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65 turbines planned for moorland owned by Boundary Mill boss

by

ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT BURNLEY COLNE LANCASHIRE TRAWDEN



The windfarm projection next to an image of the moors and Boundary Mill, inset (Image: Archive/Calderdale Council)



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Chief Reporter

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27 Comments

Dozens of wind turbines could be built on a culturally and ecologically valuable moorland estate which is owned by an East Lancashire...



If approved, it would be the biggest onshore wind farm in England with 65 turbines spread across an area the size of 3,300 **football** p
The next nearest in size is Scout Moor in the South Pennines, which has 26 turbines, and Little Cheyne Court in Kent, which also has 26 turbines.



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The largest onshore wind farm in the UK is situated near Glasgow, and contains 215 wind turbines.

Developer, Calderdale Wind Farm Ltd, submitted a scoping report to Calderdale Council in September seeking to build 65 wind turbines what is known as 'Bronte Country', specifically on the Walshaw Moor Estate near Hebden Bridge.

The land, which is used for grouse shooting and livestock grazing, also borders some parts of East Lancashire, in particular Trawden, and parts of **Burnley**.

The plans would seek to end grouse shooting on the site.

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The moorland estate is owned by Colne's Boundary Mill entrepreneur Richard Bannister, and his wife Janine, and sits at Heptonstall, cl a farmhouse which is associated with the Bronte sisters.

The Bronte sisters were famous for their poetry and novels, often inspired by the wild moorlands next to their home in Haworth, in-bc Colne and Bradford.

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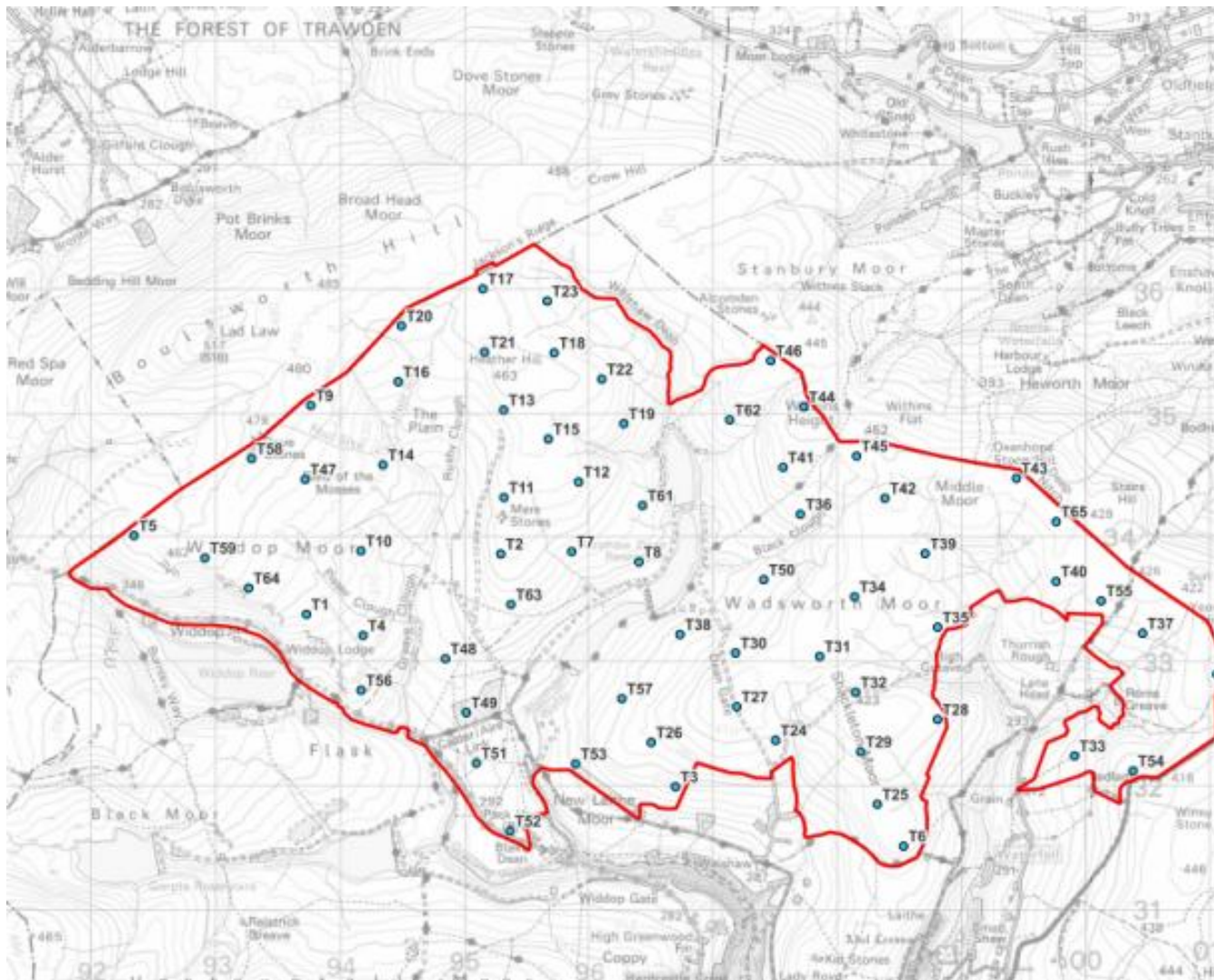
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The site where the turbines are planned includes a farmhouse and tree believed to have inspired Wuthering Heights, and the moors a popular with fans of the authors and walkers alike.



A location plan of the proposed site (Image: Calderdale Council)

The scoping report, which carried out consultations with and garnered comments from a number of stakeholders, including Burnley (Pendle Council, Bradford Council, Natural England, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, and the RSPB, was accepted by Calderdale Council in Dec



Before any planning approval or development can take place however, a full planning application must be submitted to Calderdale Co addressing a number of grave concerns and issues raised during the consultation period, which include loss of wildlife habitat and ne impacts on carbon stores beneath the moors.

Documents submitted alongside the scoping report state: "The site is located within the Walshaw Moor Estate, close to the northern boundary of Calderdale with Bradford, and would measure around 2,352 hectares [around 3,000 football fields].

"The site lies within the nationally designated South Pennines Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and within the international designated South Pennine Moors Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and South Pennine Moors Phase 2 Special Protection Area (SPA)

"The site also lies in a number of other national and local designations including green belt, special landscape areas, and the wildlife networks.

"The lifespan of the proposal would be at least 25 to 30 years after which time the project would be decommissioned."

Many concerns, including from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and the Lancashire Wildlife Trust have been raised.



A projection image of the proposed site (Image: Calderdale Council)

The RSPB said: "The proposal to develop a wind farm on Walshaw Moor is highly inappropriate, given the sensitivity of this location, w important peatland habitat, significant wildlife interest and protected wildlife sites.

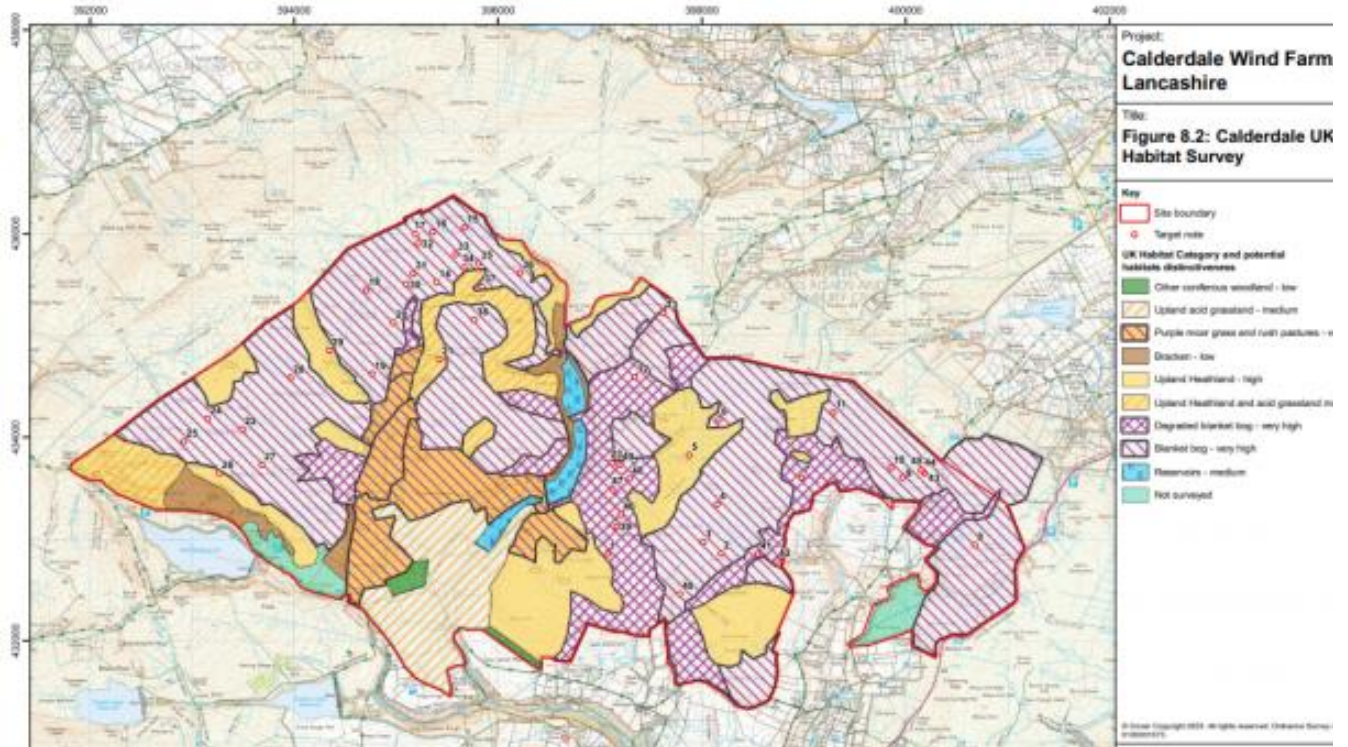
"Based on the information available to us at this time, we have significant concerns about a wind farm in this location."

A spokesperson for Lancashire Wildlife Trust stated: "I do not believe that there are wholly exceptional reasons for a windfarm to be located on the specified site, as opposed to another area of moorland that does not have the same statutory designations, priority habitats and species, and areas of deep peat (40cm or more)



"Whilst the application is to determine whether the scoping for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is suitable, the appropriateness of the site chosen for the development must be considered, and the Lancashire Wildlife Trust would object to a development of this size which would have negative impacts on statutory sites, priority habitats, priority species, and carbon stores.

"The Lancashire Wildlife Trust would also like to backup and support the comments submitted by the RSPB, and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust which reflect and share many of its concerns about the proposal."



A habitat survey of the area (Image: Calderdale Council)

Ban the Burn, a voluntary blanket bog protection group based in the Upper Calder Valley also objected, stating: "We are in favour of onshore as well as offshore wind energy, but Walshaw Moor Estate is not an appropriate site for the huge, proposed Wind Farm.

"Walshaw Moor is one of the rare areas of upland blanket bog in the UK and should be protected as a vital carbon sink on a par with tropical rainforest.

"But the habitat survey for the scoping report shows that most of the proposed turbines would be built on blanket bog or degraded blanket bog."

While Bradford Council said it would need to see documents related to habitat mitigation and compensation for the loss of irreplaceable blanket bog habitat within the site, and also raised concerns that the overall impacts on the visual landscape might be, "more significant than what is being indicated and we seek to ensure this is robustly addressed".

The director of Calderdale Wind Farm Ltd is Dr Ghazi Mohammed Ahmed Osman, a Sudanese national who currently resides in Saudi Arabia and has a correspondence address listed on Companies House as the Port of Blyth, South Harbour, Blyth, Northumberland.