

PLANNING APPLICATION: 08/01412/FUL

In the event that a recommendation on this planning application is overturned the Committee is reminded of the advice contained on the front page of the agenda for Reports on Applications

The Proposal

- The application proposes the erection of a small scale wind turbine at Allheagar, Mundole Forres. The turbine will be set on a 15 metre high tower and the rotors will be 5.57 metres diameter.

The Site

- The property is located to the south end of a group of houses on the east side of the public road from Balnageith to Mundole, opposite Mundole Farm, near Forres.

Policy / Objections-Representations / Consultations - See Appendix

History

None.

Advertisement

None.

Observations

Impact of the proposal on the character and amenity of rural setting of the site L/IMP2

The proposed wind turbine is of a sleek appearance and as such will not be overly prominent to view.

In these circumstances the proposed development is considered to be acceptable.

Author/Contact Officer: Jim Gibson
Planning Officer

Ext: 01343 563279

Signature (Alan Short, Development Control Manager)

R A STEWART
DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

APPENDIX

POLICY

Moray Structure Plan 2007 and/or Moray Local Plan 2000

Policy 2: Environment and Resources

The Moray Structure Plan Strategy will be supported by: -

- f) conserving and enhancing the areas built heritage resources and their settings.

Policy L/IMP2: Development in Rural Areas

The Council will seek to ensure that all proposals for development in the rural area (i.e. all areas in Moray outwith town settlement and rural community boundaries) are compatible in terms of character, amenity and design, integrate sensitively into the environment and, where possible, located within easy walking range of public transport (this latter requirement will particularly apply to large scale developments). The Council will, therefore, pay special regard to matters such as traffic and landscape impact, accessibility, loss of productive or biodiverse land, siting, scale, colour and energy conservation. The Council will consult relevant organisations such as Scottish Natural Heritage, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency etc. on significant development proposals and 'The Moray Landscape Character Assessment' report as prepared by Scottish Natural Heritage will be utilised to inform decisions on siting and locating within the landscape.

Emerging Moray Local Plan 2008 - Material Consideration

IMP1: Development Requirements

New development will require to be sensitively sited, designed and serviced appropriate to the amenity of the surrounding area. It must meet the following criteria:

- a. the scale, density and character must be appropriate to the surrounding area,
- b. the development must be integrated into the surrounding landscape,
- c. adequate roads, public transport, and cycling and footpath provision must be available, at a level appropriate to the development,
- d. adequate water, drainage and power provision must be made,
- e. sustainable urban drainage systems should be used where appropriate, in all new developments
- f. there must be adequate availability of social, educational, healthcare and community facilities,

- g. the development should, where appropriate, demonstrate how it will incorporate renewable energy systems and sustainable design and construction. Supplementary Guidance will be produced to expand upon some of these criteria,
- h. provision for the long term maintenance of public landscape and amenity areas must be made,
- i. conservation of natural and built environment resources must be demonstrated,
- j. appropriate provision to deal with flood related issues must be made, including the possibility of coastal flooding from rising sea levels and coastal erosion,
- k. pollution, including ground water must be avoided,
- l. appropriate provision to deal with contamination issues must be made, and
- m. the development must not sterilise significant workable reserves of minerals, prime quality agricultural land, or preferred areas for forestry planting.
- n. where appropriate, arrangements for waste management should be provided.

OBJECTIONS-REPRESENTATIONS

The application has resulted in letters of objection being received from:-

- Robert and Rosalyn Mackay, Sonnagreen, Balnakeith, Forres

The grounds of objection are as follows:

- **The noise the turbine generates will cause disturbance to us.**
Applicant's Response: The turbine in question has no gearbox to help reduce noise impact. The only noise that is audible is the gentle 'swooshing noise' of the blades cutting through the air. It is not possible to totally remove this noise, however, steps can be taken to reduce it substantially. The blades on this model are aerodynamically designed to produce the right level of lift for maximisation of power production, to allow stalling in higher wind speeds to protect the turbine and to allow the blade to cut through the air like a knife - therefore reducing noise levels.
Comment: The Environmental Health Manager has suggested a planning condition restricting noise level from the unit.
- **The bird and wildlife in the area will be disturbed.**
Applicant's Response: The RSPB supports the sustainable development of renewable energy such as wind power because it helps mitigate climate change, which they believe 'poses the most significant long-term threat to the environment. Studies across the country at the UK's wind farm installations show hit rates of less than 1 per turbine per year, moving vehicles significantly kills more birds. Quite simply birds are in more danger from colliding with overhead power lines than they are from wind turbines.
Comment: It is not anticipated that a domestic scale wind turbine will impact on the bird or wildlife in the vicinity of this site.

- **The size of the construction is not in keeping with the surrounding countryside and will be visible to us.**

Applicant's Response: The application is for a domestic scale development, which by its nature requires to be sited in an area of good exposure. It is therefore not possible to make it invisible, particularly in close proximity to the site.

Comment: Along with much of modern technology, e.g. overhead power lines, telecommunication masts and grain silos, wind turbines are such that they cannot be hidden from view. It is not anticipated that in the wider context, being able to see this wind turbine would significantly impact on the amenity of the objectors.

CONSULTATIONS

Environmental Health Manager, Development Services - A condition should be applied limiting the noise output of the turbine.

Contaminated Land, Development Services - Informative note regarding the close proximity to potential contaminated land should be included within any consent granted.