

St Bees Parish Council

Statement of objection to application ref: 4/23/2113/0F1 - LAND TO THE REAR OF GRINDAL HOUSE, ST BEES

St Bees Parish Council objects to the proposed wind turbine on the grounds of significant loss of visual amenity within the Coastal Sandstone landscape, and the visual effect on the Heritage buildings at St Bees School and St Bees Priory within the St Bees Conservation Area.

Landscape visual detriment

The turbine would be highly intrusive on the view both from the rim of the valley and within the valley. The visual impact would be accentuated by the lack of any woodland or features which would otherwise soften the view of the turbine, and the turbine would feature conspicuously in the undeveloped floor of this pastoral area which is currently devoid of buildings. It would be a highly anomalous engineered structure in a rural setting.

Referring to Fig 1, it can be seen that the site is in the centre of undeveloped pasture land, yet is the focus of many vistas. Vista 1 is the view from the B5345 in the floor of the valley. Vista 2 is from the ensemble of heritage buildings on the terrace at St Bees School. The turbine would feature prominently in these.

Vista 3 is the view from the B5345 entering the village from Whitehaven, and Vista 4 is the view from the High Walton road on the south of the valley rim. In these latter views the turbine would be conspicuous. We attached some indicative photo-montages to illustrate the effect.

The Copeland Landscape Settlement Study (July 2020, page 7) has identified a strong landscape link between the coast and the St Bees valley, which would be affected by the turbine.

Heritage assets and their setting

The turbine would be visually intrusive on the ensemble of buildings comprising St Bees School and St Bees Priory, which are situated nearby in the valley bottom. The turbine would significantly change the unique heritage character of this part of St Bees.

The valley bottom has no built environment because of the difficult land of the water meadows, and the built environment is therefore restricted to the firmer ground on the sides of the valley. There is a clear separation of townscape and agriculture land.

Referring to Fig 2, it can be seen that the turbine would sit in a “horseshoe” of the Conservation Area and its associated Heritage buildings. It would be highly intrusive and inappropriate to have the turbine, a modern vertical structure, in this location.

Concern about the adequacy of the application

We note that from the latest version of policy CC2PU in the draft local plan it states that a number of impacts should be avoided where possible and should be considered individually and cumulatively.

Those mentioned which we consider strongly apply in this case are:

- Landscape character including historic landscape character
- Townscape

- Visual amenity and sensitive views
- Heritage assets and their setting

We do not consider the application takes any of these factors into account.

In addition, there is no indication that an alternative green solution to reducing energy import to the property has been undertaken; such as a heat pump system for which there may well be enough land to make it ground-sourced.

Summary

The Council, on the basis of the detrimental visual impact on the landscape and the insensitive and inappropriate siting of this proposed turbine with regard to heritage assets, objects to this application.