

Dear Sir/Madam

CASE APP/P2935/W/20/3244389: CONSTRUCTION ON COLD LAW HILL – OBJECTION

I am writing in my capacity as the British Mountaineering Council' (BMC) Conservation and Access Representative for Northumberland. The BMC North East region has several thousand members who were canvassed about the construction of the 55m high 'artwork' on Cold Law hill within the area of the Wannies. Our membership overwhelmingly voted against the structure being built.

Climbers and walkers have been using the crags and moors around Cold Law and the Wanneys for over a hundred years. The first climbs being recorded in 1902. These rocks and moors have been climbed and tramped on ever since. The 'Great Wanney' crag itself is of national significance and precious to generations of climbers.

This famous and wild landscape has already suffered the intrusion of windfarms. These are unwelcome but necessary intrusions; that at least make a contribution to our electricity generation. Moreover, the turbines will in time be removed. Unlike the proposed structure which will permanently blight the landscape. This permanence is alarming, because there is a significant risk it will nothing more than a very prominent, unnecessary and unwanted white elephant.

The people I represent already come to these wild places, and they like many others do so because of the very wildness the scenery and environment offers. Ridsdale, Cold Law and the Wanneys are a special place and part of the soul of Northumberland. This deserves to be protected from inappropriate development.

There are many things wrong with this proposed construction. It is undoubtedly inappropriate, and intends to dominate the landscape. It does not work with or, have any sympathy with the rolling moors. The local community as well as climbers and ramblers object to it. (A poll in our local paper saw 1300 participate with 84% against the structure.)

The appeal strongly indicates that the developer Viscount Devonport, has no interest in the views of thousands of objectors and is convinced that his opinion is the one that counts. That is one person's opinion set against thousands of objectors.

The original application made much of the fact that the structure would become a 'tourist attraction' and increase money coming into the local economy. This is at best a speculative opinion and not based on any real, objective data. I would reiterate that visitors already come here because it is relatively unspoilt. How many will not come. In any event to have any local economic impact the visitor numbers would have to be huge, far too many for the tiny car park. I believe that those visitors who may come would be local, and have no need of local services and would simply drive out, observe and then leave, having only contributed to the local CO2 emission level.

The original proposal also drew comparison with the success of other public art in the region. Notably, the Angel of The North and sculptures in the Kielder forest. Comparison with the former does not stand scrutiny, the context, place and history are completely different, while in the latter case all of the artwork in Kielder is in hidden in the forest, doesn't disturb the skyline or sense of place and is nowhere near any residents.

Please consider all these points in your deliberation; the artwork is unnecessary and unwanted, will add nothing to the area while significantly eroding the wildness the Wanneys are known for.