

## **NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK AND COUNTY**

### **JOINT LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**

#### **Statement on the Proliferation of Wind Turbines in Northumberland**

The Joint Local Access Forum has observed a gradual encroachment of wind turbines across the remote landscapes of Northumberland. Already a great deal of our best loved countryside has been affected and it is difficult to walk or ride in much of the county without sight of wind turbines or whole wind farms, many in excess of 100 metres tip height. Even a single wind turbine positioned in an otherwise quiet unspoilt part of the county has the potential to change and devalue the landscape and our enjoyment of it.

The JLAF appreciates that the current government has introduced 'green targets' and promotion of onshore wind turbines is a large part of their green policy. Significant incentives are available for wind farm developers or operators and our county is known to have large areas of open upland, blessed with reliably strong winds. Planning permission has to be sought from Northumberland County Council but if, an application is refused, it may be reconsidered on appeal to the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol.

Significant further developments are currently under consideration in north Northumberland. They are in unspoilt countryside accessed by longstanding Rights of Way and overlooked by elevated areas of access land commanding unparalleled views of the Northumberland Coast and Holy Island on one side and the Cheviot Hills on the other. If approved, the wind turbines (which will be noticeably higher than the adjacent hills) will dominate the splendid views of our Northumberland coast.

Government wind energy policy could be more suitably met by encouraging development on industrial and brown field sites with limited potential for public access. Offshore wind turbine development should be encouraged too. Such alternatives would preserve the upland countryside and wilderness feel of northern Northumberland and the National Park.

Whilst acknowledging the aims of the current government's green policy, the spread of onshore wind turbines in the county potentially affects our access to the countryside and also our enjoyment of it. It also has an adverse impact upon our tourism industry since the great majority of visitors come to the county for its countryside and wilderness appeal.

The Northumberland and National Park Joint Local Access Forum appeal to national and local government to rein back on the development of wind farms which potentially devalue the county's outstanding landscape and our public access and enjoyment thereof.

*Approved by the Joint Local Access Forum – August 2014*