



Report to Mr Jonathan McLeod

**Proposed Matlock Moor Wind Farm:
Appraisal of Landscape and Visual Issues
*Final Report***

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Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Scope and Structure of the Report.....	1
1.2	Description of the Proposals.....	1
1.3	Description of the Site and Surrounding Area.....	2
1.4	Landscape and Amenity Interests Potentially Affected.....	2
2	The Site’s Sensitivity to Wind Energy Development.....	6
2.1	Approach to Assessing Sensitivity.....	6
2.2	Assessment of Sensitivity.....	6
2.3	Overall Sensitivity.....	8
3	Overview of Landscape and Visual Impacts.....	9
3.1	Visibility of the Proposed Development.....	9
3.2	Key Landscape and Visual Impacts.....	9
3.3	Comments on the ES.....	12
4	Conclusions.....	13
4.1	Key Issues.....	13
4.2	Recommendations for Further Work.....	13
	Annex 1: Curriculum Vitae.....	14
	Annex 2: Relevant Good Practice Guidance.....	18
	Annex 3: Key Terms and Definitions.....	19
	Annex 4: Criteria for Assessing Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Energy Development.....	21

1 Introduction

1.1 *Scope and Structure of the Report*

The purpose of this report is to review the recent planning application for wind farm development at Matlock Moor in Derbyshire and to provide an independent professional appraisal of the landscape and visual issues associated with this development¹. Work has included desk review of available documentation; a site visit; and preparation of a short report. Informal telephone discussions have also been held with planning and/or landscape staff at the Peak District National Park Authority, Derbyshire County Council and Derbyshire Dales District Council.

The report is structured as follows. The remainder of the first section provides background information, describing the proposals, the site and the surrounding area, and the landscape and amenity interests that would potentially be affected. The second section briefly assesses the site's sensitivity to wind energy development. The third section reviews the principal landscape and visual impacts that are likely to arise, and the way in which these have been addressed in the Environmental Statement (ES) provided by the applicant, Derbyshire Wind Energy Limited. The final section presents conclusions on key landscape and visual issues and their significance and recommends further work.

The approach that has been used in this appraisal is consistent with good practice guidance in landscape character assessment and landscape and visual impact assessment both generally and in relation to wind energy development specifically. The main sources of good practice guidance that are relevant for a development of this kind are listed in *Annex 2*, while *Annex 3* presents key terms and definitions.

1.2 *Description of the Proposals*

The proposed wind farm would be sited around 2.5km north-east of Matlock, partly in Derbyshire Dales District and partly in North East Derbyshire District. The Peak District National Park boundary lies to the north and west of the proposed development site. Development would comprise five wind turbines, with a maximum height to blade tip of 126m, as well as the formation of a new vehicular access, approximately 2.5km of new access track, turbine foundations each around 20m square, an underground electricity cable network, an 80m high permanent anemometry mast and an electricity substation approximately 8m by 6m and 5.5m high. The substation is expected to be connected to the grid via underground cabling although the grid connection would be the subject of a separate application under the Electricity Act 1989.

During the construction phase, the development would also require crane hardstandings approximately 25m wide by 45m long adjacent to each turbine, and a single temporary construction compound approximately 150m by 50m would be built for storage, parking and site offices. These areas would subsequently be reinstated.

¹ A short cv for the author is included at *Annex 1*.

1.3 Description of the Site and Surrounding Area

The site lies on a narrow ridge of moorland plateau, around 2.5km wide, north-east of the River Derwent near Matlock. The ridge trends north-west to south-east. Its south-western flanks, above Matlock, are generally steep, while its north-eastern flanks descend somewhat more gently towards the valley of the River Amber and tributaries. North-west and east of the proposed development site the moorland ridge is deeply incised by the small streams of Sydnop Brook and Bentley Brook respectively.

The topography of the ridge top is relatively flat and gently rounded, but the surrounding slopes have a more complex, undulating form. The maximum ground elevation in this area is 318m AOD at Wire Stone, just to the east of the proposed development site. The site itself lies at an elevation of around 270-310m AOD, while the valley floor at Matlock lies at around 95m AOD and the valley bottom to the north-east of the site lies at around 200m.

The moorland on which the wind farm is proposed to be sited is a southerly extension of a more extensive area of open moorland at East Moor to the north (within the Peak District National Park), where the land rises to 371m AOD. However as the ridge descends and narrows south of the National Park boundary, the moorland comprises smaller and more isolated blocks, separated by areas of enclosed moorland fringe pasture. In addition, several areas of former moorland have been planted as forestry, notably at Farley Moor west of the site and Bottom Moor to the east. Surrounding hill slopes are characterised by small, intricate and probably ancient field patterns, with strong hedgerows, hedgerow trees, and small woodlands on steeper ground.

The development site itself affords extensive views to the west and south, including views to the National Park landscapes west of Matlock. It also offers long views eastwards into the intimate valley landscapes around Uppertown, Kelstedge and Ashover. The surrounding forested areas are access land, and a public footpath across the centre of the site connects Matlock to a network of public footpaths in the area to the north of the ridge around Uppertown. There are a number of nearby recreational and tourist facilities, including walks on Forestry Commission land, Matlock Farm Park and Darwin Forest Country Park and Cottages.

The nearest settlements are Matlock to the south-west and the villages of Two Dales (around 2km to the west); Uppertown (just over 1km to the north-east); Kelstedge (around 2km to the east); and Ashover (around 3km to the east). Chesterfield city centre lies around 10km to the north-east.

1.4 Landscape and Amenity Interests Potentially Affected

1.4.1 Landscape character

In terms of landscape character the proposed development site lies within national Countryside Character Area 51, the Dark Peak², the vast majority of which is part of the Peak District National Park. It also closely adjoins Countryside Character Area

² http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/jca51_tcm2-21087_tcm6-4988.pdf

50, the Derbyshire Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent, which lies to the east, and Countryside Character Area 52, the White Peak, lies a short distance to the west.

The key landscape characteristics of the Dark Peak are described as being:

- Dramatic character created by sharply defined, elevated and vast plateaux with 'gritstone ridges' and edges and long uninterrupted views.
- Wild and remote semi-natural character created by blanket bog, dwarf shrub heath and heather moorland with rough grazing and a lack of habitation.
- Contrasting valley heads created by combination of sheltered, deeply-incised cloughs with fast-flowing streams around margins of plateaux and greater diversity of vegetation including semi-natural broadleaved woodland.
- Cultivated character of margins created by in-bye with dispersed farmsteads, gritstone wall boundaries and hedgerows in valley bottoms and small scale of enclosure.
- Major valleys some of which are dominated by coniferous woodland and reservoirs.
- Durable and stocky architectural style to dispersed buildings and settlements constructed from local gritstone with typical blackened appearance.

At a more local level, landscape character assessments have been prepared by the Peak District National Park Authority³ and by Derbyshire County Council⁴.

The former assessment extends to cover areas just outside the National Park boundary and places the site within the Eastern Moors Regional Character Area and the Enclosed Gritstone Upland Landscape Character Type, whose key characteristics are:

- Rolling uplands with some steeper slopes;
- Thin mineral soils over gritstone bedrock;
- Remnant patches of rough land with bracken and heather;
- Permanent pasture and rough grazing enclosed by gritstone walls;
- Regular pattern of medium to large fields;
- Straight roads with wide verges of grass and, in some places, heather;
- Isolated gritstone farmsteads with stone slate roofs with tree groups for shelter;
- Extensive conifer plantations around Matlock Moor.

The latter, more detailed, assessment places the site within the Enclosed Moorland landscape type, surrounded to the east by Enclosed Moors and Heaths and Wooded Slopes and Valleys; to the south and west by Settled Valley Pastures; and to the north by Open Moors.

These assessments, while providing comprehensive descriptions of landscape character, do not contain any specific guidance on the sensitivity or capacity of the landscape to accommodate development or change. However we understand that a *Landscape Strategy for the Peak District National Park* is to be published for consultation within the next few weeks and that this may contain more detailed advice on this topic.

³ <http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/index/pubs/lca.htm>

⁴ <http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/environment/conservation/landscapecharacter/>

1.4.2 Landscape values

The nearest nationally designated landscape to the development site is the Peak District National Park, which lies 3.6km to the south-west and 2.4km to the north-west of the site boundary at its closest points. The Peak District is England's oldest National Park, designated in 1950, and about one third of the population of the country lives within 80km of its borders and is easily able to reach this magnificent open space with its two contrasting landscapes – that of the Dark Peak with its wild moors and the softer, greener plateau of the White Peak.

Land along the south-eastern edge of the National Park has been identified as a Special Landscape Area (SLA). PPS7 (paras 24-25) recommends that such local landscape designations should be replaced by criteria-based policies utilising tools such as landscape character assessment, but permits their retention where criteria-based policies cannot provide the necessary protection.

In Derbyshire Dales District, the SLA is not dealt with in the Local Plan⁵, but in North East Derbyshire Local Plan the SLA designation and policy have been retained⁶. SLAs are defined in the North East Derbyshire Local Plan as “*examples of the finest Derbyshire landscape outside the Peak District National Park*” and are said to “*represent those areas of landscape most similar in character to the Peak District National Park*”.

In addition to these specific landscape designations, valued landscape features within a 10km radius of the proposed development site include⁷:

- The Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, which lies within the river valley south of Matlock, 5.5km from the site (or 3.75km from its buffer zone);
- Sites on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest at:
 - Sydnop Hall (Grade II) 0.7km to the west;
 - The Whitworth Institute (Grade II) 3km to the west;
 - Haddon Hall (Grade I) 7km to the north-west;
 - Chatsworth House (Grade I) 9-9.5km to the north;
 - Chesterfield (Grade II) 9.25km to the north-east;
 - High Tor (Grade II*), Heights of Abraham (Grade II*), Lovers' Walks (Grade II*), Derwent Gardens (Grade II) and Willersley Castle (Grade II) all in the Derwent Valley, 4-6km to the south.
- A number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments, of which the most important and extensive is probably Stanton Moor, 5.5km west of the site, an archaeological

⁵

http://www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/planning_and_building_control/planning_policy/local_plan/default.asp

⁶ <http://www.ne-derbyshire.gov.uk/environment--planning/planning-/planning-policy/local-plan>

⁷ Features listed here are based on information provided in the ES, which we have not been able to confirm or check within the time available for this short study.

resource that is also highly valued for the views that it gives over surrounding landscapes, which form a key part of its setting;

- Fifty Conservation Areas, the closest of which are Matlock Bank and Lumsdale (around 2.5km south of the development site) and seven further sites within 5km including other parts of Matlock; Riber, on the cliffs south-east of Matlock; and the village of Ashover, to the east of the development site.

1.4.3 Recreation and amenity

In terms of recreation and amenity, as mentioned earlier, the surrounding forested areas are access land, and a public footpath across the centre of the site connects Matlock to the relatively dense network of public footpaths in the area north of the ridge around Uppertown; and there are a number of recreational and tourist facilities in the immediate vicinity, including walks on Forestry Commission land, Matlock Farm Park and Darwin Forest Country Park and Cottages.

In the wider areas to the north and west of the proposed development site, the National Park is, by definition, an outdoor recreational resource of national importance, offering an opportunity for nearby urban populations to experience relatively wild landscapes and a wealth of natural and cultural heritage features. The National Park land to the north of the proposed development site is largely unenclosed moorland with open access. By contrast, the National Park land to the west is mainly farmed, but has an extensive rights of way network, and is also crossed by a number of long distance paths of national or regional importance. These include the Pennine Bridleway National Trail, the High Peak Trail, the Limestone Way, Derwent Valley Heritage Way and Midshires Way. The Limestone Way and Derwent Valley Heritage Way run within around 3km of the proposed wind farm site; other routes lie around 7km away at their closest point.

2 The Site's Sensitivity to Wind Energy Development

2.1 Approach to Assessing Sensitivity

The PPS22 (para 19) states that the landscape and visual effects of renewable energy development will vary according to the type of development, its location and the landscape setting. The PPS22 Companion Guide explains (para 3.34) that one of the judgements to be made in planning for renewable energy is to determine the sensitivity of the landscape; this relates to the character of a landscape and how it is vulnerable to change, and is assessed by considering the physical and perceptual characteristics of a given landscape in relation to a specific form of development.

Approaches to assessing landscape sensitivity to wind farms are now relatively well-developed. The approach that has been used here is set out in *Annex 4* and is based on work undertaken by Julie Martin Associates for the Northern Ireland Department of the Environment⁸, which will shortly be published as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Landscape sensitivity to wind energy development is considered by reference to criteria of scale; landform; enclosure; complexity of landcover and landscape features; man-made influence; skylines and settings; visibility and views; landscape quality (condition); scenic quality; wildness and tranquillity; natural and cultural heritage features; cultural associations; and amenity and recreation. This in turn provides a broad indication of a landscape's capacity to accommodate wind energy development of a given size.

2.2 Assessment of Sensitivity

In terms of landscape **scale**, the Matlock Moor site is part of the wider moorland landscape of the Eastern Moors, which is expansive but not exceptionally high. However, landscape scale in this particular part of the Eastern Moors is smaller than average, due to the narrowness and low elevation of the ridge and the presence of field enclosures and forest trees which would provide scale comparators. These influences tend to increase landscape sensitivity to tall turbines.

The **landform** of the enclosed moorland landscape type is relatively smooth, regular and broadly convex, which suggests lower landscape sensitivity; but this is counterbalanced by close juxtaposition with much more dramatic and distinctive landform features, notably the incised valleys north-west and east of the site; and the complex, rolling, valley landscapes to the north-east along the River Amber.

The site has a fairly strong sense of **enclosure**, due to the fact that it is surrounded on three sides by forestry plantation which would screen the lower parts of the turbines and ancillary development from longer views. This could help accommodate wind farm development in the landscape. However, the sense of enclosure is highly dependent on the retention and renewal of these woodlands in the long term. As they

⁸ http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/news/news_consultation/news_consultations_archive/pps18-supplementary-guidance16032009.pdf

are commercial (mainly conifer) plantations they are likely to require felling at maturity, probably within the next 10-20 years.

In terms of **complexity**, this is a relatively complex landscape, with limited areas of consistent ground cover. The enclosed moorland landscape comprises a mixture of moorland, enclosed pasture and forestry; the adjoining moorland fringes and valleys have small, often irregular and ancient field systems. Perceptions of these intimate landscapes could be adversely affected by the introduction of tall turbines.

The landscape displays some degree of **man-made influence** and this tends to reduce its sensitivity to some extent. The presence of straight edged conifer plantations and small disused quarries are the main contributors in this regard. There are, however, no large existing built or industrial features within the surrounding landscapes (which, if they were present, might further reduce landscape sensitivity).

The landscape is highly sensitive in terms of **skylines and settings**. The ridge on which the wind farm is proposed to be sited forms a prominent skyline north-east of Matlock and is also very widely visible from higher ground to both east and west. In approaches to Matlock along the A632 from Chesterfield the ridge is a key feature over a distance of some kilometres.

In terms of **visibility and views**, long uninterrupted views are a key characteristic of the Dark Peak and this tends to heighten landscape sensitivity. The site would be widely visible from within 5-7km. The hill slopes to the east, south and west and the open moorlands to the north would be especially affected, although topography would largely screen views from intervening valleys.

Landscape quality in the vicinity of the proposed development site is relatively good, with field patterns and traditional landscape features generally intact and in good condition, suggesting relatively high landscape sensitivity.

Similarly **scenic quality** is generally high, as is reflected in SLA designation. There is continuity of character with land within the adjacent National Park (both areas being part of the Dark Peak Countryside Character Area and the Eastern Moors Regional Character Area). This underlines the area's role as a key part of the setting of and approaches to the National Park and suggests high sensitivity.

In terms of **tranquillity and wildness**, the site is clearly less sensitive than core areas of the Dark Peak and Eastern Moors but nonetheless retains a sense of relative tranquillity and wildness. At a local level, the quiet, wooded, enclosed character of the forests contrasts with the wild open spaces and long views that are afforded from areas of open moorland.

While there would be little or no physical impact on **natural and cultural heritage features** of note, the scheme has potential to affect the experience and enjoyment of such features in the wider landscape. Information in the ES suggests that it may affect the settings of a considerable number of important cultural heritage features, including Registered Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas – indicating high landscape sensitivity in this respect.

In terms of **cultural associations**, the immediate locality has strong connections with the naturalist Charles Darwin, and this suggests high sensitivity. His grandfather lived locally and his father's half-brother built Sydnope Hall (just to the west of the proposed development site) to which Darwin himself was a frequent visitor. The family name is also a local place name.

Finally, in **amenity and recreation** terms, the area around the site provides valued access opportunities and an important footpath link. It also contributes to the visual amenity of the National Park as part of the landscape setting of both the open moorland to the north and the long distance paths to the west. These factors suggest landscape sensitivity.

2.3 Overall Sensitivity

This short analysis indicates that the landscape surrounding the development site is sensitive to wind energy development in many respects. Overall it is considered to be of at least **high to medium sensitivity** and to have little or no capacity for the type and scale of wind energy development proposed.

This particularly reflects the fact that the turbines proposed in this case would be very large in relation to the scale of the landscape – the moorland ridge being modest in both width and height. Other notable constraints relate to the complex character of the surrounding landscape; the highly exposed nature of the skyline; the area's wide visibility at relatively short range; its role as part of the setting of and approach to the Peak District National Park; and the presence nearby of important cultural heritage interests and associations, which in turn play a part in attracting visitors to the area.

This sensitivity assessment is believed to accord with the findings of a study that is currently being undertaken by the Peak District National Park Authority, Derbyshire Dales District Council and High Peak Council⁹. This study – *A Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Renewables in the Peak Sub Region* – will form part of the evidence base for the Peak District National Park Core Strategy, although the study area extends beyond the National Park boundary. A key element in assessing the capacity of the area for renewable energy generation has been to consider the sensitivity of the landscape that makes up the wider Peak District. Early indications are that substantial tracts of the study area are considered to be of high landscape sensitivity and inappropriate for the location of wind farm development¹⁰.

⁹ The study is currently at draft final stage and is to be issued for public consultation within the next month.

¹⁰ Personal communication, Brian Taylor, Policy Planning Manager, Peak District National Park Authority.

3 Overview of Landscape and Visual Impacts

This section provides a broad overview of the landscape and visual impacts associated with the development proposals. It is not intended to give a complete and comprehensive assessment but simply to identify and highlight some of the key landscape and visual considerations. There may be additional important impacts that emerge from more detailed assessment at a later date.

3.1 *Visibility of the Proposed Development*

The ZTV of the proposed development can be seen in Figures 13 and 14 of Volume 3 of the ES. It shows us where landscape and visual effects are likely to occur and also gives an indication of the magnitude of change – land closest to the development site usually experiencing impacts of greater magnitude than land further away.

In general, there would be widespread visibility within 5km in most directions, although visibility in low-lying valley landscapes in the Derwent valley and elsewhere would be contained by landform. Between 5 and 10km there would be little or no visibility from the north or east, but intermittent visibility from the south and west. The wind farm would also be visible from distances of more than 10km, particularly in the areas above Bakewell to the west and Alfreton to the east.

Within 5km – the zone in which a wind farm is generally considered to be prominent or relatively prominent¹¹ – the principal areas of theoretical visibility are:

- the southern part of Beeley Moor to the north of the site;
- the hill slopes around Uppertown and Ashover to the east;
- land around Tansley Moor, Riber and Snitterton to the south;
- land above Wensley and Darley Bridge to the west;
- land at Black Hill and Sydnop Hill to the north-west.

Slightly further afield (5-10km) the main areas of theoretical visibility are:

- near Holloway and Cromford Moor to the south;
- around Winster and Stanton Moor to the west.

There is expected to be little or no visibility from within the settlements of Matlock, Bakewell, Chesterfield or Clay Cross, except on the north-eastern outskirts of Matlock near Matlock Golf Club.

3.2 *Key Landscape and Visual Impacts*

Effects on the **landscape fabric** of the site would be relatively modest, although clearly significant areas of semi-natural grassland and sections of drystone wall and hedgerow would be permanently lost due to construction of turbine foundations, access tracks and ancillary works.

¹¹ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2002/02/pan45/pan-45>

In terms of **landscape character** there is little doubt that the landscape locally would become dominated by the wind farm due to the considerable height of the turbines, which at 126m to blade tip are among the tallest currently proposed in England, and which would be out of proportion with the width and height of the ridge. The effect would be to ‘flatten’ the relatively subtle yet complex underlying landform. Perceptions of turbine height would be accentuated by the presence of field enclosures, forest trees and buildings close by, which would provide scale comparators; and the movement of turbine blades overhead would further draw the eye. This in turn is likely to detract from appreciation of the intimate valley landscapes that adjoin the site (particularly those to the north and east) and from enjoyment of the long outward views to both north-east and south-west that the site currently affords. Conversely, in views towards the site, the wind farm would form a new focal point on very sensitive skylines just outside the National Park, and visually linked to it, as part of the same moorland ridge.

These impacts are considered adversely to affect not just landscape character but also **landscape values**. The scenic quality of the Special Landscape Area (deemed to be an example of the finest Derbyshire landscape outside the Peak District National Park) would be affected. Inevitably there would also be some loss of tranquillity and wildness, not only in the area immediately around the wind farm but also in areas to the north and west within the National Park boundary: approaches *to* the National Park and views outward *from* the National Park would both be affected. In addition, there would be impacts on the settings of specific cultural landscape features, some of which lie very close to the proposed development site. The principal impacts on such features, where they would be affected by visibility of the Matlock Moor wind farm, are briefly described in Table 1 below¹².

Table 1: Principal Impacts on Cultural Landscape Features

Feature	Description	Distance from Development Site and Likely Effects
Sydnope Hall	Grade II landscape park of around 80 hectares with ornamental terraced gardens and rockeries dating to the mid 19th century. Associations with Charles Darwin. Enjoys extensive views south-west over Darley Dale, and south-east to The Warren and Sydnope Stand, a folly built by the Darwin family on the skyline of the wooded far side of the valley.	Around 700m at closest point. Turbines would be seen on skyline, rising above trees and Sydnope Stand.
High Tor	Grade II* 19 th century pleasure ground on steep hillside above Derwent valley. Western edge is a steep cliff rising up from the valley bottom. On Derwent Valley Heritage Way. Part of a network of five registered parks running along the Derwent valley. Composition of characteristic views forms a key part of the setting of the park.	4km south south-west of the site. Proposed turbines would be visible on the northern skyline from the summit of the Tor, the key viewpoint.

¹² This should not be taken to be a definitive list as there appears to be a large number of other sites that may also experience impacts of some magnitude.

Stanton Moor	Extensive Scheduled Ancient Monument with remains dating from prehistoric times onwards. Access land. Highly valued for the beauty of the views it affords over a range of landscapes, including views across the Derwent Valley to Matlock Moor. Also highly valued for the sense of remoteness, emptiness, perceived naturalness and wildness that it affords (ES Volume 1 p6-17).	5.5km west of the site. Turbines visible from most of the site.
Riber	Conservation Area comprising small hilltop village south of Matlock of high value for its hilltop setting and historic buildings. Includes several listed features including the ruins of Riber Castle, a dramatic landmark in views from Matlock. Views north-west from the edge of the Conservation Area along the Derwent valley are a key characteristic.	4km south south-east of the site. Turbines would be prominent in views from the north-east edge of the Conservation Area.

In **amenity and recreation** terms, the experience of those using the public footpath across the site would totally change and would become dominated by turbines. The footpath standoff from Turbine 3 is only 50m, which means that the turbine blades (46m long) would almost oversail the path – a much greater separation than this is generally recommended if people are not to be deterred from using a public footpath. Other public rights of way in the area would also be affected, notably the footpath that connects Sydnope Hill to Farley Lane west of the site; and the footpath network to the north around Uppertown.

The landscape experience of those visiting the National Park and using either the open moorland to the north or the long distance paths to the west would also be affected to varying degrees. For those who choose to visit the National Park to enjoy relatively wild, natural and remote landscapes, landscape enjoyment would be impaired.

In addition, there would be close range views of the wind farm from a considerable number of properties in the vicinity of the development site, including 14 houses and 64 holiday cottages (the latter under construction) within 1km of the wind farm; and 95 houses and more than 100 holiday lodges within 2km of the wind farm – representing a considerable level of impact not only on residential amenity but also on the general visual amenity of the locality. The villages and hamlets north-east of the development site, including Uppertown, Brockhurst and Kelstedge, would be especially affected.

Finally, the proposed wind farm may be expected to have **cumulative impacts**. The closest existing or consented wind farm sites in the surrounding area are at Carsington Pasture (11.5km to the south-west), and Lindhurst and Loscar Farm (both around 25km to the east). Although these distances are generally great enough for effective visual separation, in some parts of the National Park, including Stanton Moor and Riber, some cumulative impacts may be expected nonetheless. An additional consideration is that if a five-turbine wind farm were to be consented at Matlock Moor there might well be pressure for further development on adjoining or nearby sites, to create a larger wind farm cluster.

3.3 Comments on the ES

The landscape and visual impact assessment presented within Volume 1 of the ES takes the form of a summary only. Detailed impact predictions are found in Appendices 6.1-6.7 and are presented as a series of tables covering effects on the setting of landscape designations; effects on Joint Character Areas; effects on landscape types; effects on viewpoints; cumulative landscape effects; and effects on cumulative viewpoints.

In my professional opinion the landscape and visual impact assessment has some notable weaknesses. Briefly, these include the following:

- It is extremely lengthy and cumbersome, making it particularly inaccessible to lay readers.
- The effects are described in such a disaggregated way that it becomes very difficult to understand or appreciate the impacts of the scheme overall.
- There is very limited consideration of effects on residential amenity, settlements, specific recreational receptors or walking or touring routes in the area.
- Levels of impact significance appear to have been seriously underestimated in at least some cases – for example the impact on the setting of Sydnope Hall is judged to be moderate only, and not significant in EIA terms.
- There are numerous internal inconsistencies – for example at Ashover and Riber impacts on the Conservation Areas settings are judged as negligible and moderate respectively, but impacts on views from those areas are deemed to be major.
- Photomontage viewpoints do not always appear to be representative of the location chosen – for example at Stanton Moor the viewpoint site is on the furthest edge of the moor although much closer viewpoints seem to exist.
- The photomontages are not consistent with good practice in that they include a wider field of view (73°) than the normal human field of view (45-60°) and therefore tend to make the turbines appear smaller than they would in reality.

Given these serious weaknesses, it is questionable whether the findings of the landscape and visual impact assessment can be relied upon by decision-makers. Further review and reassessment of impacts is recommended.

4 Conclusions

4.1 Key Issues

In summary, the key landscape and visual issues associated with the proposed Matlock Moor wind farm are:

- The landscape sensitivity of the proposed development site, which has been assessed as high to medium, indicating that the site has little or no capacity for the type and scale of wind energy development proposed;
- The relatively widespread visibility of the proposed development, particularly within 5km, the zone in which a wind farm is generally considered to be prominent or relatively prominent;
- The likely major impact on landscape character – due to the fact that the turbines would be out of proportion with the underlying landform, would detract from appreciation of adjoining valley landscapes, and would interrupt key views and skylines;
- The likely major impact on the scenic quality of the Special Landscape Area, as well as further impacts on the settings of the National Park and cultural landscape features (some of which are of national importance);
- At least moderate impacts on the recreational experience of those using public rights of way, access land and long distance paths of national and regional importance in the locality – including impacts on opportunities to enjoy a sense of relative wildness and remoteness;
- Additional impacts on the residential and general visual amenity of the locality;
- Potential cumulative landscape and visual impacts at key locations such as Stanton Moor and Riber.

4.2 Recommendations for Further Work

The landscape and visual impact assessment that has been provided by the applicant is considered unreliable and deficient in a number of respects and a full review and reassessment of landscape and visual impacts is strongly recommended before the application is determined. This review should identify further information that needs to be supplied by the applicant, as well as providing a more detailed, independent professional view of the significance of the landscape and visual impacts of the scheme for the benefit of decision-makers.

Further work should also take account of new guidance that is currently in preparation, notably the *Landscape Strategy for the Peak District National Park* and the *Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Renewables in the Peak Sub Region*. Both these documents will be available in draft in around a month's time. The guidance they contain is likely to be very relevant to the Matlock Moor application and will become a material consideration when determining the application.

Annex 1: Curriculum Vitae

JULIE ELIZABETH MARTIN

Nationality British

Year of Birth 1955

Education First Class BA (Hons) Geography, University of Durham, 1977
MA Landscape Design, University of Sheffield, 1979

Professional Affiliations Member of the Landscape Institute, 1981
Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute, 1991
Member of the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, 1993

<i>Career History</i>	1979-80	Countryside Assistant, Suffolk County Council
	1980-81	Landscape Assistant, Civic Trust for the North West
	1982-85	Environmental Scientist, Centre for Environmental Management and Planning, University of Aberdeen
	1985-1994	Senior Consultant, Associate (from 1987), then Partner (from 1989), Cobham Resource Consultants
	1994-2001	Principal Consultant, then Technical Director (from 1995), Environmental Resources Management
	2001-	Principal, Julie Martin Associates

Synopsis

Julie Martin is principal of Julie Martin Associates. A geographer, landscape architect and planner, she has more than twenty-five years' experience of assessing the impacts of major developments within sensitive rural environments, as well as advising government agencies and local authorities on conservation and sustainable development policy.

Ms Martin is one of the UK's leading experts in landscape and visual assessment. She has written key guidance on best practice in landscape character assessment for the Countryside Commission; and was the technical editor of the joint Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Assessment guidelines for landscape and visual impact assessment. She has played a pioneering role in landscape planning initiatives right across the UK; and on numerous occasions has prepared and presented evidence on the landscape and visual impacts of major development.

Recent Project Experience

COUNTRYSIDE PLANNING AND POLICY

Natural England, 2008-09. Wind energy landscape assessment – advice on a possible method for assessing opportunities for onshore, industrial scale wind farms in England.

Environment and Heritage Service, DoE (NI), 2007-2008. Study of landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments across Northern Ireland's 130 Landscape Character Areas. Preparation of draft Supplementary Planning Guidance to accompany PPS18: Renewable Energy. Consideration of issues of cumulative impact.

Heritage Council of Ireland, 2005-06. Baseline audit and evaluation of local authority landscape character assessments in Ireland. Proposals for the development of guidance and for the development of a National Landscape Classification.

Countryside Training Partnership for the Countryside Agency, 2005-06. Further training on landscape issues for agri-environment advisers, for all English regions, plus advice to the Agency on other ways to promote landscape awareness and understanding.

Alison Farmer Associates for the Countryside Agency, 2005. Guidance for relevant authorities on varying the boundaries of National Parks or AONBs.

Enviros Consulting for the Department of Trade and Industry, 2005. Project director/ adviser to the Enviros team commissioned to prepare guidance for offshore wind farm developers on seascape assessment.

Land Use Consultants for Scottish Natural Heritage, 2004-05. Adviser on study of landscape change scenarios aimed at improving understanding of landscape change and public attitudes. Assistance with scoping forces for change and method development prior to preparation of computer generated visualisations and public engagement.

University of Sheffield for the Countryside Agency, 2004. Training on landscape issues for agri-environment advisers, to accompany the introduction of the new higher level Environmental Stewardship scheme. Two regional events, pilots for a national programme.

Countryside Agency, 2004. Preparation of pilot landscape targeting information for the new Environmental Stewardship Scheme, for two Countryside Character Areas.

Scottish Natural Heritage, 2004. Review of the design content of landscape character assessments and advice on SNH's future approach to issues of design in the countryside, including help for planning authorities in the preparation of supplementary design guidance.

CJC Consulting for Defra, 2003. Methodology for monitoring of new woodland in England. Preparation of inputs on monitoring landscape and visual benefits and disbenefits of new Woodland Grant Scheme planting.

Countryside Agency, 2003. Advice on landscape character and evaluation of landscape change in Entry Level Agri-Environment Scheme pilot areas, for guidance of Countryside Agency staff undertaking the evaluation.

Nottingham University for the Countryside Agency, 2002-2007. Member of Expert Panel for the Countryside Quality Counts Project, to develop national indicators of change in countryside character and countryside quality. Input to consultative workshops and indicator development.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Rochdale and Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Councils, 2008. Landscape and visual impact assessment of revised proposal for a wind farm at Crook Hill, as an input to reports to planning committee.

Natural England, 2008. Advice on the landscape and visual impacts of proposed holiday village development at Low Borrowdale, on the edge of the Lake District National Park.

ECUS Ltd for Story Homes, 2008. Preliminary landscape and visual impact assessments of five potential housing sites in Cumbria, for use in discussions with planning authorities on potential housing allocations.

Heritage Council of Ireland, 2008. Review of the landscape and visual impact assessment for the Kilkenny central access scheme in preparation for a public hearing.

Lancashire County Council, Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council, Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council and Rossendale Borough Council, 2007. Review of three wind farm applications sited on the moorland plateau edge of the South Pennines. Assessment of landscape and visual impacts and cumulative impacts on the South Pennines landscape at a strategic scale.

Scottish Natural Heritage, 2006-08. Landscape and visual impact assessments of four separate wind farm sites in Dumfries and Galloway on behalf of SNH landscape advisers, to inform SNH planning consultation responses to local authorities and the Scottish Executive. Advice on cumulative impacts.

Countryside Agency, 2005. Advice on proposed wind farm developments at Hoff Moor and Lamony, on the edge of the Lake District National Park. Site visits, review of landscape and visual impact assessments and drafting of responses to local authority consultations.

Enviros Consulting 2005. Project director review of landscape and visual impact assessments for major wind farm developments in Ireland and Scotland. Advice to the Enviros team on methodology and good practice.

PUBLIC INQUIRY-RELATED WORK

Rochdale MBC, Calderdale MBC and Rossendale BC, 2008-ongoing. Expert witness on planning and landscape issues at a conjoined inquiry into three proposed wind farms in the South Pennines.

Natural England, 2007-08. Advice and preparation of landscape evidence in support of Natural England's case at the re-opened public inquiry into the proposed South Downs National Park.

Countryside Agency, 2005. Preparation and presentation of evidence into the landscape impacts of the proposed Whinash wind farm, sited between the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks in an area judged to be worthy of national landscape designation. Successful outcome for the Agency.

Countryside Agency, 2003. Review and debriefing report on the New Forest National Park public inquiry. Appraisal of lessons learnt from the New Forest National Park public inquiry, for the benefit of the South Downs National Park public inquiry. Critical review of core documentation for that inquiry.

Countryside Agency, 2002-2003. New Forest National Park Public Inquiry. Lead landscape witness for the Countryside Agency on boundary issues in the New Forest National Park.

Countryside Agency, 2001-2002. Landscape adviser to the Countryside Agency's expert witness at the Dibden Bay container port public inquiry. Preparation of evidence on impact of the development on the proposed New Forest National Park and attendance at inquiry.

Landscape Institute, 1999-2000. Member of Working Party set up to review and update the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*.

Institute of Environmental Assessment, 1994. Editor of landscape and visual impact assessment best practice guidelines prepared by a joint Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Assessment working party. Guidelines subsequently published and used as standard reference source at public inquiry.

LANDSCAPE/COUNTRYSIDE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Tynedale District Council and Northumberland National Park, 2007. Landscape character assessment and guidelines for the combined area of the District and National Park, which includes Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and the Cheviots.

Land Use Consultants for the Countryside Agency, 2004. Provision of fine-grained landscape information for Countryside Character Areas in the North East, North West and South West of England. Accompanying advice on which Environmental Stewardship measures should be a priority in landscape terms.

Countryside Agency, 2004. Provision of information on key characteristics and features of all 158 Joint Character Areas, for inclusion in the landscape matrix of the Farm Environmental Plan that must be prepared as part of the Environmental Stewardship Higher Level Scheme.

Scottish Natural Heritage, 2003. Overview of Scotland's National Programme of Landscape Character Assessment. Critical review to mark the completion of the programme, including consultation with programme users.

ERM Ireland and the Heritage Council, 2002-2003. Landscape and seascape character assessment of County Clare, including integrated historical and ecological characterisation. Workshop for senior policy-makers to promote landscape character assessment in Ireland.

ERM Hong Kong and Urbis Ltd for Planning Department, Hong Kong Government, 2001-ongoing. International adviser to a Hong Kong-based team undertaking a landscape character assessment and evaluation of the territory of Hong Kong. Development of a landscape indicator as part of a suite of sustainable development indicators (SUSDEV21).

Sheils Flynn for the Countryside Agency, 2001. Commission to undertake the Durham Landscape Character Pilot, a high profile landscape character assessment project to demonstrate good practice in preparing and applying character assessment at county level.

Leitrim County Council, 2001-2002. First full county landscape assessment in Ireland, to meet the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000. Assessment plus policy advice on wind energy, forestry, and landscape designations.

Lancashire County Council, Countryside Agency and various district councils, 1999-2001. Landscape strategy for Lancashire to assist the county council in Structure Plan review and in its countryside management activities. Also to be used and developed at local level by the district councils.

Environment and Heritage Service and Planning Service, DoE (NI), 1998-1999. Comprehensive landscape character assessment for the whole of Northern Ireland. Landscape input to the Regional Strategy Framework for the province, and to Area Plans. Winner of a Landscape Institute landscape planning award.

PROTECTED LANDSCAPES

Northern Ireland Environment Agency, 2008. Review of Strangford Lough and Lecale Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in preparation for (re)designation under updated countryside legislation.

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, 2006-2007. Landscape and visual impact assessment of the effects of construction works and changes in levels of motor vehicle use as a result of opening the Pennine Bridleway.

Countryside Agency, 2006. Draft recommended boundary for proposed boundary extensions to the Lake District National Park between Shap and Garnett Bridge and around Brigsteer. Advice to the Agency on the need to revise and update its approach to defining National Park boundaries.

Environment and Heritage Service, DoE (NI), 2005. Preparation of draft boundary for the proposed Mourne National Park on behalf of the Mourne National Park Working Party.

Alison Farmer Associates for the Countryside Agency, 2004-2005. Advisory input to study to establish an Area of Search for land worthy of national landscape designation in the area between the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks.

Environment and Heritage Service, DoE (NI), 2004. Preparation and presentation of advice to the newly-formed Mourne National Park Working Party on criteria and approach to defining National Park boundaries.

Environment and Heritage Service, DoE (NI), 2004. North Derry and Sperrins Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Boundary Review. Advice on the extent of these two AONBs, which are to be redesignated under new countryside legislation.

Annex 2: Relevant Good Practice Guidance

Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland*, Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage. http://www.landscapecharacter.org.uk/ca/LCA_Guidance.pdf

Environment and Heritage Service (2008) *Wind Energy Development in Northern Ireland's Landscapes: Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance to accompany Planning Policy Statement 18 'Renewable Energy'*, Department of the Environment. http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/news/news_policy/pps18-supplementary-guidance16032009.pdf

Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2002) *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, 2nd edition, Spon. http://www.iema.net/shop/product_info.php?cPath=27_26&products_id=57

Scottish Natural Heritage (2001) *Guidelines on the Environmental Impacts of Windfarms and Small Scale Hydroelectric Schemes*, Scottish Natural Heritage. <http://www.snh.org.uk/pubs/results.asp?q=windfarms&selfservice=0&c=-1&isbn=&o=title>

Scottish Natural Heritage (2005) *Guidance: Cumulative Effect of Wind Farms*, Scottish Natural Heritage. <http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/strategy/Cumulativeeffectsonwindfarms.pdf>

Scottish Natural Heritage, (2006) *Visual Representation of Windfarms. Good Practice Guidance*, Natural Heritage Management Series, Scottish Natural Heritage. <http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/heritagemanagement/Visual%20Representation%20of%20windfarms%20-%20excerpt.pdf>

Scottish Natural Heritage (2008) *Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape*, Draft for Consultation, Scottish Natural Heritage. <http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/strategy/renewables/A182753.pdf>

Annex 3: Key Terms and Definitions

Landscape sensitivity to wind energy development is the extent to which the inherent character and visual amenity of a landscape are vulnerable to change due to wind energy development. It is primarily a function of **landscape character sensitivity** (ie the degree to which a landscape character area is vulnerable to change which will affect its character); and **visual sensitivity** (ie the degree to which a particular view or visual landscape experience is vulnerable to change which will affect its character).

Landscape value is also relevant in assessing landscape sensitivity and capacity for wind energy development. This term refers to the intrinsic value attached to a landscape, often reflected in designation or recognition, and expressing national or local consensus as to the degree of importance of a landscape.

Landscape capacity is the extent to which a landscape can accommodate wind energy development without significant adverse impacts on its landscape character, visual amenity or landscape value.

Additional definitions for terms commonly used in landscape character assessment and landscape and visual impact assessment can be found in the box below. In each case the definition is taken from (or closely based upon) the most recent relevant guidance from the sources listed in *Annex 2* above.

Table 2: Additional Terms and Definitions

General terms relating to landscape and visual resources

Landscape fabric – Physical landscape elements and features, such as landform, landcover, boundary features, trees and woodland, that make up the landscape we see, and that may be affected for example by recontouring, land use changes, or damage to vegetation in the course of development.

Landscape character – The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape and how this is perceived by people. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement. It creates the particular sense of place of different areas of the landscape.

Landscape quality (or condition) – A term based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape, and about its intactness, from visual, functional and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which make up the character in any one place.

Landscape value – The intrinsic value that is attached to a landscape, often reflected in designation or recognition. It expresses national or local consensus as to the (degree of) importance of a landscape, for reasons including landscape quality, scenic (or visual) quality, wildness and tranquillity, natural and cultural heritage interests, cultural associations and recreational opportunities.

Amenity – The benefits afforded to people by a particular area in terms of what is seen and experienced. Amenity includes not just visual amenity and views but also the experience of landscape in its widest sense. Different groups of people such as walkers, residents and motorists may have different amenity expectations.

Terms used in landscape and visual impact assessment

Landscape impacts – Changes in the physical landscape which give rise to changes in its character and how it is experienced, and may in turn affect the value attached to a landscape. Landscape impacts may be beneficial (for example where a characteristic feature is restored) or adverse (for example where a characteristic feature is damaged or lost).

Visual impacts – Changes in the appearance or perceptions of a particular area or view as a result of development or other change. Visual impacts can be beneficial (for example where a new view is opened up) or adverse (for example where an existing view is affected by the addition of an intrusive feature).

Landscape sensitivity – A term based on the inherent sensitivity to change of a landscape in both landscape character and visual terms (as a result of its type of character, visibility etc). In Environmental Impact Assessment the term sensitivity may also be used to encompass the value placed upon the landscape.

Visual sensitivity – The sensitivity of visual receptors (viewers and views) to changes in the appearance of the landscape. Sensitivity depends on the location and context of the viewpoint, the expectations and occupation or activity of the viewer, and the importance or value of the view.

Landscape capacity – A term used to indicate – generally for the purposes of planning policy or guidance – the extent to which a landscape can accommodate specific types of change or development. Capacity assessment should identify key aspects of the specific change or development that are likely to have an impact on the landscape.

Magnitude – A combination of the scale, extent and duration of an effect. The nature and degree of change to the landscape resource, the scale of the change in view resulting from the loss or addition of features, the degree of contrast or integration of new features in the landscape, the angle and distance of view, the extent of the area over which the changes would be visible, and the duration of the effects are all relevant considerations.

Impact significance – A term that is not absolute and can only be defined in relation to each development and its location. The two principal criteria determining significance are the sensitivity of the landscape or viewer and the magnitude of the effect.

Annex 4: Criteria for Assessing Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Energy Development

Criterion	Comments
Scale	A large scale landscape, where the turbines may be in proportion with the landscape, is likely to be of lower sensitivity to wind energy development than a small scale landscape, where the turbines may appear to dominate the landscape and features such as field patterns, individual trees and buildings may be compared with and highlight the size of the turbines.
Landform	Landform that is smooth, regular and convex, or flat and uniform, is likely to be less sensitive to wind energy development than dramatic or rugged landform. This is because the former types of landform tend to be less prominent and less distinctive in character. Convex landform may in addition provide partial screening for turbine structures.
Enclosure	A sense of enclosure provided by topography or vegetation – especially in areas with large scale topography or woodlands – may increase the ability of the landscape to provide screening for the lower parts of turbine structures and for associated access and infrastructure and hence indicate lower landscape sensitivity. However note that woodlands and forestry should be a long term feature if their screening effects are to be relied upon.
Complexity of landcover and features	Simple, uncluttered landscapes with sweeping lines and extensive areas of consistent ground cover are likely to offer greater potential for wind energy development than areas with more complex, irregular or intimate landscape patterns (for example ancient, irregular field systems) which tend to be more sensitive.
Man-made influence	A high degree of man-made influence on the landscape may mean that it is less sensitive to change due to wind energy development. Turbines are likely to be less conspicuous in brownfield or industrial landscapes already affected by built structures such as masts, pylons or chimneys, provided there are no visual conflicts where the structures are seen in close proximity. Commercial forestry may also introduce a man-made influence to upland landscapes that would otherwise seem natural and wild.
Skylines and settings	Landscapes that do not form a distinctive backdrop or context tend to be less sensitive to wind energy development than those with strong visual features and focal points such as hilltop monuments, church spires or designed landscape features, which may form important skylines, landmarks or settings for settlements.
Visibility and views	Landscapes that are visually contained or have limited inward and outward views may be less sensitive to wind energy development than areas with extensive inward and outward views. Extensive close or middle range views from scenic routes, well-known vistas or tourist viewpoints may increase a landscape's sensitivity to wind energy development, as may close proximity to settlement.
Landscape quality (condition)	Areas where the condition and integrity of landscape patterns, elements and features are relatively good may be more sensitive to wind energy development than areas where condition is poor. In areas where landscape condition is good the fabric and character of the landscape are likely to be more highly valued and also more vulnerable to change.

Scenic quality	Scenic quality, that is visual appeal due to important views, visual interest and variety, contrasting landscape patterns, or dramatic topography, may increase landscape sensitivity to wind energy development. Land of high scenic quality occurs within designated landscapes (World Heritage Site, proposed National Park, AONBs) but also elsewhere; the approaches to and settings of areas of high scenic quality may also be sensitive.
Wildness and tranquillity	The presence of a relatively wild and/or tranquil character (due to remoteness, freedom from disturbance and factors such as openness and perceived naturalness) tends to make the landscape more sensitive to wind farm development. The introduction of wind turbines may alter perceptions of wildness and tranquillity, introducing movement, sound and light effects and possibly bringing a more industrial character to the affected landscapes.
Natural and cultural heritage features	The presence of natural and cultural heritage features such as interesting and valued habitats, wildlife, archaeological, historical or built features that enhance the landscape experience may increase sensitivity to wind farms, particularly where these features may directly affected by construction works and/or access tracks; or where or enjoyment of these features may be diminished.
Cultural associations	Specific cultural (ie historical, folklore, literary or artistic) associations relating to the landscape may result in increased sensitivity to wind energy development if the character or perceptions of the landscape concerned are likely to be significantly altered.
Amenity and recreation	Areas offering access to high quality landscapes, memorable places, special experiences and to a range of opportunities for open-air recreation may be more sensitive to wind energy development due to potential effects on accessibility and/or on the quality of the recreational experience that will be obtained.

The sensitivity level of a landscape overall is assessed by considering the combined weight of evidence on landscape sensitivity to arrive at a judgement on a scale as outlined below:

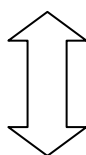
High sensitivity

Landscape is very vulnerable to change and would be adversely affected by wind energy development, which would result in a significant change in landscape and visual characteristics and values.

High to medium sensitivity

Medium sensitivity

Medium to low sensitivity



Low sensitivity

Landscape is not vulnerable to change and would not be adversely affected by wind energy development, which would not result in significant change in landscape and visual characteristics and values.