70%) opposed the plan and raised objections. Only 16% of people supported the plan.
 - ? the most common objections were about the visual and environmental impact that the 405 ft high turbines would have on the open landscape of the area.
 - ? people who attended the Applicants exhibition in January were more likely to oppose the wind farm and far less likely to be undecided about it. Of the people who attended, 84% were opposed to it and only 3% were undecided. Of those who had not attended and who would therefore have less information about the details of the plans, 62% were opposed and 20% unsure.
- 1.14 The Selby Times carried out an online survey in February about the wind farm proposals and about the bio-mass plant proposed for Drax. These surveys showed that a significant majority of residents was against the Applicant's proposals but a majority was in favour of the bio-mass plant at Drax. One can deduce from this therefore that local people are not against 'green' energy, but they are against the wind farms.

STOP WOODLANE WIND FARM ACTION GROUP OBJECTION DOCUMENT

Selby Times Online Survey questions	Yes	No	Don't know
Do you support Prowind's application to build a wind farm?	14%	86%	0%
Are plans to build a Bio-mass plant at Drax a good idea?	77%	20%	3%
Do you support Drax's green plant bid?	87%	7%	10%
Is the creation of renewable energy jobs a way to revive Selby?	34%	63%	3%

Table 1.1 Surveys undertaken by the Selby Times

- 1.15 At each of the SWL public meetings mentioned above there have been votes by a show of hands. In each case there has been either a unanimous vote against the wind farm or only one or two people in favour. Some of the people in favour were landowners with a financial involvement in the project. Their attendance at the meetings led to constructive discussion.
- 1.16 Birkin Parish Council held a vote by public meeting, and by ballot to those unable to attend. The result was that 30 of 33 people at the meeting voted against the wind farm, and when the postal votes were included the count was 54 against and 8 in favour.
- 1.17 Selby District Council has written to all residents who live within 2 km of the proposed site, requesting comments. Large numbers of residents have responded with objections. In addition people who live locally, but outside the 2 km boundary, have also responded in high numbers, as have people who visit the area for recreational pursuits.
- 1.18 At the time of writing this document there are 777 objections registered on the Selby Planning Portal from local residents or people who visit the area for recreational purposes. The breakdown of these by home location is as follows:

Home Location	No. People Objecting
Closest Villages Beal, Birkin, Gateforth, Hillam, West Haddlesey	387
Other Local Villages Brotherton, Burton Salmon, Byram, Chapel Haddlesey, Hambleton, Kellington, Monk Fryston	262
Yorkshire (excl. above villages)	98
UK (excl Yorkshire)	14
Home Location Not Known	16
Total	777

Table 1.2 Analysis of Objections

STOP WOODLANE WIND FARM ACTION GROUP OBJECTION DOCUMENT

- 1.19** In summary, there is overwhelming majority opposition to the wind farm proposal. It is clear that as people gain a better understanding of the proposal they are more likely to be opposed to it. Selby area residents are not opposed to the other forms of 'green' energy generation being proposed for the area.
- 1.20** We ask that in reviewing the application full consideration is given to the strength of local feeling on the matter.