



Upper Calderdale Wildlife Network

c/o Middle Bottomley Bottomley Road Todmorden Lancashire OL14 6QZ

Tracy Babin
Mayor of West Yorkshire
West Yorkshire Combined Authority

18th June 2025

Dear Tracy

Proposals for an onshore wind farm on Walshaw Moor, Calderdale Wind Farm, West Yorkshire

I am contacting you about proposals for a major wind farm development on the South Pennine moors above Hebden Bridge and Haworth in West Yorkshire. Developers, Calderdale Wind Farm Ltd (CWFL) are proposing to construct what could become England's largest onshore windfarm with up to 41 turbines at a height of up to 200 metres.

I am a member of the Upper Calderdale Wildlife Network, and we are hugely concerned about the damage that such a massive industrial scheme could have on our nationally and internationally protected moorland habitats. Walshaw Moor and its environs are protected by a raft of designations:

- SPA (South Pennine Moors Phase 2 Special Protection Area)
- SAC (South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation)
- SSSI (South Pennine Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest).

Our group's observations of this wonderful wild place have demonstrated that Walshaw Moor is bucking the trend of decline for many vulnerable species such as curlew and lapwing.

We recognise that we must embrace renewable energy to combat the terrible consequences of climate change, but we know that this development is proposed in the wrong place. An RSPB study last year showed that England has plenty of suitable areas for wind farms not on protected peatland, for the government to achieve its Clean Power 2030 target for onshore energy. Building the wind farm here would be catastrophic for nature, exacerbate already

very serious local flooding, destroy the precious sense of wilderness and result in the destruction of vast areas of protected peatland habitat.

In the objectives for the emerging West Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, it states that the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) will pledge to tackle the climate and environment emergency, and say that restoring nature, biodiversity and wildlife habitats is at the heart of that ambition. It goes on to recognise that wider environmental benefits such as carbon storage, flood control, water quality, health and wellbeing are also achievable objectives.

We believe that the protection of our upland peatlands and blanket bogs, is essential, these are not just irreplaceable habitats, peat will store four times as much carbon as tropical rainforest, they are a vital part of the whole upland ecosystem, so as international peatland ecologist Dr Guaduneth Chico, has written:

“Establishing windfarms on peatland in pursuit of greener energy risks compromising and undermining the green-energy transition.”

Richard Lindsay, who is an internationally recognised peat expert and Senior Research Advisor to the IUCN UK Peatland Programme, has told us that the blanket bog hydrology supports wider areas of species rich upland grasslands, of significant importance in Calderdale for the fungi assemblages, and ancient woodlands.

We consider the creation of a 41 turbine wind farm and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) along with the massive infrastructure required to achieve this, comprising many miles of access roads and tracks, turbine foundations, crane hard standings, cable ducting and substations, is entirely incompatible with the protection of Walshaw Moor and its irreplaceable habitats and vulnerable species that live there.

As part of their recent non statutory public consultations for the wind farm we were shocked to see that Calderdale Energy Park (CEP) had published their own version of the habitats map, erasing most of the blanket bog, undermining the importance of the peatland for carbon sequestration, and indeed contradicting their own 2023 Calderdale Windfarm Scoping Report where they show a much greater extent of blanket bog across the greater part of the proposed wind farm site, recognising it as a habitat of very high distinctiveness.

Recognising the importance of blanket bog and our upland peatlands, UCWN, have been campaigning alongside other groups as Stronger Together to Stop Walshaw Moor Wind Farm, and earlier this year we launched a Parliamentary Petition to ban windfarms on protected peatland in England, with the intention of getting an amendment to the draft Planning and Infrastructure Bill.

Can we count on your support on the principle of banning windfarms on protected peatland in England, and locally to support the campaign to prevent the industrialisation of an iconic area of moorland. We hope that the LNRS can be used to restore areas of peatland such as Walshaw Moor while recognising that this would not be achieved as part of a major wind farm development.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Penny Price". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Penny" and the last name "Price" written in a single continuous line.

Penny Price

On behalf of the Upper Calderdale Wildlife Network