

12 TOURISM, RECREATION AND SOCIOECONOMICS

12.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) evaluates the effects associated with the proposed Spicer Hill Wind Farm ('the Development') on the tourism, recreation and socioeconomic resource. This chapter firstly examines the effect of the proposed development on the local economy of Barnsley, secondly it considers the effects on local tourist attractions and recreation facilities (excluding landscape and visual effects which are considered in Chapter 5: *Landscape and Visual Assessment*).

This chapter contains the following sections:

- Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria – describing the methods used in baseline surveys and in the assessment of the significance of effects;
- Baseline Description – a description of the tourism, recreation and socioeconomic resource of the development site and the surrounding area based on the result of a desk-based assessment;
- Potential Effects – identifying ways in which tourism, recreation and socioeconomics could be affected by the development;
- Mitigation Measures – to enhance any beneficial effects and minimise any adverse effects;
- Residual Effects – an assessment of effects following mitigation;
- Cumulative Effects – an assessment of effects of the Development in conjunction with other proposed developments;
- Summary of Effects; and
- Statement of Significance.

12.2 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY AND SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

12.2.1 Policy and Guidance

The following documents have been considered in relation to the assessment of the potential impacts of the Development on tourism, recreation and socioeconomics:

- Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment (2004) Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment¹; and
- A Handbook for Environmental Impact Assessment (2005) Scottish Natural Heritage².

Relevant planning policy is set out in Chapter 4: *Planning Policy* of this ES.

12.2.2 Data Sources

Baseline conditions have been established through desktop studies, consultation and review of information on tourist attractions. A number of different sources and materials have been referenced, including the following:

- National Statistics online (www.statistics.gov.uk);
- NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics (www.nomisweb.co.uk);
- Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (www.barnsley.gov.uk);
- Penistone Community Website (www.penistone.uk.com);

¹ Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment (2004) Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment - <http://www.ieem.org.uk/ecia/introduction.html>

² A Handbook for Environmental Impact Assessment (2005) Scottish Natural Heritage - <http://www.snh.org.uk/publications/online/heritagemanagement/EIA/>

- Peak District National Park (www.peakdistrict.org);
- The Trans-Pennine Trail (www.transpenninetrail.org.uk); and
- Visit Penistone (<http://www.visitpenistone.co.uk>).

Information concerning the public's perception of wind farms has been gathered from all parts of the United Kingdom.

12.2.3 Consultation

As part of the Scoping process, the relevant organisations were contacted with regard to the proposal. Table 12.1 outlines the responses received.

Table 12.1 Consultation responses

Consultation	Response
British Horse Society	There is a public bridleway which is situated approximately 700m from the closest wind turbine from Whitley Road to Middle Cliff. It was recommended that a 200m buffer from the bridleway should be maintained in accordance with the Companion Guidance to PPS22.
National Trust	The National Trust was consulted and, due to proximity of the Development to the Peak District National Park, recommended three view points from the popular routes in the National Park. These view points are further considered in the Landscape and Visual Assessment (Chapter 5).
Natural England	The EIA should discuss any possible impacts on the rights of way. It should also consider opportunities for increasing access linkages both within the site and with the surrounding countryside.

12.2.4 Significance Criteria

The scale of significance described below has been used to assess the potential and residual effects of the Development against baseline conditions. The assessment process aims to be objective and quantifies effects as far as possible; however some effects can only be evaluated on a qualitative basis.

Effects associated with the construction phase of the wind farm are considered to be temporary and short term effects. Effects associated with the operation phase of the wind farm are classified as long-term effects.

Effects are defined as:

- Positive: effects that provide an advantageous or beneficial effect to an environmental resource or receptor, the significance of which may be "not significant" or "significant";
- Negligible: effects that provide an imperceptible effect to an environmental resource or receptor; and
- Negative: effects that provide a disadvantageous or adverse effect to an environmental resource or receptor, the significance of which may be "not significant" or "significant".

In terms of socioeconomic factors, potential effects would be significant if the Development resulted in any fundamental or material changes in population, structure of the local community, and local economic activity during the different construction, operation or decommissioning phases.

In respect of the tourism and recreation resource and, in the absence of more local guidance, the methodology of assessment of potential effects was taken broadly following the Scottish National Heritage (SNH) "*Guide to Outdoor Access Assessment*". Significant potential effects are those where the Development would lead to permanent or significant impacts on facilities. These effects also include where the proposal would affect recreational resources that have more than local use or importance.

The potential indirect effect of the proposal on tourism and recreation is closely related to public attitudes towards wind turbines in the landscape and a number of studies have been conducted in relation to this matter. The relevant conclusions from the most recent studies are discussed later in this chapter.

The physical effects of the wind farm on existing land use are assessed by considering the possible effect of the wind farm on the current land use of the site. Significant effects would be those which resulted in a fundamental change in the predominant land use of the site.

12.3 BASELINE DESCRIPTION

12.3.1 Recreation and Tourism

The Spicer Hill site lies predominantly within an agricultural area that is approximately 1.8 km to the east of the Peak District National Park. Tourism and recreation resources are highlighted Figure 12.1.

There are two particularly well-known tourist attractions within the vicinity of the site. These are the aforementioned Peak District National Park, and the Trans-Pennine Trail. The Peak District is located approximately 1.5 km to the south west of the site, and the Trail is located approximately 1.5 km directly south of the southern site boundary.

The Peak District National Park attracts over 19 million day visits each year³ and generates in the region of £75 million for the local economy, based on the most up to date publicly available information⁴. According to the Peak District National Park Visitor Survey, Heart of England Tourist Board (1998), 51% of visitors said they visited the National Park for the scenery and landscape. The National Park also attracts large numbers of visitors for the range of activities available which includes climbing, caving, walking and cycling.

The Trans-Pennine trail first opened in 1989 and is a long distance route for walkers, cyclists and horse riders that runs for 555 km from the coast at the Irish Sea, through Lancashire and Yorkshire, to the coast of the North Sea. This is illustrated in Figure 5.11. The section running through the borough of Barnsley is also National Cycle Route No. 62 and this attracted 1 million people in 2007⁵. One of the sections of the trail that runs through the Peak District National Park to Penistone is 2km to the south of the site.

There are two long distance walking routes in the vicinity of the site. Barnsley Boundary walk⁶ is a long distance walk that passes close to the proposed wind farm. It is a 117 km

³ Peak District National Park Profile, Best Value Performance Plan 2007-08, Annex 1, p46

⁴ <http://www.peakdistrict-nationalpark.info/studyArea/factsheets/02.html>

⁵ BBC news article http://www.bbc.co.uk/southyorkshire/content/articles/2005/06/09/trans_pennine_trail_feature.shtml

⁶ Long Distance Walkers Association http://www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show_publication.php?publication_id=2969

route that roughly follows the boundary of the Metropolitan Borough of Barnsley, and the section from Langsett to Ingbirchworth comes within 50m of the northern edge of the Development site. The other walk is Penistone Boundary Walk. It is a circular trail that runs from 25km around the boundary of Penistone and is approximately 800 m from the closest turbine.

There are several well-known local historic attractions around the area; a selection of which are listed below:

- Cannon Hall, built in 1760's is now converted to a museum and has 70 acres of parkland and historic walled garden that attracts large numbers of visitors all around the year. The gardens of the museum are officially registered gardens. The attraction lies 7 km to the north east of the site boundary;
- The award winning Elsecar Heritage Centre is a History and Craft centre that is located within the conservation village of Elsecar. The visitors can explore the former ironworks and colliery workshops of Earls Fitzwilliam and attractive restored buildings and monuments. The Heritage Centre is part of the Trans-Pennine Trail. It is approximately 19km to the south east of the site boundary; and
- Wentworth Castle Gardens and Parkland feature 26 listed buildings and monuments that are popular with visitors because of the scenic views. It is considered as one of the most important historic gardens in the North of England⁷.

Horse riding is a popular recreational activity in the area, with a number of private stables close to the site. There are two public bridleways (see figure 12.1) approximately 0.8 km and 1.6 km from the closest turbine respectively. The British Horse Society has confirmed that a number of minor roads around the site are also utilised by riders. In addition, the Trans-Pennine Trail is used as a National Long Distance Bridleway. It is worth noting that these are bridleways are used even with Royd Moor wind farm being operational since 1993.

There are three reservoirs; Scout Dike, Ingbirchworth and Royd Moor which are within 1.5 km of the Development site. Bird watching and fishing are popular recreational activities at these reservoirs. There are also two designated circular routes constructed by Yorkshire Water⁸ for walking; cycling and horse riding around Ingbirchworth Reservoir (2 km in length) and Royd Moor (6 km in length).

The operational Royd Moor Wind Farm is considered to be an attraction for walkers on the Royd Moor reservoir walking route. "The windy tops of the moor present the ideal setting for a wind farm which can be observed from Spicer House Lane"⁹. Regular users of the public bridleways and minor roads are familiar with turbines due to the existing wind farm.

12.3.2 Socioeconomics

The population of the Borough of Barnsley increased from 218,100 in 2001 to 222,100 in 2005. This was an increase of 1.8% over the 5 year period, compared to an increase of 1.9% for England as a whole. According to the 2001-2005 mid-year estimate, there has been a decrease in 0-9 year olds (-5%) and 25-34 year olds (-14%), but all other age groups have seen an increase in numbers.

The Development site is situated in the Penistone West Ward which is more rural in character than other parts of the borough. According to 2005 mid-year estimates, Penistone West Ward had a population of 10,525 in 2005, and its population density was 1.31 persons per hectare compared to 6.63 across the Borough of Barnsley, and 3.4 in England and Wales as a whole.

⁷Garden Trust <http://www.gardenstrusts.org.uk/new/EVENTS/Wentworth%20Castle%20Flyer.htm>

⁸Yorkshire Water Website <http://www.yorkshirewater.com/?OBH=522&ID=3544>

⁹Yorkshire Water website, www.yorkshirewater.com/recreation/?OBH=3750&ID=147

There is a relatively high percentage of working age population in Barnsley (16-64 years old for males, 16-59 for women). Approximately 61.6% of the total population are of working age. The NOMIS official labour market statistics from the period of July 2007 to June 2008 indicate that there were 107,500 economically active people in Barnsley and of these 100,900 were in employment. The unemployment rate for Barnsley stood at 5.9% for the same period, slightly above the British average of 5.2%.

According to the 2005 mid-year estimate, the average gross weekly wage in Barnsley in 2007 was £408.50, which is lower than the national average of £458.60.

12.3.3 Public Attitudes towards Wind Farms

In the United Kingdom there have been numerous surveys to assess the public's attitudes to wind farms. This section examines a number of these studies in chronological order, as a means of predicting the public's response to the Development.

A survey conducted by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) in September and October 2001, in which 1000 adults were canvassed, revealed that only 3% of the respondents are opposed to building onshore wind farms in the UK over the next ten years¹⁰. This poll revealed that 68% of the respondents are opposed to building new nuclear power stations and 82% opposed their construction within three miles of their homes.

A MORI poll was commissioned by the Scottish Renewables Forum and the British Wind Energy Association in 2002 to determine public attitudes towards wind farms in Argyll, which has the highest concentration of such developments in Scotland. The survey, which was based on detailed interviews with some 300 visitors over two September weekends, found that over 90% of visitors would return to Scotland for a holiday whether or not there were wind farms in the area. Of those which had actually seen wind farms whilst on holiday only 8% had come away with a negative impression. Eight out of ten said that they would go to a wind farm visitor or information centre during their stay¹¹. The conclusions that may be drawn from the research are that there is no evidence that wind farms detract from the tourist experience of an area.

A MORI survey commissioned in 2003 by the Scottish Executive which examined the views of locals living within 20 km of Scotland's ten largest wind farms¹² revealed that:

- 20% of the residents felt that their local wind farm has a broadly positive effect on the area, compared to just 7% who said it was negative, while 73% felt it had neither a positive nor negative effect, or expressed no opinion; and
- When asked what the shortcoming of the area in which they lived, respondents most commonly mentioned lack of amenities (20%) and poor public transport (18%), whilst only 0.3% of people specifically mentioned wind farms as a negative aspect of their area.

The 2003 study also found that people living closest to wind farms tend to be more positive about them (44% of those living 5 km away say that a wind farm has had a positive effect compared to 16% of those living 10-20 km away). People living closest to wind farms are also more supportive of expansion of the sites (65% of those within the 5 km zone support 50% expansion compared with 53% of those in the 10-20 km zone). The same study also found that before construction 27% of people surveyed thought that adverse landscape impacts might occur as a result of wind farm development. Following construction only 12% indicated that the landscape had been spoiled.

¹⁰ BRMB for RSPB Market Research (2001) RSPB Market Research Project 0136: the Public's views on energy issues

¹¹ MORI Scotland, "Tourist Attitudes towards Wind Farms", 2002. Sample: 207 Tourists.

¹² Scottish Executive, MORI, "Public Attitudes to Wind Farms: A survey of Local Residents in Scotland", 2003. Sample: 1,800 residents.

In July 2003, a poll of 2,500 participants found that 74% were in favour of the Government's ambition to generate 20% of the UK's electricity from renewable power sources by 2020 and of increasing the use of wind power throughout the UK¹³

In July 2006 the Wind Tracker survey of public opinion to wind energy in Great Britain¹⁴ showed that:

- 76% of people agreed wind farms are necessary to help us meet current and future energy needs;
- 52% disagreed that wind farms are ugly or would be a blot on the landscape, with 21% having no strong view;
- 60% of people think that appearance is unimportant because wind farms are necessary; and
- 56% said they would be happy to have a wind farm in their local area with 21% having no strong view.

In March 2007 Allegra Strategies undertook a comprehensive study into UK consumer views on Energy Efficiency and Alternative Energy Sources. Key findings in relation to wind energy were as follows:

- Renewable energy sources featured highly when consumers were asked which source of energy would be best for society. Most popular was wind power cited by 19.9% of consumers, second was solar at 17.9%, third most popular was nuclear at 10.5%;
- Wind power was believed to be the best energy source for society because there is plenty of wind in the UK. Wind is considered to be a clean and natural source of energy, better for the environment. It is also deemed to not run out like fossil fuels and is cost efficient in the long-term;
- Consumers perceived that wind farms as a good solution to benefit the environment. 18% thought wind farms were aesthetically pleasing versus 6.4% who viewed wind farms as an eyesore. For a number of respondents the benefits of wind energy outweighed the visual impact and respondents were unsympathetic about other consumers complaints regarding the visual impact of wind farms;
- Many consumers believed wind turbines should be used more widely to produce clean energy and they generally responded positively to wind turbines in their local area;
- 70.1% of respondents stated that they would be happy to have a wind farm located close by, compared with 17.3% who would not;
- 85.9% of respondents who had wind turbines in their local area expressed positive feedback. Only 5.3% were opposed;
- Many of the respondents in Northern England (46.1%) would prefer their electricity to be derived from large scale renewables; and
- Most energy consumers in the UK (47.8%) favoured large-scale renewable, such as wind energy, as their most preferred source.

Overall, sixty separate surveys have been conducted over a 15 year period and results have shown:

- Consistently high levels of support for the development of wind farms, both in principle and also in practice, amongst residents living near a wind farm;
- Direct experience provokes a more positive attitude;
- Closer proximity results in a higher level of support; and
- Results of "before and after" surveys have shown a shift in attitudes towards positive and the fears of potential adverse effects are unfounded¹⁵.

¹³ Conducted by leading independent research company GFK NOP and governed by MRS Codes of Conduct. BWEA Press Release July 2003 <http://www.bwea.com/media/news/round2.html>

¹⁴ BWEA Press Release 22nd August 2006 <http://www.bwea.com/media/news/060822.html>

¹⁵ BWEA Briefing sheet: Public Attitudes to Wind Energy in the UK, November 2004.

12.3.4 Land Use

The Development site is currently in agricultural use as rough grassland and improved pasture, which is predominantly used for sheep grazing. The Penistone Ward and neighbouring areas is a mixed urban and agricultural area with the Spicer Hill site situated in an area of poor agricultural quality land – Grade 4¹⁶.

The Barnsley Boundary Walk footpath and the permitted routes around the Ingbirchworth and Royd Moor reservoirs (part of Yorkshire Water walks) are in close proximity to the site boundary; both are to the north east of the site at approximately 400 m from the closest turbine.

Whitley Road runs along the south-western part of the application boundary which will form the vehicular access point to the site, as shown in Figure 3.5, and Spicer House Lane that runs along the eastern part of the application boundary.

12.3.5 Information Gaps

No information gaps have been identified within the assessment.

12.4 Assessment of Potential Effects

12.4.1 Recreational and Tourism Effects

Potential tourism and recreational effects of the Development are categorised as either:

- Direct physical effects: for example construction activities interfering with rights of access; or
- Indirect effects: such as the effects of noise and changes in view on tourists and recreational land users.

12.4.1.1 Construction

The public rights of way (as shown on Figure 12.1) in the vicinity of the site will not be required to be closed or diverted during the construction phase of the development. However, when construction is due to commence, notices will be put up together with details of any areas with restricted access for health and safety reasons.

Also during the construction phase, there may be indirect intermittent effects on noise levels and air quality of the public rights of way. These will be minimised through the use of best practice guidance.

A detailed assessment of the visual impact of the wind farm on the surrounding scenic areas has been carried out in Chapter 5: *Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* of this ES.

12.4.1.2 Operation

There are a number of public rights of way (as shown on Figure 12.1) in the vicinity of the site. The Public Rights of Way Officer for BMBC has stated that a wind farm would not be a cause for concern, and that any disruption to walking, cycling and horse riding in the area surrounding the site would be minimal.

This is borne out by experience elsewhere throughout the UK, and indeed at the existing Royd Moor Wind Farm where public access around the site continues as it had before.

¹⁶ www.magic.gov.uk

Surveys of public attitudes to wind farms provide no clear evidence that the presence of wind farms in an area has any adverse impact on local tourism. In fact, the Royd Moor wind farm (situated directly adjacent to the proposed site) is a tourist attraction for walkers, cyclists that use the public bridleways, minor roads and designated walking routes in the area.

Renewable Energy now forms part of the National Curriculum in England, and the Development could be made accessible for organised visits with local education facilities, such as schools or colleges. Those who wish to visit the site would be able to do so by contacting the Developer.

With reference to the assessment outlined above, the Development would be no significant effects on any recreational or tourist resource.

12.4.1.3 De-commissioning

Decommissioning effects will be similar to construction effects as described above. The wind farm is a temporary feature, which after its 25 year operational life would be removed and the Development site restored. No significant effects are predicted.

12.4.2 Socioeconomic Effects

The Development will result in contract opportunities for local and regional contractors, both for construction activities and throughout the supply chain. The investment in this project has the potential to generate a range of economic and social effects and opportunities for local businesses, most notably employment opportunities and local spending.

Social and economic effects can be divided into:

- Direct effects: for example employment opportunities in the construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of the wind farm;
- Indirect effects: such as employment opportunities created down the supply chain by those companies providing services to the development during construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning; and
- Induced effects: for instance employment created by the additional spend of wages into the local economy and the purchasing of basic materials, equipment and office space for staff.

12.4.2.1 Construction

The Development will place significant contracts for services and materials during construction and local sourcing will be preferred wherever possible. In the region of ten full time equivalent short-term construction jobs would be created during the six month construction period.

Manufacture of the turbines will be by an established, specialist manufacturer. Local sourcing of equipment and the turbines themselves is preferred when possible, but it is constrained to some extent by the specialist nature of the equipment.

Example of direct opportunities for local contractors would include:

- Haulage;
- Turbine base and access track construction;
- The supply of building materials (*e.g.* fencing, concrete, cement, stone, etc.); and
- Mechanical, electrical and supervisory series.

All stone and ready mixed cement used for the construction of the site would be sourced from nearby local quarries, providing an additional, indirect economic benefit to the area.

Construction workers not living locally would reside in local accommodation during the construction period providing an economic opportunity for local accommodation and other local services.

Overall, construction of the wind farm would not result in any fundamental or long term changes in population, structure of the local community, local services or employment, but would bring about a moderate, short term, temporary beneficial effect through increases in employment and business opportunities.

12.4.2.2 Operation

Once the site is fully operational, one full-time equivalent maintenance job would be created. This would be a skilled engineering position, living within a call out distance of the site. Also, periodic maintenance would be required from a specialist maintenance team. The developer is also committed to maximising opportunities for local companies during the operation of the wind farm.

A community fund to support sustainable/ environmental projects will be set up throughout the operational life of the wind farm. The vehicle for administering this community fund will be established and agreed with BMBC and relevant Parish and/or Town Councils. This vehicle will help to determine the scope of projects to be funded and a mechanism for granting awards.

12.4.2.3 De-commissioning

Employment opportunities would also arise during the de-commissioning process. De-commissioning effects are anticipated to be of a similar nature and scale to that of the construction effects, with employment opportunities arising during this process.

12.4.3 Land Use

12.4.3.1 Construction

The total area within the planning application is 28.39 ha. It is estimated that the total land take of the wind farm made up of turbine foundations, access tracks, compound, extension to control building and hard-standings would be approximately 1.42 ha or 5% of the total planning application area, and less than the total study area. However, some of these areas such as the construction compound will be reinstated following construction whilst turbine foundations and crane pads would be covered with subsoil and topsoil and allowed to naturally re-vegetate.

The land is currently used for grazing and it will be necessary to ensure the safety of livestock during construction, through restricting access to either part or all of the site for parts of the 10 month construction period. This would be a minor negative effect and would be considered as a limited loss of grazing/agricultural land.

12.4.3.2 Operation

The only land that will be directly affected by the Development would be the land used for turbines, access tracks, control building, compound and hard-standings. No other land within the Development site would be affected during operation.

The majority of the Development site consists of poor arable and improved grazing fields which have little socio-economic value. The land and its associated revenue will increase in

value as a result of the presence of operational wind turbines, which represents a non-significant beneficial effect to the local economy.

12.4.3.3 De-commissioning

The proposal is a temporary feature which after its 25 year operational life would be removed and the Development site restored. The access tracks would be retained for use in land management following de-commissioning. Following de-commissioning, the land would be capable of supporting the same uses as presently, and hence no effects are identified.

12.5 MITIGATION

There are no significant adverse effects predicted during the lifetime of the Development. Therefore, no mitigation is proposed.

12.6 RESIDUAL EFFECTS

As a consequence of there being no requirement for mitigation the significance of residual effects is as described above.

12.7 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

Cumulative visual effects of the Development and neighbouring wind farms on outdoor recreational facilities such as rights of way are assessed in Chapter 5: *Landscape and Visual Impact* of this ES. No further, potentially significant, cumulative effects are anticipated.

12.8 SUMMARY OF EFFECTS

Table 12.2 provides a summary of the effects identified in this chapter.

Table 12.2 Summary of Effects

	Socio-economic effects	Tourism and Recreation Effects	Land Use Effects
Construction	1) Opportunities for local contractors. 2) Stone and cement sourced locally. 3) Approx. 10 Full Time Equivalent construction jobs.	1) Minor impact during the construction months to the existing bridleways and public rights of way near to the site.	1) Limited loss of improved and semi-improved grassland
Operation	1) One full time maintenance job. 2) Community fund	1) Wind farm can be utilised for pre-arranged educational visits. 2) No significant effect on tourism and recreation facilities.	1) Grazing activities unaffected. 2) Land value and revenue increased
Decommissioning	1) Employment and Contracting opportunities.	1) Minor impact on the recreation facilities during decommissioning of the wind farm.	1) Turbines removed and infrastructural areas of site restored to use as farm land.

12.9 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Development would not result in any fundamental, long-term or material changes in the population, structure of the local services or long term employment. However, there would be a minor, short term economic benefit due to the creation of jobs and through tendering opportunities for local and regional companies directly for construction and through the supply chain. Socioeconomic effects would occur at a local and regional level and are deemed to be minor, short-term and not significant in terms of the EIA regulations.

Effects on tourism and recreation are dependent upon the attitude of the viewer. Studies undertaken by a range of professional bodies have shown that the majority of the public are in favour of generating energy from renewable sources and although local people can be concerned about wind farm proposals in their area, these fears are generally allayed when the wind farm becomes operational.

The loss of improved and semi-improved grassland and arable land is assessed as negligible and *not significant* in the context of the similar available land locally.

