

**MINUTES of MEETING of PLANNING, PROTECTIVE SERVICES AND LICENSING
COMMITTEE held in the INNELLAN PUBLIC HALL, 51 SHORE ROAD, INNELLAN, ARGYLL,
PA23 7TH on MONDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2013**

Present: Councillor David Kinniburgh (Chair)

Councillor Robin Currie	Councillor Donald MacMillan
Councillor Gordon Blair	Councillor Alex McNaughton
Councillor Rory Colville	Councillor James McQueen
Councillor Robert G MacIntyre	Councillor Sandy Taylor

Attending: Charles Reppke, Head of Governance and Law
Brian Close, Planning Officer – Bute and Cowal
David Anderson, VG Energy – Applicant's Agent
Councillor Dick Walsh, Supporter
Councillor Michael Breslin, Supporter
George Morrison, Objector
Michael Burke, Objector
Alex Noakes, Objector

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were intimated from Councillors Mary-Jean Devon, George Freeman, Alistair MacDougall and Richard Trail.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MR JOHN STIRLING: ERECTION OF TWO 225KW WIND TURBINES (47.02 METRES TO BLADE TIP), AND ASSOCIATED METER HOUSES, FORMATION OF CRANE HARDSTANDING AND VEHICULAR ACCESS: LAND WEST OF NEWTON PARK, TOWARD, DUNOON (REF: 13/00004/PP)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. He then outlined the procedure that would be followed and the Head of Governance and Law identified those who wished to speak.

Planning

Brian Close presented the application on behalf of the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services. He advised that this revised application was submitted in December 2012 and he provided some planning background to this proposal. He advised that VG Energy first approached the department in February 2012 for a screening opinion on the erection of two wind turbines in a similar position to the application before Members today. He advised that whilst the department considered that the proposal would not require an Environmental Impact Assessment the Applicants were informed that the proposed wind turbines would be located in an area that could potentially have a detrimental impact on the

setting and character of the Garden and Designed Landscape of Castle Toward and that the turbines would also be highly visible from many viewpoints along the A815, Toward and Innellan settlements. Notwithstanding this advice an application (ref: 12/01536/PP) was submitted in July 2012 but withdrawn in September 2012 due to issues of landscape and visual impact of inappropriate scale and siting. He also advised that VG Energy submitted a similar screening opinion for a single wind turbine beside Toward Farm close to the application site (ref: 12/000372/PP). An application (ref: 12/01415/PP) for a single 225kw wind turbine (47.02 metres to blade tip) west of Toward Farm, 1.5 km south west of the proposed turbines was submitted in June 2012 but withdrawn in August 2012 due to similar issues of landscape and visual impact by virtue of inappropriate scale and siting. Despite discussions with the department the same proposal was resubmitted (ref: 13/00472/PP) in March 2013 and withdrawn in May 2013. This was an identical resubmission of the previous scheme that was withdrawn due to similar issues of landscape and visual impact on Toward Castle and Castle Toward Area of Panoramic Quality by virtue of inappropriate scale and siting. This single turbine attracted many objections from Bute residents similar to the scheme before Members today. This turbine was the same model as those proposed at Toward Taynuilt Farm and submitted by the same agents VG Energy. He advised that on two farms within a range of 1.8km, VG Energy were proposing 3 x 47 metre high wind turbines which the department had considered to be inappropriate and inconsistent with the Council's adopted Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Statement (LWECS). Following withdrawal of these applications Mr Close advised that he met with VG Energy in November 2012 to discuss solutions to reduce the visual impact. VG Energy had advised that they could not go below the size and model of turbine proposed and that the single turbine at Toward was not in the best location. He advised that VG Energy were willing to bring their turbines downhill slightly and this was produced as a photomontage. He advised that when it came to resubmitting the proposal as a 'free shot' VG were reluctant to submit a fresh planning fee for the revised scheme which was outwith the original red line boundary and instead opted to submit a revised scheme which proposed to site the same turbines but on land 5 metres lower than previously proposed. Mr Close went on to discuss the detail of the proposal and advised that within the adopted Argyll and Bute Local Plan the two wind turbines, the upper part of the access track, the crane hardstandings and the electrical control buildings were all located within Very Sensitive Countryside with the lower part of the access track located within Sensitive Countryside. The site was also close to an Area of Panoramic Quality. He advised that within the LWECS the application site was located within the Cowal Ridges and categorised as 'Steep Ridgeland and Mountains' which have 'high to medium' sensitivity for larger turbine development as they are particularly prominent in important views. He advised that smaller turbines could introduce clutter to more remote and less developed areas and could have similar effects as large turbines on complex landform. He advised that the application site was at the lower extremity of the 'Steep Ridgeland and Mountain' Character type and very close to 'Rolling Farmland with Estates' which increased sensitivity even further. He advised that wind turbines greater than 35 metres in height were not encouraged in such landscapes. Mr Close

referred to a slide highlighting the planning history for wind turbines in this part of the Cowal peninsula and surrounding areas. He advised that turbines permitted so far did not exceed 25 metres in height to blade tip and tended to be located close to the buildings or uses they intended to serve. He advised that the proposed turbines would be twice the height of the highest wind turbines approved and 20 times the generating capacity. He advised that larger turbines on higher ground have been historically refused due to inappropriate scale and siting in what was a constrained area with high visual impact. He advised that the proposed turbines would be erected on high grazing farmland north of Toward Taynuilt Farm and 0.6 km west of Newton Park, Innellan. He advised that the turbines would be located on the southern slopes on Innellan hill overlooking the settlements of Toward and Toward Point. He advised that there were currently two MOD mast installations north of Toward Taynuilt Farm and they were reached by an access track from the A815. He advised that it was proposed to extend this access track and erect two wind turbines on land at the northern boundary of the farmland close to plantation forestry which covered the hillside but was due to be felled and replanted in the near future. He highlighted on slides the access track leading to the turbine locations and also showed slides illustrating both turbines with associated crane hardstanding areas and meter houses. He then referred to a slide which illustrated the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) which covered a very wide area including Bute, Firth of Clyde, south Cowal area and Inverclyde. He advised that it was evident that there were few viewpoints within close range of the site where the turbines would not be visible. He advised that the very large ZTV illustrated the number of settlements and scenic areas on both sides of the Firth of Clyde and from the Isle of Bute which would be adversely affected by the proposed wind turbines. Mr Close then referred to consultee responses received. He advised that SNH considered that the proposal was in keeping with the guidance in the LWECs as long as the turbines had a backdrop and were of an appropriate colour. However, if no backdrop was present and/or the turbines were not of an appropriate colour then the turbines would have an adverse impact, significantly changing the landscape character of the area. He advised that this representation should be taken as an objection given the many viewpoints where the turbines would skyline and lack of or loss of forestry as a backdrop. He advised that SNH had requested ecology reports regarding outstanding concerns and lack of site specific information on protected species including otter, bats and bird species. The ecology and ornithology reports were submitted and accepted by SNH subject to conditions regarding a large range of mitigation measures to protect watercourse, habitats and species throughout construction activities and operational activities. As a result of this reason for refusal number 2 as cited in the original report was no longer applicable and has been removed from the revised recommendation for refusal. He then advised that Public Protection had no objections regarding noise and shadow flicker but had raised concerns regarding the potential impact on private water supplies and recommended that a full assessment be undertaken detailing necessary mitigation measures during construction and decommissioning. The Applicant's consultant has been in discussion with the Council's Public Protection Service and an agreement was reached in respect of potential impact on private water supplies in the vicinity. Mitigations measures have been suggested and agreed but

Public Protection wished to point out that not all private water supplies were registered and that these would need to be confirmed prior to any work commencing. He advised that if Members were minded to grant planning permission then appropriate mitigation measures would need to be addressed via a suspensive planning condition(s). He advised that both Inverclyde and North Ayrshire Councils had raised concerns regarding visual impact from a number of key viewpoints and impact on settlements along the Clyde coast routes and Firth of Clyde seascape. The Council's Roads Engineer had no objection subject to conditions and there were no objections from Glasgow Prestwick Airport, National Air Traffic Services and SEPA. He advised that the Ministry of Defence had no safeguarding objections in principle but that conditions and advisory notes were recommended. There was no response from the RSPB. In terms of representations he advised that 23 individuals raised objections and 5 expressions of support were received. Objections included concerns with visual impact, impact on tourism and sailing, contribution to renewable sector, financial benefit, impact on wildlife, quality of supporting information and impact on surrounding settlements. Support came from 3 individuals and 2 Councillors and they highlighted agricultural and community benefit, that green energy should be encouraged, far better windmills than nuclear power with associated risks, and stated that the view of the turbines on the other side of the Clyde was not detrimental to the landscape and it was believed that the scale of these proposed turbines would blend well with the surrounding forestry, pylons and masts already there. Mr Close then presented a number of photomontages which represented the best available images to help in the assessment of the visual and landscape impact. He referred to the Forestry Commission felling plan and advised that two compartments close to the site had already been felled due to recent wind blow. He advised that other areas in close proximity currently providing some degree of backdrop were due to be felled within a five year period. He advised that felling of large areas of forestry currently acting as a backdrop to the turbines would render large parts of the Environmental Statement inaccurate and misleading. He then summarised his presentation and advised that the principle issues in this case were the adverse consequences of the presence of such large wind turbines and the impact on landscape character, adjoining landscape character areas, cumulative impact, adverse visual impact, associated consequences for tourism interests and built heritage and ecological impacts. He advised that it was considered that the contribution this proposal could make towards combating climate change would be insignificant and that this proposal would result in development giving rise to inappropriate environmental consequences which could not be viewed as being sustainable and consequently the proposal was recommended for refusal.

Applicant

David Anderson of VG Energy spoke on behalf of the Applicant. He advised that this application was for two wind turbines and that the application for D and K Mundell referred to by Planning was a separate application which had been withdrawn following advice from consultees and that it was not likely to be resubmitted. He referred to concerns about the removal of forestry and comments made that the information

contained within the environmental statement was misrepresented. He advised that no dubiety was meant and that they were asked to study the conditions as they currently were. He advised that they were willing to work with any condition regarding the colour of the turbines. He referred to the turbines being on the skyline being an issue and advised that this depended on the viewpoint. He advised that the turbines had been moved 5 metres further down the hillside and that the viability of the proposal would be compromised if the turbines themselves were any smaller. He advised that they had worked with the Council which resulted in the turbines being moved further down the hill. He referred to the grid connection being expensive and that they had taken into consideration all the planning policies and guidelines. He advised that the proposed development was not on the shore line. He referred to the representation submitted by SNH that advised that the turbines would change the character of the landscape. He advised that this proposal was just for two wind turbines and was not a wind farm. He advised that it was his opinion that the felling of the plantation would have an impact on the landscape. He advised that the turbines were manufactured to industry standards and that the crane hard standings measured 12 x 12 metres.

Supporters

Councillor Dick Walsh advised that the reason he was supporting this application was because he felt it was important to the area and would bring economic benefits to Toward. He advised that he had concerns regarding the advice provided in the planning assessment of the proposal and advised that he had no problems with the siting of the turbines or the site in question. He advised that the issue seemed to be the size of the turbines and that he felt the landscape had the capacity and ability to absorb these turbines. He referred to comments made that the proposal would have an adverse visual impact and advised that whatever was done in an area had the potential to alter the character of a landscape and that the question was to what degree that impact would be. He advised Councillors to look at the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal. He advised that it was clear from Planning that the proposal would have an adverse visual impact and would be contrary to planning policies. He referred to a number of alterations and changes that were made to the application. He advised that he had an issue with the relevance of the withdrawn application to this application and also to the reference made about the outcome of an appeal process. He advised that there were a number of important areas which should be focussed on. He advised that there were no ecology or ornithology concerns, that there would be no impact on the habitat, and that public protection no longer had any concerns regarding the private water supplies and were not objecting. He advised that as the turbines were less than 50 metres they followed the guidance contained in the Wind Energy Capacity Study. He referred to tree felling and advised that not all the tree groupings would be removed. He advised that the proposed development would not be sited within an Area of Panoramic Quality or Area of Scenic Quality. He advised that there was a question over whether it would be within an area of very sensitive countryside. He advised that there were no objections from statutory consultees and no objections from the local community. He advised that there would be visual impacts for the local community rather

than the wider community and that there were no objections from the community of Toward. He advised that the area of Toward has changed significantly in recent times which has had a huge bearing on the economy of the area. He advised that the resources that would follow this application would sustain the viability of the farming community and that some community benefit would also follow this development. He advised that it was indicated in the planning report that this application was contrary to a number of policies and that he did not subscribe to that view. He advised that he would suggest that the proposal was consistent with a number of policies. In conclusion he advised that yes the siting of this structure in that part of Toward would alter the landscape but that it would not significantly have an adverse impact. He referred to other wind turbines which could be viewed from Innellan and that on a clear day you could see them but that they did not have a significant adverse impact on the area. He advised that what was proposed was a small/medium scale development which was consistent with the Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study and the policies of Argyll and Bute.

Councillor Michael Breslin advised that he endorsed everything that Councillor Walsh had said and advised that he had 8 points to make. Firstly he advised that he supported diversification of farms in this area. Secondly he advised that there would be some relatively small agriculture benefits from this proposal as the access road would allow for access to farm land which was currently difficult to get to. Thirdly there would be community benefit of around £5,000 per annum. Fourthly he advised that renewable energy policies in the country needed to be supported. Fifthly he advised that the generating capacity of the turbines would be 20 times greater than the largest turbine currently approved in the area and that this power was important. Sixthly he advised that not all the forestry would be felled at the same time and that it would all be replanted over time. He advised that there were 2 structures not previously mentioned and that these were television masts further to the west which were very prominent. Finally he advised that he lived in the area and would see these 2 turbines from his home and that he did not see them causing him or anyone else a significant issue.

Objectors

George Morrison advised that he lived on Bute and objected to this proposal as it was inconsistent with planning guidance, the local plan and the Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study. He referred to the visual impact and advised that these turbines would be visible from a large number of areas on Bute including Rothesay Bay which he advised was the most scenic area in the world. He advised that the forestry was not a permanent structure and would be cut down. He advised that there were plenty areas elsewhere where these turbines could be located where they would not have a massive detrimental impact on the surrounding area. He referred to tourism and the economy and stated that Bute relied heavily on tourism and that it was a major employer on the island as well as across Argyll and Bute. He referred to the impact the proposal would have on the Rothesay Golf Course and Mount Stuart House and to the Wemyss Bay to Rothesay ferry crossing. He advised that wind farms did not employ anyone in the areas they were sited on. He advised that this

proposal could impact on tourism across Argyll and Bute. He referred to Health and Safety and advised that this development would be sited on rough grazing with forestry nearby. He advised that there were 1,500 accidents and incidents involving turbines in the UK. He referred to a wind turbine in Ardrossan exploding during a storm. He advised that the biggest problem with wind turbines was their height which meant if they went on fire the fire brigade could not do anything. He advised that burning debris could be scattered over a wide area with the potential for causing hill fires. He advised that the risk was small but it was still there. In conclusion he advised that this development would cause great harm to the surrounding area and would be detrimental to the economy of the area. He advised that this was a bad neighbour development and asked that it be refused.

Michael Burke referred to the Bute economy which was a tourist and retirement economy. He advised that the advantage of Bute was its visually unspoilt landscape which attracted many visitors. He advised that the retirement community was expanding. He advised that the risks of this development were disproportionate to the risk of the economy that could be lost from tourism and the retirement community.

Alex Noakes advised that his family have farmed in the area for generations and that he was past Chair of the Community Council and that he had walked extensively around Cowal. He advised that it was his opinion, as a former Estate Agent of considerable experience, that the erection of these turbines at the proposed site would seriously affect the amenity and property values of houses in the area. He advised that there was also a great danger that acceptance of this proposal could lead to a precedent being set to accept larger schemes. He advised that this proposal did not just affect Dunoon and the local area and that it affected the whole of the Clyde Estuary. He advised that the effect on property values and the environment would not just be for the immediate vicinity but would be for the whole area, not just Dunoon, not just Cowal but the whole estuary. He advised that he was very sympathetic to the Applicant but that he could not accept this situation. He referred to other sites and step changes being made within the renewable industry and that the use of turbines was falling away. He referred to other sources of renewable energy and advised that these should be explored.

Members' Questions

Councillor Colville asked if an anemometer mast had been erected to monitor wind at the site and asked for Planning's views on the efficiency of this particular site which he believed could be affected by two new nearby forestry plantations. Mr Close advised that he was not aware of an application for an anemometer mast being submitted.

Councillor Colville asked Mr Anderson to comment. Mr Anderson advised that data collected from an anemometer mast was only accurate once it was on site for 2 years and that they were generally associated with large scale developments. He advised that computer fluid dynamics were being used by the industry now. He advised that his company would not be recommending turbines to be sited in an area that was not efficient and

that all issues were taken into consideration and that it was concluded that this site was perfectly viable.

Councillor Colville asked Mr Anderson how he had arrived at this site and asked if this was solely based on the efficiency and availability of the site. Mr Anderson advised that the site's efficiency was taken into consideration along with the visual impact, ecology, noise and other infrastructures in the area. He advised that for this scale of development it was deemed that this was the best location for the scale of the turbines and that the development would not have been viable if the turbines were smaller or sited closer to the farm.

Councillor Colville sought and received clarification that VG Energy was able to source different sizes of turbines.

Councillor Currie referred to reasons for refusal detailed at page 14 of the agenda pack and asked Planning how comfortable they were to state that this development would have an impact on habitats and species and would have an impact on historic gardens, listed buildings and ancient monuments when the organisations concerned with these issues had not objected. Mr Close referred to supplementary planning report number 2 which removed reasons for refusal no 2 and no 3 as following the submission of the habitats and species reports SNH had no objections in principle to the proposal subject to mitigation measures being put in place and that Public Protection were not objecting as the private water supply issue had been resolved. He advised that the main reason for refusal was the visual impact of the proposal. He advised that taking account of the wider area the lighthouse and the lighthouse keeper building which were both listed would be impacted on.

Councillor Currie referred to Mr Morrison advising that the proposal would have a serious effect on tourism and asked what evidence he had to support his comments. Mr Morrison advised that it was his personal opinion that tourism would be affected.

Councillor McNaughton sought clarity on concerns made regarding the felling of the forestry and asked if Members were expected to imagine what the landscape would look like in the future or should Members just be considering the landscape as it is at the moment. Mr Reppke advised that Members were not required to imagine but should take account of information provided which was based on fact. He advised that information had been provided on a future felling programme for the area and that this was factual information which was presented and should be taken into consideration.

Mr Close advised that Planning's best attempt at assessing the proposal was based on photomontages and an assessment of the various viewpoints. He advised that whether or not the forestry was there the proposal would have an effect on the skyline from various viewpoints.

Councillor MacMillan sought and received clarification that the distance from the turbines to various parts of Bute was between 5.5 and 6 km.

Councillor Blair referred to Mr Morrison's comments about the risk of fire and asked if risk assessments were carried out. Mr Anderson referred to the manufacture of the turbines and that you could not legislate for mechanical faults. He advised that the Ardrossan incident was a very isolated and rare case. He advised that everything was done to ensure the right product was used for the right location and that turbines were maintained by the manufacturer on a yearly basis and had warranties. He advised that the turbines were durable and lasted longer than their 20 – 25 year lifespan. He advised that operationally they were maintained and monitored remotely from central control stations and that risk assessments were carried out during the construction phase.

Councillor McQueen asked if this proposal was classed as a wind farm. Mr Close advised that 3 or more turbines were classed as a wind farm.

Councillor Currie asked why turbines were normally white or light grey. Mr Anderson advised that they could be painted any colour and that a condition had been attached to a wind farm consent in North Ayrshire which required the turbines to be painted green.

Councillor MacIntyre asked if an impact assessment had been carried out on the mast for the MOD and Mr Close advised that he did not know.

Councillor MacIntyre asked how high above the skyline the blade tips would be. Mr Close advised that it was around a few metres and that it varied at different viewpoints. He advised that changing the colour of the turbines would work for some viewpoints but not for others. He advised that the colour of the turbines was not the issue it was the scale of the turbines and that there was no suitable back drop. He advised that the movement of the turbines caused a greater visual impact than a fixed mast.

Councillor Colville advised that he was concerned about setting precedents in Argyll and Bute for this size of turbine if this proposal was granted and asked what was there to stop this company moving on to the next farm and then the next farm and submitting further applications. He asked Mr Anderson to comment. Mr Anderson advised that in terms of setting a precedent each application they received was determined on its own merits. He advised that they were not a massive developer and that they primarily worked with the agricultural community. He advised that they were approached and that they did not go about putting in speculative applications. He advised that everything they did was based on good customer service and that they would not recommend turbines being sited on unsuitable sites. He advised that they were not a speculative developer signing up large areas of land and that they were not here to sign up the entire Cowal and Bute area.

Councillor Colville sought and received clarification that VG Energy had no policy in place for cumulative impact.

Councillor McNaughton referred to advice given by Planning that the turbines be reduced in height and asked why this advice was not taken on board. Mr Anderson advised that all advice given was taken into

consideration but that it was more than just visual impact that needed to be taken account of and that all options in terms of project viability were explored. He advised that the turbines had been reduced from the skyline as much as possible without reducing the viability of the project.

Councillor Kinniburgh referred to comments made by Mr Morrison about the Wemyss Bay to Rothesay ferry crossing and the impact of the turbines on tourism and asked was it not correct that wind turbines could also be seen from the other side of the water. Mr Morrison advised that these other turbines could not be seen from Wemyss Bay and that it was his opinion that the other turbines were much further away and did not have an impact.

Councillor Kinniburgh referred to comments made by Mr Noakes about the Forestry Commission having control over applications and asked if this was true as it was his understanding that all applications came through the planning process. Mr Close advised that it would depend on the size of the scheme and that larger schemes would go direct to the Scottish Government. He advised that they would all still go through the planning process.

Summing Up

Planning

Mr Close advised that nothing he had heard today altered his recommendation to refuse this application. He advised that the Development Plan supported renewable energy proposals of the correct scale and in appropriate locations. He advised that the Development Plan also included many policies to safeguard the environment and landscape in terms of sustainable development, habitat, ecology and tourism. Accordingly, he advised that in line with LWECS guidance, the department have adopted a cautious approach towards medium to large scale wind turbines in such sensitive coastal locations as can be seen from the wind farm consent map and refusals in other similar coastal areas. He advised that it was considered that this proposal would have an adverse impact regarding landscape and visual considerations as the turbines were considered to be too large and too high up the hill with no suitable backdrop. He advised that changing the colour of the turbines would make no difference as it was the siting and scale that was unacceptable. He advised that the small amount of electricity generated or the supporting case put forward did not outweigh the significant visual impact that these wind turbines would create on the surrounding landscape and coast scape that can be viewed from a much wider area. He advised that approval of these turbines would result in the highest structures in this part of the Cowal peninsula and could also establish a harmful precedent for the erection of wind turbines that were of an inappropriate scale for their sensitive locations. He requested that Members support the department's recommendation based on the Development Plan and refuse planning permission.

Applicant

Mr Anderson referred to the impact on tourism and advised that evidence would suggest that it was not the case that turbines have any impact on tourism. He advised that schemes of this scale were vital to support agriculture. He advised that this was not a wind farm, that it was not out of scale and that it was appropriate for the site being developed and an appropriate scale of development and asked the Committee to approve the application.

Supporters

Councillor Walsh advised that in his presentation he had attempted to confine his presentation to the facts rather than what might happen in the future. He advised that it was not relevant to consider the other application referred to. He advised that this small/medium scale development was acceptable for the Landscape Character type it was located on. He referred to a number of other wind farm developments around the Firth of Clyde area which did not have an adverse impact on the coastal areas of the Firth of Clyde. He advised that he was of the view that the proposal was not inconsistent with a number of policies. He advised that a material consideration was the economic impact and that this proposal would bring economic benefits to the farm unit and to the community of Toward. He advised that this was to be welcomed as it would retain jobs and support the community. He advised that he hoped Members would approve the application as consistent with policy or approve as a minor departure to policy. He advised that he could not see any good reason for refusing this application.

Councillor Breslin advised that he endorsed everything Councillor Walsh said. He advised that he has lived in the area for 16.5 years and was building here for a second time. He advised that if he had thought this proposal would have an impact on the outstanding beauty of this area he would not support it.

Objectors

Mr Morrison advised that it was his opinion that these turbines would damage the area and would be detrimental to the wider area.

Mr Noakes advised that this proposal would seriously damage the economy and enjoyment of the area. He advised that every other application in the area has been rejected and that he was puzzled why this one should be entertained.

The Chair asked all those present to confirm that they had received a fair hearing and they all confirmed this to be the case.

Councillors Dick Walsh and Michael Breslin referred to the terms of the National code of Conduct for such matters and left the meeting.

Debate

Councillor Taylor advised that he had heard a lot both for and against this proposal and that a lot had been said about tourism. He referred to the

Reporter comments in respect of a recent planning appeal and that the Reporter had been unmoved by the case for the impact on tourism. He advised that it was his opinion that the focus should be on the adverse visual and landscape impact. He referred to the earlier site visit where other masts were seen and advised that he thought these two turbines would add to the clutter of what was already there. He advised that the skyline was also an issue.

Councillor Colville advised that he looked at the landscape and asked if it was worth preserving and where were Members meant to draw the line. He advised that the landscape had already been blighted. He advised that he was struggling but the one mitigating factor was the proliferation of manmade structures on the landscape.

Councillor McNaughton advised that he had the same feeling that this area has already been compromised by structures and masts. He advised that he was very tempted with this application but the one thing which put him against it was in respect of the discussion which took place to reduce the height which worried him and that he would have liked to see the height reduced.

Councillor Blair advised that he did not have a problem with wind turbines. He advised that there was a need to be realistic about the economic advantages this development would bring and that he was quite keen to put the mark down that not only was this area the gateway to the Highlands but the gateway to renewables. He advised that approving this application would not automatically mean approving others. He advised that he thought this development was appropriate and that he was very keen on renewables and that he was minded to move to support this application. He advised that he did not see the scenery being detrimentally affected by the siting of 2 turbines.

Councillor MacMillan advised that there had been quite a lot discussion about the visual impact. He advised that this issue was overcome in respect of a development in Mid Argyll and that tourist buses now went up to that wind farm. He advised that people would get used to the turbines and that tourism would not be affected. He advised that in view of his experience with the previous turbines put up at Loch Fyne he would support this application.

Councillor Currie advised that like Councillor McNaughton he was struggling with this application. He advised that on the one hand he believed single or two turbines were the way forward rather than large wind farms which can be a blot on the landscape. However he advised he would be more in favour of the application if the turbines were a different colour. He advised that it was stated in the report that a darker coloured turbine may reduce visibility. He advised that the reasons for refusal were lengthy and to find a competent motion to approve would be quite difficult.

Councillor McQueen advised that he agreed with Councillor MacMillan.

Councillor MacIntyre advised that he would have had more reservations if

local people had objected. He advised that because the local people had not objected he was minded to support the application.

Councillor Kinniburgh advised that like a lot of his colleagues he was struggling with this application. He advised that it was not a large scale development and that it was at the upper end of small/medium scale and that it came down to the visual impact as far as he was concerned. He advised that he could look around and see other turbines, wind farms and masts and that he was struggling to come to terms with whether 2 turbines in this location would seriously impact it and that he was totally undecided. He advised that if a competent motion was put forward recommending approval of the application he would wish to listen to that before making up his mind.

Councillor Taylor advised that he was quite clear that he would be supporting the Officer's recommendation to refuse this application. He advised that he was moved by the points that were made about what existed on the other side of the water but advised that this was an industrial area and that landscape was more acceptable to what was there. He advised that Argyll and Bute was an area of beautiful landscape which was relied on and notwithstanding its unique aspects but by being consistent he was going to support the Officer's recommendation for refusal.

Councillor Colville advised that he also accepted the Planning Officer's recommendation to refuse and supported Councillor Taylor.

Councillor MacMillan asked if it would be possible to adjourn the meeting for lunch to see if it would be possible to get a competent motion to approve.

Mr Reppke advised that if Members were minded to approve he was not sure if it would be possible to find a competent motion during the lunch break and that further information may be required. He advised that Members could adjourn the meeting to another day.

Councillor Blair advised that he would be keen if there was some way of addressing the concerns around the impact including changing the colour of the turbines. He advised that he would be quite keen to put forward a competent amendment but would like to seek guidance on that and asked for an adjournment to seek that advice.

The Chair ruled and the Committee agreed to adjourn at 1 pm for lunch.

The Committee reconvened at 1.45 pm.

The Chair welcomed everyone back to the meeting and advised that before the Committee adjourned for lunch a Motion had been put forward by Councillor Taylor to support the Planning Officer's recommendation to refuse and that this was seconded by Councillor Colville. He asked Members if anyone had an amendment to put forward.

Amendment

That the meeting be adjourned to another day in order to ascertain whether or not it would be possible to frame a competent Motion to approve the application and also to request that the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services seek further information from the Applicant on whether or not there would be operational constraints to the development if the turbines were located further down the hill and, if so, what evidence could be advanced to detail the issues.

Moved by Councillor Blair, seconded by Councillor MacIntyre

The Amendment was carried by 5 votes to 3 and the Committee resolved accordingly.

Decision

Agreed to adjourn consideration of this application to another day in order to ascertain whether or not it would be possible to frame a competent Motion to approve the application and also to request that the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services seek further information from the Applicant on whether or not there would be operational constraints to the development if the turbines were located further down the hill and, if so, what evidence could be advanced to detail the issues.

(Reference: Report by Head of Planning and Regulatory Services dated 9 April 2013, supplementary report no 1 dated 16 April 2013 and supplementary report no 2 dated 12 September 2013, submitted)