

Date: 18th March 2025



Dear Madam / Sir

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT)
(ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2011 - REQUEST FOR SCREENING OPINION
ONSHORE WIND FARM: LAND AT BRADSHAW LANE, LEEK ST13 7NN**

The Screening Opinion is requested in order to confirm whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) would be necessary for a planning application seeking planning permission for the development of an Onshore wind farm for the purposes of commercial electricity generation, at land at Bradshaw lane, Leek ST13 7NN. The following information is provided as part of this Screening Request, as set out in Regulation 5(2) of the EIA Regulations:

- (a) a plan sufficient to identify the land*
- (b) a brief description of the nature and purpose of the development and of its possible effects on the environment.*
- (c) such other information or representations as the person making the request may wish to provide or make.*

For the reasons set out below we consider that the proposed 49.9Mw wind farm is, on balance, unlikely to raise significant environmental impacts, either during construction or operation, and therefore an Environmental Impact Assessment should **NOT** be required.

Application Site and Surrounding Area

The sites belongs Padwick Farm and Bradshaw Farm wich currently used for agricultural purposes, primarily consisting of pastureland and arable farming on approximately 236 hectares. These fields have been in continuous agricultural use for many years, supporting livestock grazing and the cultivation of cereal and forage crops. The soil conditions vary across the sites, with a mix of soil textures and drainage characteristics that influence productivity. Soil wetness, influenced by regional climatic conditions and underlying drainage capacity, is a key factor affecting agricultural potential.

The proposed wind energy development will enable renewable energy generation while allowing for continued agricultural use. Practices such as sheep grazing will be integrated beneath and around the turbines, ensuring that the land remains productive. The project design will minimize soil disturbance, preserving long-term soil viability and enabling the land to be restored for agricultural purposes after decommissioning.

The sites consist of open fields with boundary hedgerows and scattered woodland features in the surrounding area. A Biodiversity Management Plan will be implemented to enhance local ecology, incorporating measures such as hedgerow reinforcement and wildflower planting. Existing vegetation will be retained wherever possible to maintain ecological connectivity. A full ecological survey will be conducted to identify any protected species, ensuring that appropriate mitigation measures are put in place

Possible Impacts

As required by the regulations, this screening request will now outline the potential impacts of the proposed wind farm, during both construction and operation:

- **Noise:** The noisiest aspect of construction will be the foundation works for the turbine bases, which could take several weeks. Noise impacts will be managed by restricting construction activity to the hours of 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday, and 8am to 1pm on Saturdays. During operation, modern wind turbines are designed to minimize noise emissions, and their impact on nearby receptors will be assessed as part of a noise impact assessment
- **Lighting:** There is no requirement for permanent lighting at the wind farm. Temporary lighting may be used during construction, but it will be directed to minimize spill. Any necessary aviation warning lights will be installed as per Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) guidance, but these are designed to minimize impact on local residents.
- **Traffic:** Construction is expected to take approximately 12 to 18 months, depending on weather conditions. The most significant traffic impact will be associated with the delivery of turbine components, which requires specialized transport. HGV deliveries will be scheduled to avoid peak traffic hours and will be managed through a Traffic Management Plan to minimize disruption to local roads.
- **Biodiversity:** The site is currently used for grazing, which typically results in low ecological value. Existing boundary vegetation will be retained, and additional planting may be implemented to mitigate visual and ecological impacts. A Biodiversity Management Plan will outline measures to protect local wildlife during construction and enhance habitat connectivity post-installation.

Following the temporary impacts associated with construction, the wind farm will have limited impacts on the environment:

- **Noise:** Modern wind turbines are designed to operate quietly. While they do produce some aerodynamic and mechanical noise, operational noise levels will be assessed to ensure compliance with national noise standards.
- **Traffic:** Once operational, the site will require only occasional visits from engineers and maintenance personnel for inspections and servicing. The level of traffic generated will be minimal and is not expected to exceed current levels experienced on local roads.
- **Socio Economic -** The wind farm will contribute to the district's renewable energy supply, generating electricity to power thousands of homes annually. The development will also provide economic benefits through local employment opportunities during the construction phase, as well as ongoing maintenance and operational support.
- **Waste & Pollutions:** the solar installation will be passive in nature, with no emissions or waste generation.

Proposed Development

The proposed development is for a wind farm, which will generate renewable green energy to be fed into the National Grid. The wind farm will comprise the following key elements:

- The installation of wind turbines, each mounted on a steel tower with a concrete foundation. The turbines will have a hub height and rotor diameter appropriate for the site conditions to optimize energy generation.



- The installation of transformers and switchgear to convert the turbine-generated electricity into a format suitable for distribution. A small substation will be constructed to facilitate connection to the local electricity grid.



- Wind farms typically do not require full perimeter fencing. Surveillance cameras and warning signage may be installed where necessary. The open landscape will allow for continued agricultural use, primarily through livestock grazing.

The development is fully reversible in the event that electricity generation should cease on the site.

EIA Regulations

The proposed development does not fall within Schedule 1 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, where an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is mandatory. However, it falls within Schedule 2, Part 3(i) as an “installation for the harnessing of wind power for energy production (wind farm).” The EIA screening threshold for wind farms applies where a site exceeds 0.5 hectares or involves two or more turbines, both of which apply to this development.

Under the EIA Regulations 2017, an EIA is only required if the proposal is likely to result in significant environmental effects due to its scale, location, or environmental sensitivity. The site consists of agricultural land with no landscape or nature conservation designation, and no statutory environmental constraints have been identified.

A formal EIA Screening Request is submitted along to this document to the Local Planning Authority to confirm whether an EIA is required for this development. Based on an initial assessment, it is anticipated that the proposal is unlikely to result in significant environmental effects requiring an EIA.

Planning Application

The following documents will be prepared to accompany a planning application:

- Planning and Sustainability Statement
- Noise impact assessment
- Design and Access Statement
- Landscape and Visual Assessment
- Archaeology and Heritage Assessment
- Ecology Phase 1 Habitat Survey
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Transport Statement
- Construction Management Plan
- Agricultural Land Classification Statement
- Site Selection Report
- Statement of Community Involvement

We would be grateful for an acknowledgement of formal receipt of this letter, together with notification of the expiry date of the statutory period and confirmation that the Screening Request has been placed on the Public Register in accordance with Regulation 20 (2).

We hope that we have provided you with sufficient information for you to make a screening opinion on the project. Should you require clarification on any issue or further details, please do not hesitate to contact me. Otherwise, I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours faithfully

Jose Manuel Fernandez
Planning Development Manager
OPDE UK Ltd

Enclosed: Location plan and Layout

