

ING 1 SUSTAINABILITY

SPARROW HILL WIND FARM DEBATE

SITUATION

A British power company has identified a commercially viable site for a wind farm in the north of England. The proposal is for a wind farm of 80 turbines over a large area. Each tower will be 60 metres tall and have a turbine of 35 metres diameter. The wind farm will cover an area of several kilometers and take 5 years to complete.

TASK: ATTENDING A PUBLIC MEETING

PUBLIC MEETING

To discuss the

Sparrow Hill wind farm proposals

Date: 4th April

Time: 8.30 am

Venue: Engineering school

All welcome

Divide the class into 4 groups of 4 students. You are going to role-play the meeting. Study the role cards that your teacher gives you and prepare for the meeting. **NB: You may choose one or a combination of two of the roles, but you must make sure that there is an equal balance between the arguments in favour and the arguments against the wind farm when you conduct the debate.**

Role-play the meeting during your next lesson. The person with the role of Government Representative will lead the meeting. Ask your questions and give your opinions. Try to persuade the other people at the meeting to accept your ideas. **Each meeting should last 20 minutes.**

You will perform your role-plays on 4th April. Each group will come at an allocated time between 8.30 and 10.00 am.

ASSESSMENT

Each student will receive an individual mark for his/her participation in the meeting.

Marks will be awarded according to the following criteria:

- Ability to express your opinion clearly (Do you make your position clear? Can you justify and defend your arguments?)
- Lexical range (Do you use vocabulary specific to the subject of renewable energy?)
- Your interaction with other participants (Do you listen and react to other people's comments?)

This mark will contribute to your speaking mark for the semester.

Local resident 1

You are very much in favour of the wind farm.

You live in the area and own some of the land needed for the wind farm. You represent a number of farmers. You will receive money because the wind farm will be built on your land.

You think:

- wind farms are beautiful structures.
- the wind farm will attract visitors to the area. It will be the biggest in the country.
- the wind farm will provide cheap power for the local community.
- building the wind farm will create jobs for local people.
- the wind farm will attract international interest and publicity.

You want to know what the disadvantages of the wind farm would be.

Local resident 2

You are completely opposed to the wind farm.

You live in the local area and run a hotel. The area is popular with tourists who want relaxing walking holidays.

You think:

- the wind farm will damage the tourist industry and affect local property prices.
- the machinery used creates a lot of noise pollution and wind farms are not as efficient as other ways of producing electricity.
- wind farms are ugly and ruin the landscape.
- the flashing lights on the towers and the shadows from the blades can disturb and upset people.
- it will take five years to build the wind farm. There are certain to be traffic problems.

You want to know what the advantages of the wind farm would be.

Wildlife group representative

You are very hostile to the wind farm.

You are a member of a radical wildlife group: Flora and Fauna Protection (FFP). You are strongly against the building of wind farms in areas of natural beauty.

You think:

- wind farms are dangerous to all wildlife.
- birds and bats are often killed when they fly into the blades of wind turbines.
- the habitat of many birds, animals and plants will be destroyed during the building of the farm.
- the proposed site is home to several rare species of butterfly.
- the area currently attracts a large number of scientists and naturalists who study the wildlife of the area.
- wind farms are an expensive and wasteful way of producing electricity.

You want to know what the advantages of wind farms are.

Environmentalist

You want the wind farm to go ahead as soon as possible.

You are a member of an environmental pressure group 'Lovers of the Land' (LoL). Your group is keen on renewable energy sources and supports the building of wind farms.

You think:

- there is an urgent need for sources of renewable energy.
- nuclear power is dangerous.
- the wind has been used as a clean and efficient source of power for centuries.
- the latest wind farms are much more efficient.
- the proposed wind farm is environmentally friendly.
- the wind farm sets a good example for other areas and countries.

You want to know what the disadvantages of wind farms are.

Government representative

You are a government minister in the Energy Department. You will welcome people to the meeting and lead the meeting.

You think:

- wind farms are a good idea and building new ones is a government policy.
- it is important, however, to listen to the opinions of local people. There is an election next year and you do not want to upset too many potential voters. As Sparrow Hill would be a very big wind farm it is important to make the right decision.

You want to know what the feelings of local people about the proposed wind farm are.