Comments for Planning Application APP/2013/2779

Application Summary
Application Number: APP/2013/2779
Address: Beechwood Burnend Forglen Turriff AB53 4LB
Proposal: Erection of 1 no. Wind Turbine (Hub Height 32 metres) Total Height 45.5 metres; Siting of Equipment Cabinet and Formation of Vehicular Access
Case Officer: Jim Martin

Customer Details
Name: Mr James Bayne
Address: The Cottage Kirktown of Alvah Banff

Comment Details
Commenter Type: Community Council
Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application
Comment Reasons:
Comment:ALVAH AND FORGLEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL
Reply Address: The Cottage, Kirktown of Alvah, Banff AB45 3US

4 June 2016

Dear Mr. Martin,
APP/2013/2779 Erection of Wind Turbine at Beechwood, Burnend, Forglen, Turriff
Alvah and Forglen Community Council considered the subject planning application at its meeting on 31 May. The Community Council unanimously agreed that the turbine would have an adverse effect on the Alvah and Forglen community, particularly those living in close proximity to the proposed site and also those living in and around the Deveron Valley. The Community Council therefore calls for its rejection.
The Community Council concluded that the proposed turbine would be inappropriately sited on a slope of The Deveron Valley and that there would be an adverse cumulative impact when considered with other turbines erected in the area. Due to the size and positioning of the turbine it would have an overbearing visual impact on nearby houses resulting in a significant loss of amenity to residents.
Factors taken into account were:
(i) Local Opposition. The Community Council was struck by the large number of objections already lodged. Almost all objections were from those who live in or around the Deveron Valley.
(ii) Landscape Capacity. The proposed turbine is 45.5 metres tall. The SNH Strategic Landscape Capacity Assessment for Wind Energy in Aberdeenshire reports that there is zero capacity for turbines over 15 metres in height in the proposed location and that the area is already over its underlying and remaining capacity. This is due to the area's medium scale, valley landform,

quality, pattern, high value and visual sensitivity.
(iii) Visual Impact. The proposed turbine would be located at a height of 100 metres, in the Deveron Valley, and about 600 metres from the River Deveron. Because of its dominance the turbine would have a significant and detrimental visual impact on the Deveron Valley. Due to its position and height there would be no significant obscuration by trees or vegetation. It would be seen from a wide area across the Deveron Valley and beyond.
(iv) Local Amenity. Due to the size and positioning of the turbine it would have an overbearing visual impact on nearby residences resulting in a significant loss of amenity to residents.
(v) Cumulative Effect. When considered in conjunction with other turbines in the area the cumulative effect would be unacceptable. There are over 21 approved or erected turbines within a 4 km radius of the proposed turbine. There is no remaining capacity in this area. Appendix 5 of the planner's report shows two 80 metre close by turbines at Wrae and Ashogle as being refused but they have now been approved. This significantly adds to the cumulative effect.
(vi) Historic Sites. Within 5km of the proposed site there are 170 archaeological sites, including 5 scheduled monuments and 31 listed buildings. Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service has raised concerns about the impact on Cairn Ennit which would be less than 250 metres from the turbine.
(vii) Natural Heritage The site is in Zone 2 - medium sensitivity. The applicant's environmental survey acknowledges that sparrowhawks, buzzards, osprey and kestrels breed and hunt in this area. This turbine would present a very significant risk to these protected species. There are also Whooper Swans in the area. RSPB has previously informed Aberdeenshire planning department of the large over wintering flock of Whooper Swans in the upper Deveron Valley between Turriff and Kirkton of Alvah, a protected species which are at particular risk from wind turbines. They have requested that between 60 - 72 hours of vantage points observations are undertaken over the months from November and March to enable collision risk analysis assessment for applications within the area. No such observations are noted in this application.

(viii) Viewpoints. The viewpoints chosen minimise the actual severity of the impact on local residents. The Community Council believes that there should be a viewpoint in Bogton looking down the valley towards the turbine site.

(ix) Photo Montages. The photo montages are of very poor quality and do not reflect the overbearing effect of the turbine on the community. The montages do not comply with the mandatory visualisation standards of Annex B of Scottish Natural Heritage - Visual Representations of Wind Farms Version 2.1 December 2014 in that the taking camera (Sony SLT-A55V) is not full frame but instead has an APS-C sensor.

The Community Council fully supports the recommendation of the Planning Department, which is attached as an annex.

Yours sincerely,

James Bayne
Secretary, Alvah and Forglen Community Council
Email:secretary.alvahforglencc@gmail.com

ANNEX

Recommendation

REFUSE for the following reasons:-
The proposed development is contrary to Policy 3: Development in the Countryside, and SG Rural Development2: Wind Farms and Medium to Large Wind Turbines, Policy 8: Layout, Siting and Design of New Development, and SG LSD 2: Layout, Siting and Design of New Development, and Policy 12: Landscape Character and SG Landscape 1: Landscape Character, as contained in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2012 in that:
a. The proposed turbine would have an adverse impact on the Deveron and Upper Ythan Valleys landscape character area due to being dominant and out of scale with the landscape, resulting in a noticeable change to it, and the further damage it would result to the landscape in conjunction with the other turbines already operational and consented to the south of the River Deveron in the area.