ALVAH AND FORGLEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

27 August 2014

Dear Mr. Martin,

APP/2014/1538 | Erection of 1 No. 800kW - Wind Turbine on Land West Of Waulkmill Farm Auldtown of Carnousie Turriff AB53 4LU

The Alvah and Forglen Community Council considered the subject planning application at its inaugural meeting on 26 August. The committee unanimously agreed that the turbine would have an adverse effect on the Alvah and Forglen community, particularly those living in close proximity of the proposed site. The Community Council therefore calls for its rejection.

Factors taken into account were the 153 objections lodged with the council, particularly those from the 20 houses within 1000 metres of the site; the personal health circumstances of at least one objector – details of which are known to the planner under confidential protection and which may be considered a 'protected characteristic' under the Equality Act 2010: and compliance with The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan.

The Community Council concluded that the proposed turbine would be inappropriately sited on the slopes 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 dominate nearby residences, cause noise pollution and shadow flicker resulting in a significant loss of amenity to nearby residents.

The Council found that the application failed to meet the requirements of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan in a number of areas as detailed below.

Landscape character.

The development would be sited on a high prominent ridgeline, would be dominant and have a significant and detrimental visual impact on the Deveron and Upper Ythan Valleys LCA and its surrounding area.

SNH guidelines for LCA 1 (i) where the turbine would be states:

> Proposals for medium/large and medium turbines adjacent to Deveron and Upper Ythan Valley would also exceed the landscape capacity of the more sensitive LCA. The upper slopes of the valley landform should be maintained free of turbines greater than 30m in height as they could easily visually dominate the smaller scale landscape.

The proposed turbine is 79 m high, is located at a height of 150m approximately 1.5 km from the edge of the Deveron and Upper Ythan valley. OS map contours show the location to be on the upper slopes of the valley landform with the land sloping down to the river to the east and south of the location. As there is no land higher between the river and the turbine location the turbine would be very prominent.

The application is, therefore, contrary to Policy 12 and SG Landscape 1.

Cumulative impact

There are 17 wind turbines planned or consented within 5 km of the proposed site and 40 within 10km of the site. This is an area of high sensitivity, already saturated with wind turbines and the impact of further turbines in the area would be high.

The proposed turbine is located within LCA 1 (i). SNH Landscape Capacity Assessment for Wind Energy in Aberdeenshire – final report (March 2014) guidelines show recommended minimum separation distances in LCA 1 (i) between medium/large turbine clusters to be 5km to 10km , for medium sized turbine clusters to be 3km to 6km and for small turbine clusters to be 2km to 4km.

The proposed turbine does not meet that guidance due to distances to:

Medium /large turbine clusters – 5km to 10km minimum separation distances

- Mains of Whitefield (1 x 80m. APP/2012/3647, consented)-1.6km
- Craigathrey (1X 79m. APP /2013/2901, planning) – 2.6 km
- Deuchries (3 X 100m, APP/2012/3229, consented)-3.5km
- Cowie Hill (1x 80m. APP/2012/0411, consented) – 4.65m
- Ashogle (1 x 80 m , APP/2011/4216, allowed on appeal) – 4.7km
- Wrae (1x 80 m , APP/2011/4266, allowed on appeal) 4.85km

Medium turbine clusters – 3km to 6km minimum separation distances

- Brokenfolds (1 x 80m. APP/2011/3829, consented) 2.9 km

Small turbine clusters – 2 km to 4km minimum separation distances

- Burnside of Whitefield (3x 27m. APP/2010/3779, APP/2012/1076 consented) 1.3km
- Adreddie (APP/2010/1887, consented)1.3km

Due to the prominence of the site, the scale of the proposed and existing wind turbines and the proximity of the developments to one another, there would be significant visual relationships and adverse cumulative impacts in relation to each of these developments.

The proposal is therefore contrary to the cumulative criteria of Policy 3, SG Rural Development 2, Policy 12 and SG Landscape 1.

Amenity.

Shadow Flicker.

The applicant has taken into account only visual impact from "forward facing" windows in neighboring properties but has not taken into account constantly used outbuildings on these properties. Waulkmill farm e.g. has a number of constantly used outbuildings well within 10 rotor diameters of the proposed turbine and would therefore suffer significant shadow flicker. The LDP

guidance is for turbines to be set back a **minimum** of 10 rotor diameters. Three properties are just over this distance and could experience shadow flicker.

Overbearing Presence.

The turbine, due to its size and position on the ridgeline, would dominate the closest houses and be overbearing. This would result in a significant loss of amenity to the nearest residents.

Noise

The background noise levels at the nearest houses, as recorded by the applicant, are unrealistically high. It is likely that the acoustic sensors were placed in inappropriate sites such as close to the main road or in an area of unusually high tractor activity. It is most probable that the nearest dwellings will experience unacceptable noise levels.

Trees.

It is understood that a number of mature trees will be felled to make way for the turbine. This constitutes a further loss of amenity to the community.

The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy3, SG2, Policy 8 and SGLSD2.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Rosemary Dewhurst,

Chairman Alvah and Forglen Community Council