

Environment



Great Edge above Widdop Reservoir - one of the moorland areas which could be affected by the turbine plan.

Proposed wind farm could be the biggest yet

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Local Democracy Reporter
@HXCounter

Turbines taller than Blackpool Tower would dominate Calderdale's special moorland if a proposed windfarm goes ahead, claim campaigners. In September, Calderdale Wind Farm Ltd - in conjunction with renewable energy investors WWRE - announced it is exploring options to build a 65-turbine windfarm on more than 2,300 hectares of land at Walshaw Moor, above Hebdon Bridge.

But a campaign group against the proposals - Save Walshaw Moor - argues the "industrial" development would be environmentally damaging.

The group reports 130 people packing a public meeting at Wadsworth Com-

munity Centre to discuss impacts the wind farm might have on the landscape and wildlife of the upper Calder Valley and voice their objections to the scheme.

Walshaw Moor's siting within the South Pennine Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest has led local conservationists Upper Calderdale Wildlife Network to call it the "jewel in the crown" of Calderdale's wildlife sites, say campaigners.

The company's proposals would threaten this, they allege, with turbines potentially up to 200 metres high - 40 metres taller than Blackpool Tower - scattering over nine square miles of ecologically-sensitive moorland.

The turbines would dominate Walshaw Dean, Wadsworth Moor and Widdop Moor, intrude on the renowned National Trust estate of Hardcastle Crag,

loom over the "beautiful unspoilt valley" of Crimsworth Dean, be visible from Todmorden landmark Stoodley Pike and rear up on the horizon above Top Withens - the ruined farmstead said to have inspired Emily Brontë's classic novel Wuthering Heights - campaigners argue.

Presentations at the meeting also highlighted potential impact on the moorland habitat and blanket peat bogs.

And there were comments on potential impact of turbines of this size from Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Halifax Scientific Society, the RSPB and local walkers. These included impact on ground-nesting birds including curlews, lapwings and golden plovers.

Calderdale Wind Farm Ltd said the windfarm could be England's biggest if it progresses.

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