

Aileen McGarry

From: ash brown [REDACTED]
Sent: 26 October 2021 21:57
To: Planning
Subject: Rigged Hill windfarm objection.docx la01/2019/0890/F
Attachments: Rigged Hill windfarm objection.docx

I would like to lend my support to the attached objections for the planning application. Listed above.

Sent from my iPhone

Dear Sir / Madam

I wish to expand the content of my objection to planning application – LA01/2019/0890/F

- 1) The windfarm will have a detrimental impact on the character of Rigged Hill and Donald's Hill:

The current Rigged Hill windfarm consists of 10 turbines standing at a height of 57m. It is my understanding that these were built with the intention of blending into the local landscape. With the backdrop of the sky behind them; their colour allows camouflage depending on the weather.

The proposed new Rigged Hill Windfarm will change the location of the existing wind turbines. Some of the new wind turbines will be brought forward and located downhill. This results in the wind turbines contrasting with the local environment and being unable to blend in with the landscape. Additionally, the revised height of 137metres results in the windfarm outsizing and completely overwhelming Rigged Hill, which stands 377metres above sea level. The development will negatively impact on the established character of Rigged Hill. Furthermore, due to the proposed height and relocation of the turbines, the established character of the adjoining Donald's Hill will also be negatively impacted.

- 2) Oversaturation of wind turbines in the Roe Valley:

Following the construction of two windfarms within the last year, the village of Drumsum now hosts three windfarms within a 2/3 mile radius of the village. Furthermore, another windfarm has been passed and is awaiting construction. For the residents of Drumsum and the wider Roe Valley this rate of new windfarms is quite alarming. We already host the largest windfarm in Northern Ireland located across the valley outside Dungiven. Additionally, there is the windfarm on the Coleraine/ Limavady Mountain road that is also looking to expand. This is not to mention the large number of individual wind turbines on private land.

The unfortunate reality is that the Roe Valley is becoming increasingly oversaturated with wind turbines. The negative impact of these wind turbines on the landscape has been amplified with the construction of turbines over 100m high. This results in a high visual impact as the turbines fail to blend in with the surrounding environment.

Centrally located, Rigged Hill is a prominent peak within the Roe Valley. With the revised wind turbine height of 137metres, the wind farm will be highly visualised to a large population of residents. The accumulative impact of the new Rigged Hill windfarm along with other wind farms/ turbines, will have a high negative impact on the scenic landscape of the Roe Valley. An accumulative impact study needs to be undertaken. Planning at Causeway seems to overlook the overall impact of these windfarms and instead assesses each application individually.

- 3) Visual Impact outside of the Roe Valley.

Due to the hugely increased height of the proposed turbines from the existing ones; visual impact must also be applied to further afield, i.e. the Bann Valley and Inishowen. Furthermore, residents of these areas should be consulted before a planning decision is made.

4) Lack of public consultation:

Despite the area of the Rigged Hill Windfarm expanding, there has been no public consultation within the village of Drumsurn. With such a large visually impacting development; residents of the community located closest should be consulted and be allowed to make an informed decision.

5) Social- Economic Impact:

Despite the Roe Valley arguably doing more than its fair share of renewable energy production, there has been little to no beneficial social-economic impacts for the vast majority of local residents. Electricity prices are continuing to increase. With the high visual impact of Rigged Hill to the Roe Valley, tourism can be negatively impacted as tourism companies will not advertise the scenic beauty of the local area and tourists can be disenfranchised to return. Additionally, The North Sperrin's Way (Ulster Way Walking Route) traverses very close to the proposed development.

6) Environmental Impact:

As a local resident, I am concerned that the local habitats of Rigged Hill and the adjoining Donald's Hill, will be negatively impacted with the construction of 137metre high wind turbines. There needs to be a study into the accumulative impact of all the wind farms/ turbines in the Roe Valley impacting on bat, insect and bird species including migratory birds.

The lack of an independent Environmental Agency in Northern Ireland is concerning. The company that is carrying out the environment studies for this development is an agent, working on behalf of the windfarm company. Therefore, how can a reader be convinced that the environmental information is not bias towards the windfarm company?

7) Red lights at night:

Due to the height of the wind turbines, public bodies such as the Ministry of Defence have recommended red flashing lights at night, i.e. 'In the interests of air safety, the MOD requests that the structures are fitted with aviation warning lighting. The perimeter turbines should be fitted with a minimum intensity 25 candela omni directional red flashing light or equivalent infra-red light fitted at the highest practicable point of the structure.' (Planning Application Documents).

If passed, there is a possibility that the new windfarm will not only be visualised during the day but at night also. Light pollution will be an issue in this rural area were people value and appreciate the dark skies. Additionally, an investigation into the negative impact to bat, bird and insect species is essential.

8) Viability of Wind Farms in Northern Ireland:

https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/northern-ireland-wind-farmers-paid-1m-to-stop-generating-electricity-since-2018-39377481.html?fbclid=IwAR1UOW_Y8EFpXB_831qt8RMymf0zldCAo26TLqDw6qoidFTty8Hd33Uluj8

According to the attached article, "Wind farm owners in Northern Ireland were paid £1m to switch off their turbines and stop generating electricity in a 20-month period." "The money was for "constraint payments" to reduce output and discard surplus energy."

This article raises the issue of how economically viable the wind farm proposal on Rigged Hill is to the economy of Northern Ireland and the financial well-being of the people who live here. Not only are electricity prices increasing; taxpayers' money is being used to pay windfarm owners to turn off their wind turbines.

Yours Sincerely,

Lonan Thomas McLaughlin