

Delegated or Committee Planning Application Report and Report of Handling as required by Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 relative to applications for Planning Permission or Planning Permission in Principle

Reference No: 11/00937/PP

Planning Hierarchy: Local

Applicant: Mr Jonathan Waxman, Genesis Energy Ltd

Proposal: Erection of wind turbine (60m to hub, 84m to blade tip), with associated substation, crane pad and temporary hardstanding and the upgrading of 550m of existing forestry track.

Site Address: Land North East Of Redesdale House, Skipness, Tarbert

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT No. 1

A. SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to update Members on further information which has been received since completion of the original report circulated with the agenda papers.

B. FURTHER SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Visibility Report

A report prepared by Genesis Energy dealing with visibility of the proposed turbine from the local road network was received on the 15th January 2013. The aim of this further study was to determine on the ground visibility of the proposal, to supplement the theoretical visibility study submitted with the planning application.

Theoretical visibility is calculated on the assumption of no vegetation, using a terrain model that may not capture the smallest surface undulations and does not include buildings. Therefore in certain circumstances it can overestimate the observed visual impact of a proposal on an area. The study assesses the visibility from three major roads within 10km of the proposal: the A83, the B8001 (Claonaig road), and the B8024 (Kilberry road).

The total length of roads within a 10km radius of the proposal is 65km (40.4 miles). The zone of theoretical visibility predicts that of the 65km of the road within the 10km

radius, the turbine would be visible for 23.4km (14.5 miles), 36% of the total length of roads within 10km.

This study concludes that theoretical visibility (not taking into account any vegetation cover) is 23.4km of the 65km of roads within 10km. Furthermore, that a field study of vegetation cover shows that in practice the visibility would be significantly lower than this, mostly due to existing vegetation cover. In total the distance on local roads that the turbine would be visible is approximately 18km, out of the total 65km of roads within 10km of the turbine location. It further concludes that as the study was undertaken at the time of minimum vegetation cover, this probably overestimates the area from which the turbine would be visible in the summer months when the trees are in leaf. The full copy of this report can be viewed on the Council's website.

The reason for submission of this report is unclear as it does not alleviate any of the serious landscape, visual and cumulative impact concerns detailed in the original PPSL report. When determining wind turbine applications the fact that 'Zones of Theoretical Visibility' cannot take vegetation and buildings into account is acknowledged and considered by officers and SNH's Landscape Advisors.

The report only covers three transport routes within the overall 'Zone of Theoretical Visibility Area' – a vast study area including a 35km radius from the site. It does not alleviate any of the landscape impact concerns identified in the original PPSL report. It is still considered that at 84m in height to the blade tip, the extent of visibility, the impacts upon key viewpoints and presence of a sporadic and isolated turbine in the landscape would give rise to the unacceptable consequences cited in the recommended reason for refusal. It does not alleviate any of the visual impact concerns identified in the original PPSL report, particularly in regard to the following sensitive receptors: properties in very close proximity; the B8001 and National Cycle Route 73 (significant adverse effect if the forestry is felled); Settlements, such as Whitehouse; Kintyre Way SE of Cruach nam Fiadh; B8024 (near Torinturk) and National Cycle Route 78; Ardpatrik House/peninsula; and Catacol Bay - (North Arran NSA).

The report makes no reference to any other wind farm and focuses only on the traffic routes referred to previously. It does not address the serious adverse cumulative sequential visual impact the proposal will have from the Kintyre peninsula and associated transport routes (road and ferry), Knapdale, and West Loch Tarbert. Furthermore, the report does not address that fact that this proposal would disperse wind development along the length of the peninsula from the north of the peninsula south to Machrihanish, and would introduce wind development to a 'new area' to the north of the Kennacraig – Claonaig road which is sensitive in landscape terms, resulting in a significant adverse cumulative impact.

Additional Photomontages

Officers recently requested the applicant to provide additional photomontages (only wirelines contained in landscape & visual assessment) for Viewpoints 1 – Spion Kop, Kennels, 2 – Lonlia Property, and 3 – Whitehouse to assist Members in the

determination process. Their submission has had no bearing on the officer's recommendation, but is considered beneficial from a contextual perspective in terms of topographical features.

C. COMMUNITY BENEFIT

It is understood that a letter from the applicants has been circulated to Members with details of the intended level of Community Benefit to be provided should the proposal be successful in obtaining planning permission. This is not a valid 'material planning consideration'. In the event that permission were to be granted, the negotiation of any community benefit, either directly with the local community or under the auspices of the Council, would take place outside the application process. It should be noted however, that there has been no expression of support for the proposal by local residents and the Tarbert & Skipness Community Council have expressed their opposition to the proposal, despite the indication of prospect of community benefit being associated with the development.

D. RECOMMENDATION

The above additional information has been taken into account but does not change the previous recommendation of refusal. This proposal remains recommended for refusal for the reasons stated in the original report.

Author of Report: Arlene Knox

Date: 21st January 2013

Reviewing Officer: Richard Kerr

Date: 21st January 2013

Angus Gilmour
Head of Planning and Regulatory Services