

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: CONSULTATION FROM PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

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DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED: ERECTION OF 7 WIND TURBINES, BAMFF ESTATE, 5KM NORTH WEST OF ALYTH

REFERENCE: P & K Ref I2/00963/FLL

APPLICANT: SCOTTISH POWER RENEWABLES

RECOMMENDATION: NO OBJECTION

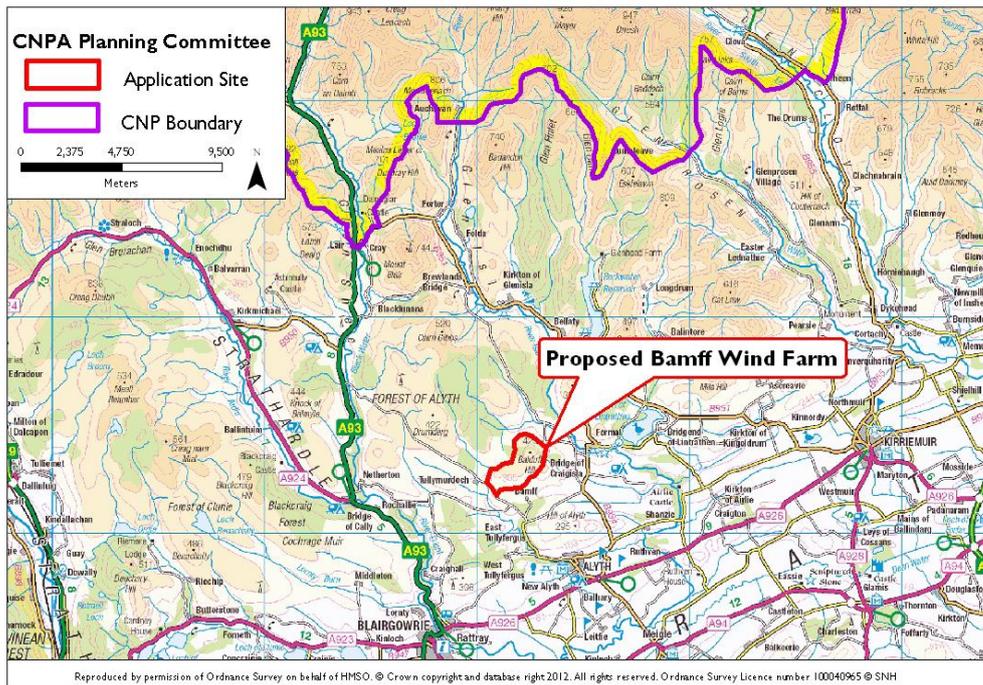


Fig I.: Location Plan

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to provide a consultation response to Perth and Kinross Council on a planning application for eleven wind turbines, situated at the Bamff Estate 5 km to the north west of Alyth. The site is some 12 kilometres from the boundary of the National Park at its nearest point.
2. The Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) has been consulted in relation to any impacts upon the park as the application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2011. The planning issues being considered in relation to this consultation are whether there are any impacts upon the qualities of the park

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

3. The site is located some 12 kilometres to the south of the CNP beyond the Highland boundary fault on agricultural land with forestry to its edges. The site is approximately 5 km south west of Loch of Lintrathen.
4. The proposal seeks consent for seven wind turbines measuring up to 111 metres to tip with a combined capacity of 14MW. Associated access tracks, borrow pits, met mast and hard standing areas are also proposed.
5. The application is accompanied by an Environmental Assessment as noted earlier, and this includes chapters on ecological and landscape impacts. In this regard the Environmental Statement (ES) makes reference to the Cairngorms National Park. The statement considers that any landscape and visual impacts will be negligible.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

Strategic Policy - Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017

6. The Cairngorms National Park Plan sets out the vision and overarching strategy for managing the Park and provides focus and priorities at a time of limited financial resources. The Plan also provides a strategic context for the Local Development Plan and shows how the four aims of the National Park can be achieved together. It sets out the strategic direction and priorities for the Park.
7. Three long term outcomes for the Park are set out as follows:
 - A sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities;
 - A special place for people and nature with natural and cultural heritage enhanced; and
 - People enjoying the park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences.

These outcomes address the interaction of the three main characteristics of the National Park these being that the Park is an internationally important area for nature conservation; a fragile rural economy, and an internationally known tourism destination. Recognising the relationship of these outcomes is at the heart of the National Park. A series of work programmes to help deliver the outcomes is set out in the Plan.

8. Policy 1.3 states that large scale commercial wind turbines [> 1 turbine, > 30m in height] are not compatible with the special qualities of the National Park and are not considered to be appropriate within the National Park or where outside the Park they affect its landscape setting.

CONSULTATIONS

9. **The CNPA Senior Heritage Officer:** In general terms the conclusions of the Landscape and Visual Assessment are acceptable though there is a tendency to underestimate the significance of the impact but only from a few locations. The location of wind farm is approx 12km from the boundary of the Park and is set within a relatively settled landscape. There is no particular perceptual link to the National Park and consequently there is no direct landscape impact upon the CNP.
10. The visual impact of greatest magnitude is to the edge of the National Park above Glen Clova, though it is relatively discrete. There are views from higher points such as Lochnagar, the Mounth and Mount Keen but they are well over 20km distant. In cumulative terms the proposal contributes to the cumulative effects of multiple wind farms around the park as a whole but its individual contribution is limited within this sector of the Park boundary where the numbers of wind farms are not as high as other parts. The habitat impacts are well beyond the boundary of the Park and in this situation raptors and geese will be considered by SNH.
11. Overall, in conclusion while there are some impacts upon the Park they are not significant enough in their own right to sustain an objection.

APPRAISAL

12. The proposed wind farm is located on a site which lies approximately 12km away from the southern boundary of the National Park. Based upon the conclusions of the Environmental Statement and the location of the site relative to the Park, there are unlikely to be any significant ecological issues in this case, issues relating to raptors and geese will be dealt with by SNH.
13. Consequently, the key planning issue for consideration is that of the visual and landscape impact on the setting of the National Park, and views into and out of this part of the Park.
14. The ES suggests that any landscape and visual effects upon the National Park will be negligible. The CNPA Senior Heritage Officer has looked at the

proposal and while considering that there is some underestimation of impacts this is only related to a few isolated locations. The site is located a considerable distance from the National Park and importantly is set in a more settled landscape character area which differs from the landscapes in the Park.

15. There are a number of other wind farms/proposals in the area including ones at Drumderg and Tullymurdoch. However, at the distances from the CNP taken together with the more settled landscape characteristics of the area when viewed from the southern hill summits of the Park there would be no significant cumulative impact from this wind farm in combination with others. The limited contribution of this proposal to the base line of existing wind farms/proposals is recognised by the CNPA Senior Heritage Officer.
16. While the development would be visible from some points in the Park the impacts are not considered to be of an extent that would warrant objection to the proposal. The proposal has been considered with respect to the statutory aims of the National Park and is not considered to conflict with these objectives. Accordingly it is recommended that the CNPA raise no objection to the proposal.

RECOMMENDATION

17. That Members of the Committee support a recommendation of **NO OBJECTION** to the construction of seven wind turbines of height 111 metres to tip at Bamff Estate, 5 km NW of Alyth

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