



HOUSE OF COMMONS

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Rt. Hon. Chris Huhne, MP
Secretary of State
Department for Energy and Climate Change
Nobel House
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Wind Turbines

Wind turbines are large, visually intrusive, noisy, and alien structures in the English countryside.

The only justification for wind turbines is that they can generate electricity from wind power and help the UK meet its Renewables targets and reduce CO2 emissions.

However, it is being increasingly clear that a large number of wind turbines are simply being put up so that they can benefit from the subsidies that are given out under the Renewable Obligation Scheme.

It would appear that more than half of Britain's wind farms are operating at less than 25% capacity, and on land in England, this figure rises to a staggering 75% of onshore developments.

The fact is that over generous subsidies under the Renewable Obligation Scheme simply mean that large numbers of turbines are going on to sites where there is simply insufficient wind, and never will be sufficient wind to make them effective wind turbines.

This may well explain why in a recent planning application for a wind turbine in my constituency, the company concerned never made any attempt whatsoever to



demonstrate the effectiveness of erecting a wind turbine near Ardley. Clearly, so far as they are concerned, it doesn't matter how inefficient their wind turbine might be, because I think it is a reasonable inference that they are not interested in generating electricity, but clearly, as with so many others, interested in the subsidy.

As you will know, the subsidy for one wind turbine running at just 30% is £283,088.

We are getting ourselves into a crazy situation where we are spending large amounts of tax payers' money on wind turbines that are inefficient, not meaningfully contributing to our CO2 Reduction targets and despoiling the countryside at the same time.

These concerns are compounded by the fact that for whatever reason the Planning Inspectorate appears not to be qualitatively assessing wind turbine applications – indeed, it is clear from the experience in my constituency that they are paying little or no regard to the amount of electricity that any particular wind turbine might generate or little or no regard to the likely capacity of the wind turbine once operating, and little or no regard for how windy or otherwise an area might be, seemingly working on the basis that any detrimental environmental impact is somehow almost magically going to be offset by whatever CO2 emissions such a wind turbine might generate over its existence.

I think there is going to be increasing frustration and anger if it is felt that wind turbines are no more than expensive eyesores.

As you will have seen, Professor Jefferson, of the London Metropolitan Business School, following research, has concluded that wind turbines, operating well under capacity, are doing extremely well out of the Renewable Obligation Scheme.

Professor Jefferson very sensibly recommends that any wind turbine that falls below 25% of efficiency, should not be eligible for any subsidy whatsoever.

We have a ludicrous situation where the Government is giving subsidy to 9 turbines in Blyth Harbour in Northumberland, where each turbine is reaching a meagre 4.9% of their capacity.

It is a crazy situation if wind turbines and wind farms are being built where there is no wind, and only being built where there is no wind because there is plenty of Government subsidy and there is a planning system that seems to take no account of whether or not there is wind.



Can I suggest that if this is not going to become a discredited area of public policy, that your Department needs to consider as a matter of urgency how we ensure that only those wind turbines that really are going to generate significant amounts of energy, are granted planning permission and are given public subsidy.

Tony Baldry