

Argyll and Bute Council
Comhairle Earra Ghaidheal agus Bhoid

Customer Services
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6 December 2010

PLANNING, PROTECTIVE SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE
14 DECEMBER 2010

Please find attached supplementary report which was not previously circulated with the agenda for the above meeting.

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director - Customer Services

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

- 3. RWE NPOWER RENEWABLE LTD: APPLICATION FOR ERECTION OF A 15 TURBINE WINDFARM (45 MEGAWATT MAXIMUM CAPACITY): RAERA FOREST, KILNINVER (REF: 09/01874/PP)**
Report by Head of Planning and Regulatory Services (Pages 1 - 2)

PLANNING, PROTECTIVE SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

Councillor Rory Colville
Councillor Vivien Dance
Councillor Daniel Kelly
Councillor Neil Mackay
Councillor Bruce Marshall
Councillor Roderick McCuish
Councillor James McQueen

Councillor Robin Currie
Councillor Mary-Jean Devon
Councillor David Kinniburgh
Councillor Donald MacMillan
Councillor Alister McAlister
Councillor Alex McNaughton
Councillor Al Reay

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DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES
PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

6th December 2010

Reference Number: 09/01874/PP
Applicants Name: RWE Npower Renewable Ltd
Application Type: Planning Permission
Application Description: Construction of a 15 turbine (45 megawatt maximum capacity) wind farm
Location: Raera Forest, Kilninver, Argyll & Bute

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT 1

(A) INTRODUCTION

Since this proposal was initially reported to PPSL on the 20th October 2010, a supporting document entitled 'additional information' has been provided by the applicants to accompany the copies of Supporting Visuals (with key issues) which had been requested for Members' use for the site visit and the Public Hearing. This report serves to provide Members with a brief update on the 'additional information' document.

(B) ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The 'additional information' report provides a summary of the applicant's response to the issues raised in the committee report to the meeting of the 20th October 2010. The applicants' intention is that it will assist members of the committee in their consideration of the officers' report and recommendation. The applicants conclude that there are *'no significant impacts sufficient to justify a refusal of the scheme, and that overall the balance is in favour of granting consent'*. I would confirm that despite the matters raised in the 'additional information' document, officers do not agree with this statement and the recommendation of refusal still stands for the reasons specified in the report dated 20th October 2010.

Sections covered in the 'additional information' report and key points raised are summarised below:

Approach to Site Selection – site chosen due to lack of international or national designations. Status as an 'area of panoramic quality should not imply a prohibition on development. Design has evolved so as to minimise visual impact.

Forestry – removal necessary to overcome problems with turbulence.

Noise – national guidelines to be met and environmental health are satisfied in this respect.

Private Water Supplies – risk negligible with mitigation measures in place.

Distance to Nearest Neighbour – 6 properties within 2km but no unacceptable noise impact identified

Ornithology – no objection form RSPB subject to a monitoring programme within a Habitat Enhancement Plan.

Carbon Emission & Sustainability – 3.6 year payback period using SNH modelling.

Tourism – whilst the site will be visible, or partly visible, from a range of locations around the coast, available surveys of tourists in Scotland suggest that the likely impact upon tourism is being overstated by Council officers and by SNH.

Ancient Woodland - impact to be minimised with mitigation measures in place.

Community Consultation – exceeds the statutory Pre-Application Consultation requirement.

Landscape and Visual Effects – a robust assessment has been undertaken based upon a valid assessment of baseline landscape character. The Environmental Statement is accurate and sound in showing the inter-visibility between the coast and the site. It is not accepted that the visualisations under-represent the likely impact of the proposal as Scottish Natural Heritage has suggested.

Selected Viewpoints – Due to the effectiveness of screening by topography and/or conifer plantation, visibility of the windfarm is generally partial and intermittent. Turbines do not sit on the coastal ridges as SNH suggest, but lie beyond, protruding up behind those ridges. The scheme has been designed to mitigate as far as possible visual impacts.

(C) CONCLUSION

The 'additional information' detailed above has been taken into consideration insofar as it introduces further matters beyond those already set out in the Environmental Statement. There are no matters of material significance which, individually or in combination, would warrant any change to the stance adopted in my original report and therefore the recommendation to refuse the application still stands, for the reasons set out in the original report to the PPSL Committee of the 20th October 2010.

Author:	Arlene H Knox	Date: 06.12.2010
Reviewing Officer:	Richard Kerr	Date: 06.12.2010

Angus J Gilmour
Head of Planning