

Proposed Reathwaite anemometer mast

At their meeting on 14 December 2010, Allerdale Council's Development Panel considered application No. 2/2010/0879 for planning permission for a 70 metre high anemometer mast at Reathwaite, grid ref: NY 310 436.

Westward, Sebergham and Boltons parish councils had recommended refusal of this application and, in total, there had been over 50 written objections, including some from regular visitors to the area. The planning officers' report recommended that planning permission should be granted.

Four local residents spoke at the meeting, drawing attention to the number of applications being made for masts and wind farms in this area just outside the National Park, highlighting the impact that a 70 m mast would have on the landscape, and expressing serious concern at the way the Planning Inspector had over-ruled the carefully considered decisions of the Panel in the case of the nearby Rosley masts.

In the members' discussion that followed, there was a clear majority view that the planning context within which individual applications are considered needs to be updated. At present, the Panel may refuse an application but then has to rely on an individual Inspector supporting that decision to prevent industrial features changing the settled, sensitive landscape. The Council has a statutory obligation to protect that landscape and the stage has been reached where even more anemometer masts are unacceptable. The members of the Panel decided, by 11 votes to 3, to refuse planning permission for the mast.