

Biala wind farm photomontage and the subsequent Visual Impact rating.

The Biala wind farm proposal should be rejected. It will have negative impacts on the amenity of nearby resident's homes as well as their sleep and health.

The proponent's public consultation has been inadequate and has involved providing substandard and misleading information to local residents regarding the visual impact of their proposed wind farm.

Photomontage comparison

The following photomontage was displayed at the Biala open day in January and is available from the Newtricity web site.



The one below is from Biala LVIA, Page 52.

Both Clouston Associates and ERM take credit for each photomontage.

They would appear to be the same photo, cropped and magnified, yet they are obviously different in other respects. There are startling differences in the contrast and overall visibility of the turbines. This is an example of misleading and inconsistent information being provided by the proponent in relation to potential visual impact. It does not inspire any confidence about the accuracy of any other information they have provided

Neither of these two photomontages, as published by the proponent, provides anywhere near a true assessment of the colossal Visual Impact that 185 metre high turbines, located only 1.7 kms away from the viewpoint will inflict.

Remember, residents don't have the facilities to blow them up to A0/A1 size.



Please compare the 2 pictures as published by the proponent:

Wouldn't it be quite reasonable for community members who viewed the first photo at the open day, to feel misled if the turbines are built and do in fact resemble the turbines in the second montage?

Unrepresentative view

In addition to this, see the note: "Additional WTGs are visible to north of the viewpoint"

The tallest single tree in the centre of photo 1 is at the right edge of photo 2, so you can see that there are 12 or so turbines to the north cropped from the photo used at the open day and an additional 2 turbines appear in the left half of the LVIA photo.

Would a reasonable person think that is a representative view of the Biala wind farm from this viewpoint or a misleading choice of angle?

Scale of visual impact

The photomontages are from a public viewpoint (Number 4). The nearest turbine is 1.7 km away. You can virtually see the whole wind farm for minutes as you sedately drive along a country road.

And yet Cloustons assess the Visual Impact as moderate. It begs the question: what it would take for Cloustons to assess Visual impact as high?

From the LVIA Page 53, we find glimpses of Cloustons logic as to how they arrived at this rating.

RECEPTOR IDENTIFICATION	RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE				
		DISTANCE	QUANTUM OF VIEW	PERIOD OF VIEW	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE	SUMMARY OF RATINGS
4	M	H	H	L	M	M
Overall Visual Impact Rating					MODERATE	

The first obvious error in it is the rating of LOW for the factor, Period of View.

Note THEIR definition from Page 108

Period of view		<p>The length of time the visual receptor is exposed to the view. The duration of view affects the impact of the Proposal on the viewer - the longer the exposure the more detailed the impression of the proposed change in terms of visual impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant part of the day - high impact: usually residential property. • 5 minutes to several hours - high to moderate impact: often from a garden or park or commercial property and work places. • 10 seconds to 5 minutes - moderate impact: usually from a road/driveway entrance, walking past or entrance to commercial property. • 5 to 10 seconds - moderate to low impact: often from a road or walking past. • 1 to 5 seconds - low impact: usually from a road or railway
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It's clear the assessment should be a minimum of MODERATE and more likely HIGH/MODERATE.

Compromised visual impact assessment.

This factor alone would alter the overall assessment. Cloustons should be required to justify its rating of Magnitude of Change and clearly explain the circumstances under which a wind farm would warrant a rating for the factor of HIGH.

This is an example of an assessment of Visual Impact from one of the view locations that has been clearly understated, as a result, the total Visual Impact assessment of the wind farm has been compromised and should be rejected.

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