

**MINUTES of MEETING of PLANNING, PROTECTIVE SERVICES AND LICENSING
COMMITTEE held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD
on FRIDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2018**

Present: Councillor David Kinniburgh (Chair)

Councillor Gordon Blair	Councillor Alastair Redman
Councillor George Freeman	Councillor Sandy Taylor
Councillor Donald MacMillan	Councillor Richard Trail
Councillor Jean Moffat	

Attending: Charles Reppke, Head of Governance and Law
Sandra Davies, Acting Major Applications Team Leader
Arlene Knox, Senior Planning Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rory Colville, Robin Currie, Mary-Jean Devon, Lorna Douglas, Audrey Forrest, Graham Archibald Hardie and Roderick McCuish.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. EDF ENERGY RENEWABLES LTD (VIA SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSENTS UNIT): ELECTRICITY ACT SECTION 36 CONSULTATION RELATIVE TO AIRIGH WIND FARM: LAND SOUTH WEST OF TARBERT, ARGYLL (REF: 17/02484/S36)

At the PPSL Committee on 24 January 2018 it was agreed to arrange a site visit before considering a response to this consultation. Following the site visit which took place earlier in the day the Acting Major Applications Team Leader presented the report for further consideration along with a supplementary report which advised of correspondence received from the Applicant' Agent which sought to address a number of points raised at the Committee meeting on 24 January 2018. The report also provided Members with the Officers' view on these matters. In light of the above there is no change to the recommendation to object to the proposal for the reasons detailed in the main report dated 22 December 2017.

Motion

To agree to object to this proposal for the reasons detailed in the report of handling.

Moved by Councillor David Kinniburgh seconded by Councillor Jean Moffat

The Chair ruled, and the Committee agreed, to adjourn the meeting at 2.30 pm to allow Members of the Committee time to prepare a competent Amendment.

The Committee reconvened at 2.45 pm.

Amendment

To agree not to object to this proposal for the following reasons:-

1. Landscape impact is minimised given that the site sits lower in the landscape due to the surrounding topography and as such it does not have a significant impact on the Upper Forest Moor Mosaic and the Rocky Mosaic character types.
2. The location of the proposed wind farm is distant from visual receptors and as such the impact is minimised by this separation and as such it does not have a significant adverse visual impact on the appreciation of South Knapdale.
3. The distance from existing wind farms is substantial which minimises the cumulative impact that can be perceived. Given that the proposed wind farm will sit in a bowl it will not extend the cumulative visual impact from Kintyre into Knapdale.

Given those views, to raise no objection on the basis of a minor departure from the specified policies and guidance in the Local Development Plan.

Moved by Councillor George Freeman, seconded by Councillor Richard Trail

The requisite number of Members required the vote to be taken by calling the roll and Members voted as follows:-

Motion

Councillor Kinniburgh
Councillor MacMillan
Councillor Moffat
Councillor Redman

Amendment

Councillor Blair
Councillor Freeman
Councillor Taylor
Councillor Trail

On there being an equality of votes the Chair gave his casting vote for the Motion and the Committee resolved accordingly.

Decision

The Committee agreed to object to this planning application for the following reasons and that the Scottish Government be notified accordingly:-

1. The proposal lies in the Upland Forest Moor Mosaic (UFMM) (6b) landscape character type (LCT) identified in the 'Argyll and Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study' (LWECS 2017) which has established that this LCT has an overall 'high sensitivity' to Very Large typology wind turbines and affords no scope to accommodate them. The area in which the proposal is located forms the landscape backdrop to the coastal, small scale, settled Rocky Mosaic LCT and to views across the scenic West Loch Tarbert area. The proposal lies within the western part of this area which is designated an Area of Panoramic Quality (Knapdale APQ). This landscape also forms the backdrop to the adjacent Knapdale National Scenic Area (NSA).

In this location, there are a number of landscape characteristics increasing sensitivity to large or very large turbines, including the scale, complexity of landform, visual sensitivity, and landscape context. The close proximity of the development to the highly sensitive coastal landscape (Rocky Mosaic LCT) and intrusion into the landscape of South Knapdale as appreciated from locations across West Loch Tarbert, and across the sea from locations in West Kintyre and from Gigha, are key constraints. At 149.5m to blade tip the turbines will appear out of scale/too large in relation to the higher open ridge to the north-east and distract from the landscape setting of West Loch Tarbert (as represented by VP 9 Dun Skeig). These uplands currently form an uncluttered backdrop to the scenic West Loch Tarbert area and the introduction of development at this scale would compromise this composition and significantly detract from the contribution South Knapdale makes to the experience of West Loch Tarbert (as represented by VP 10 Ronachan) and the appreciation of this area across water (as represented by VP F2 from the Islay-Jura ferry).

The number and size of turbines proposed would therefore have a significant adverse effect upon the character, qualities and experience of the landscape within areas of the Upland Forest Moor Mosaic (6b) and the smaller scaled and settled 'Rocky Mosaic' (20) landscape character types and associated seascape. This would be clearly contrary to the guidance set out in the 'Argyll and Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study' 2017.

The foregoing environmental considerations are of such magnitude that they cannot be reasonably offset by the projected direct or indirect benefits which a development of this scale would make, including local economic benefits and the achievement of climate change related commitments. Having due regard to the above it is considered that this proposal is inconsistent with the provisions of the Scottish Planning Policy; Scottish Government's Onshore wind turbine: planning advice (May 2014); 'Onshore Wind Policy Statement' (December 2017); Policies LDP STRAT 1 - Sustainable Development; LDP DM 1 – Development within the Development Management Zones; LDP 6 – Supporting the Sustainable Growth of Renewables; and LDP 9 – Development Setting, Layout and Design; of the 'Argyll & Bute Local Development Plan' (adopted 2015) and Supplementary Guidance: SG LDP ENV 13 – Impact on Areas of Panoramic Quality (APQs); and the conclusions of the 'Argyll & Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study' (LWECS) 2017.

2. There is extensive visibility of the proposal from the West Loch Tarbert area, the wider seascape (including islands) and from part of the west coast of Kintyre. Development on the scale proposed would intrude in scenic views from these locations and would compromise the contribution South Knapdale makes to the landscape setting of West Loch Tarbert in particular. It would pose significant adverse effect on views from the Islay – Jura ferry (as represented by VP F2) and would extend the influence of wind farm development upon the Isle of Gigha from locations to the east within Kintyre, to also include this additional location to the

north. The proposal's significant visual effects would include popular and scenic walking routes including part of the Kintyre Way (as represented by VP 10 Ronachan), the walk to Dun Skeig (as represented by VP 9 Dun Skeig), coastal locations popular for recreation on the north-west coast of Kintyre and around the West Loch Tarbert area, and would include views from the Islay/Jura ferry and recreational watercraft. In addition to the inappropriate scale of the turbines, the design results in a poor layout and image from some locations (as represented by VP 3) where there is a considerable variation in turbine position/height.

The proposal would therefore lead to significant adverse visual effects in the appreciation of South Knapdale from frequented coastal locations in west Kintyre and from the Isle of Gigha where sensitive receptors in terms of transport routes, settlement and tourism/recreational assets are concentrated, and in views of South Knapdale from locations offshore. This would be clearly contrary to the guidance set out in the 'Argyll and Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study' 2017.

The foregoing environmental considerations are of such magnitude that they cannot be reasonably offset by the projected direct or indirect benefits which a development of this scale would make, including local economic benefits and the achievement of climate change related commitments.

Having due regard to the above, it is considered that this proposal is therefore inconsistent with the provisions of the Scottish Planning Policy and Scottish Government's Onshore wind turbine: planning advice (May 2014); 'Onshore Wind Policy Statement' (December 2017); Policies LDP STRAT 1 - Sustainable Development; LDP DM 1 – Development within the Development Management Zones; LDP 6 – Supporting the Sustainable Growth of Renewables; and LDP 9 – Development Setting, Layout and Design; of the 'Argyll & Bute Local Development Plan (adopted 2015) and Supplementary Guidance: SG LDP ENV 13 – Impact on Areas of Panoramic Quality (APQs); and the Argyll & Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (LWECS) 2017.

3. The proposal would result in the spread of the effects of wind farm development from the Kintyre peninsula, where development is currently concentrated, across West Loch Tarbert into Knapdale, thereby posing significant adverse cumulative effects on the experience of Knapdale and Kintyre. The uplands of Knapdale presently provide an important uncluttered backdrop to, and contribute to the scenic composition of, West Loch Tarbert. This proposal would extend the influence of very large scale wind turbine development to the northern side of West Loch Tarbert, thereby reducing the distinctiveness of the Knapdale landscape and the contribution which it makes to the setting of sensitive coastal areas valued for their scenic qualities. In particular, it would impinge on the dramatic coastal panoramas of the Paps of Jura as experienced from west Kintyre where they are first revealed (Clachan and Ronachan).

This change to the established pattern of development, and the spread of development into a new area would also be experienced from locations offshore, particularly from the Isle of Gigha and from key ferry routes. Significant adverse cumulative visual effects would occur from offshore, and from parts of Gigha as represented by VP 12, the sea and West Loch Tarbert as represented by the Islay – Jura ferry view (F2) where, in combination with Freasdail Wind Farm, wind farms would then have an unwelcome presence on both sides of West Loch Tarbert.

These significant adverse cumulative landscape and visual effects would be clearly contrary to the guidance set out in the 'Argyll and Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study' 2017.

The foregoing environmental considerations are of such magnitude that they cannot be reasonably offset by the projected direct or indirect benefits which a development of this scale would make, including local economic benefits and the achievement of climate change related commitments.

Having due regard to the above, it is considered that this proposal is therefore inconsistent with the provisions of the Scottish Planning Policy; Scottish Government's Onshore wind turbine: planning advice (May 2014); 'Onshore Wind Policy Statement' (December 2017); Policies LDP STRAT 1 - Sustainable Development; LDP DM 1 – Development within the Development Management Zones; LDP 6 – Supporting the Sustainable Growth of Renewables; and LDP 9 – Development Setting, Layout and Design; of the 'Argyll & Bute Local Development Plan (adopted 2015) and Supplementary Guidance: SG LDP ENV 13 – Impact on Areas of Panoramic Quality (APQs); and the Argyll & Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (LWECS) 2017.

(Reference: Report by Head of Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services dated 22 December 2017, supplementary report 1 dated 22 January 2018 and supplementary report number 2 dated 6 February 2018, submitted)