

Robertson J (Jane)

From: Glen Urquhart Community Council <glencc@btinternet.com>
Sent: 23 March 2017 14:20
To: Robertson J (Jane); Karen Lyons; Jennifer Jack; Ian Kelly; jwmbraeva [REDACTED]
Warwick Lyster-Kaye; Shirley Gold; Kirsty Morris; Cliff Green; Lucinda Spicer
Subject: DEPA-PPA-270-2155 proposed wind farm at Cnoc an Eas
Attachments: DPEA PPA-270-2155 GUCC Closing Submission.doc

Categories: Cnoc an Eas

Good afternoon

Please find attached the Closing Submission of Glen Urquhart Community Council.

regards.... Pam Lucas - chair - GUCC

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Glen Urquhart Community Council

DEPA PPA-270-2155 proposed wind farm at Cnoc an Eas, Glen Urquhart

Closing Submission

Corrimony Chambered Cairn

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) had lodged an objection to the application. Their three representatives all stood firmly by their original submissions in explaining how the proposed wind farm would impact on the setting of Corrimony Cairn and the importance of this cairn in the wider picture of our current understanding of Bronze Age structures, their uses and the ways in which people interacted with them.

The Appellant's defence was purely academic. Corrimony's Clava Cairn is equally important in its setting as other cairns are to Balnalarain. The Appellant suggests that tree cover would provide screening and have a softening effect on the industrial structures. As was pointed out during the site visit, it is not realistic to depend upon the presence of screening from tree cover due to forestry activity.

Glen Urquhart Community Council (GUCC) believes that Corrimony Cairn is a very significant part of the history and culture of the glen, it would not benefit from commercialization of its surroundings and the building of the proposed wind farm would have a detrimental impact on its setting.

Impact on landscape, visual amenity, residential and recreational amenity and cumulative effect

GUCC, STAG, the Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCoS), ScotWays and local residents all participated maintaining their original objections.

Tourism is the main industry of this area and it is marketed as offering visitors access to and enjoyment of wild land and open countryside. The Appellant underestimates the degree to which the proposed wind farm would be visible from the Affric Kintail Way and from the surrounding hills and peaks. MCoS and ScotWays made mention of the cumulative effect of the "Ring of Steel" which is in danger of being created around Loch Ness whereby people in elevated countryside have an almost continuous sight of numerous wind farms. GUCC supports the local belief that this proposed wind farm would contribute to a negative outcome for tourism which would in turn damage the local economy.

Permanent residents of Glen Urquhart must not be overlooked. Members of the community regularly and frequently use the many forestry and hill tracks for walking, riding and cycling. There is also farming, stalking and fishing

activity. A highly visible industrial development would detract from the character and amenity of the district. The Appellant showed a video presumably intended to indicate that awareness of turbines from the A831 would be minimal, however, this video was not helpful in giving any meaningful impression of place or context.

Compliance with the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance

The Highland Council demonstrated that although Glen Urquhart may be considered suitable for small wind turbines intended for private use, this is a large scale industrial development, and, therefore, does not comply with the supplementary guidance. Thus the presumption should be against the Appellant.

Conditions

The Highland Council and the Appellant appear to have reached agreement on most of the conditions listed during the appeal.

12. Hours of construction – The Appellant suggests working hours from 0700 to 1900 Monday to Friday and 0700 to 1300 hours on Saturdays with no work on Sundays or public holidays. This is acceptable. However, the custom in this area is for there to be no Sunday working of any kind. The tasks listed by the Appellant as being appropriate on Sundays appear to be routine core activities and as such ought to be carried out during normal working hours.

23. Community Liaison Group – THC has indicated that a community liaison group should be in place ahead of any commencement of development. The Appellant has stated that this was not considered necessary. GUCC is strongly of the view that a community liaison group is essential in the case of a large industrial development. The group should include representatives of Glen Urquhart and Kiltarlity Community Councils, STAG and local residents as well as any other affected groups. The group should be formed well before commencement of the project and meet in a planned and orderly fashion during construction.

Conclusion

GUCC continues to affirm that the proposed wind farm is a large scale industrial development, it is not appropriate to the integrity of this rural environment and it would inflict detriment to the quality of life of residents and to the local economy. GUCC believes that if the Lavender Test was applied in this case it would become evident that several properties, especially in the Balbeg, Shenval and Shewglie areas, would become unattractive places to live.

It is disappointing that the Appellant regards a community liaison group as not necessary. It was stated that any problems which occurred would be rectified. This in no way alleviates the anxiety of the residents who would prefer that problems did not occur in the first place. This includes particular concerns including pollution of the private water supplies and safety on the access tracks. The Appellant stated that on other projects liaison groups had faded due to "fatigue". This suggests a history of lack of commitment to proactive interaction with local communities and reinforces the impression of lack of respect for residents.

GUCC is clear that no effective and suitable mitigation measures would alleviate the impact on Corrimony Chambered Cairn, Shenval, some properties in Balbeg and tourism. We continue to believe that the proposal is contrary to planning guidance and, therefore, the appeal should be refused and the proposed development should not take place.

Pam Lucas / John Duncan
Glen Urquhart Community Council

March 23rd 2017