## Navitus Bay Wind Farm - Westminster Hall debate

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**Robert Syms (Con, Poole), opened a Westminster Hall debate on Tuesday on the Navitus Bay wind farm saying "we are all very disappointed by the process."**

The Crown Estate had identified a site for wind farms, and a preferred bidder then floated a number of options, he said. However people were never sure of the precise details until right at the end of the consultation process.

Decisions were taken without councils or MPs being substantively involved, he argued, adding that the Navitus Bay wind farm would lead to a reduction in tourism and impact upon jobs.

However the biggest concern was the visual impact, particularly given the coast had world heritage status, he commented. In-land the presence of sites of special scientific interest "constrained the planning authorities, yet just a few miles out at sea, we will have a proposal that may have a major visual impact" he said.

Other concerns about the development were the potential noise generated and the impact on shipping and aircraft.

He added:

"Not a great deal has been said about birds, but clearly 218 turbines will have a major impact on bird life."

On this point Annette Brooke (Lib Dem, Mid Dorset and North Poole) said there had been no objections from Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) to which Syms replied that the concerns had nevertheless been raised by hundreds of constituents and local people, "many of whom are members of the RSPB."

Regarding offshore wind he said it was the most expensive way of generating electricity and was also not the most efficient.

Conor Burns (Con, Bournemouth West) said that these developments could go significantly further out to sea.

He added he had no objection to wind farms but were concerned over the impact proposals had on the local economy and on a world heritage site.

He said few details over the scheme had been announced and called the consultation process flawed.

Michael Fallon, Minister of State, Department of Energy and Climate Change, said he could not comment directly on the proposed wind farm, since it would be assessed by the Planning Inspectorate before it makes a recommendation to the Secretary of State.

The Secretary of State would then have to consider the recommendations and the report that accompanies them and make the final decision on the application, he said.

Fallon added that he had no information on the likely date of the consideration. He went on to explain in detail how such decisions on this development would be made, and the different stages involved.

He encouraged all individuals and organisations with an interest in the proposals to engage with any public consultation when it was launched.

The minister concluded that interested parties' concerns about the potential impact of such projects would be "thoroughly considered during the planning process, which is designed specifically to encourage participation by all interested parties."

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[Link to the original source document](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm131119/halltext/131119h0002.htm#13111959000001)