
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: CONSULTATION FROM ABERDEENSHIRE
COUNCIL: HIRNLEY WIND TURBINE

Prepared by: ANDREW TAIT, PLANNING OFFICER
(DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT)

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED: CONSTRUCTION OF ONE
WIND TURBINE MAXIMUM
HEIGHT 79.6 METRES, LAND SW
OF HIRNLEY, LUMPHANAN,
ABERDEENSHIRE

REFERENCE: N/A

APPLICANT: GREEN CAT RENEWABLES LTD

DATE CONSULTED: 29 JULY 2011

RECOMMENDATION: NO OBJECTION

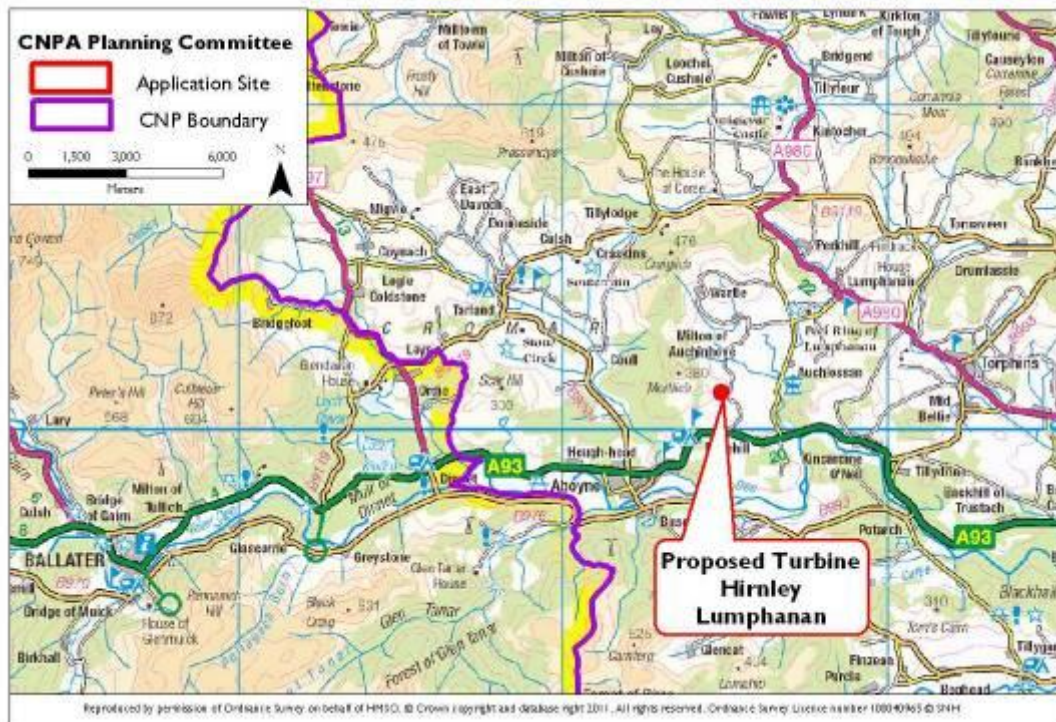


Fig. 1 - Location Plan

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to provide a consultation response to Aberdeenshire Council on a planning application for a single wind turbine, situated at Hirnley, mid way between Aboyne and Lumphanan. This comes to the CNPA under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2011. The only issues to be considered are the Landscape and Visual Impacts on the Cairngorms National Park and its setting.
2. The CNPA was consulted some time ago prior to the application being submitted and provided some advice on viewpoints that should be used in any assessment.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

3. The site is located approximately on the east facing slope of a hill known as Mortlich some 6km north east of the Park boundary at Bridge of Dess to the south west of Aboyne, Aberdeenshire (see fig. 1).
4. The application comprises a single wind turbine with a capacity of 800kw. The turbine would measure 55.6 metres to the hub and 79.6 metres to the blade tip at its highest.
5. The Landscape and Visual assessment within the Environmental Statement (ES) includes reference to the Cairngorms National Park. The statement considers that there will be no significant landscape and visual impacts.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

Strategic Policy - Cairngorms National Park Plan 2007

6. **Strategic objectives for Landscape, Built and Historic Environment** include, amongst others; maintaining and enhancing the distinctive landscapes across the Park; conserving and enhancing the sense of wildness in the montane area and other parts of the Park; and ensuring development complements and enhances the landscape character of the Park. This section also emphasises the importance of assessing the potential impacts of public and private roads, masts, utilities, renewable energy developments (in and where relevant beyond the Park), to ensure that designs and locations do not detract from the landscape character. Strategic Objective a) on Biodiversity seeks to conserve and enhance the condition and diversity of habitats and species present throughout the Park. Objective e) seeks to ensure that populations of species given special protection under the Habitat Regulations, the Wildlife and Countryside Act, the Nature Conservation Act, and European Directives are stable or where appropriate increasing.

7. **Strategic objectives for Energy** include; contributing to national targets for greater renewable production through increasing community, business and domestic-scale renewable energy schemes. However, large scale wind farms are not considered to be appropriate in the National Park due to landscape and natural heritage impacts, but the development of domestic, and community-scale facilities in a full range of energy options should be pursued in appropriate locations.

Local Plan Policy - Cairngorms National Park Local Plan (2010)

8. The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan was formally adopted on 29th October 2010. The full text can be found at:
<http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/parkauthority/publications/results.php?publicationID=265>
9. *Policy 6 – Landscape*: there will be a presumption against any development that does not complement and enhance the landscape character of the Park, and in particular the setting of the proposed development. Exceptions will only be made where any significant adverse effects on the landscape are clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance and all of the adverse effects on the setting of the proposed development have been minimised and mitigated through appropriate siting, layout, scale, design and construction.

CONSULTATIONS

10. **The CNPA Landscape Officer** confirms that this single turbine would not have any significant landscape and visual effects upon the Park.

APPRAISAL

11. The proposed wind farm is located on a site which lies approximately 6km away from the boundary of the National Park. The only potential issue for consideration is that of visual and landscape impact on the setting of the National Park, and views into and out of this part of the Park.
12. The ES suggests that there will be no significant landscape and visual effects upon the National Park. The CNPA Landscape Advisor considers that the proposal would have no significant effects upon the Park.

13. The turbine is located on an east facing slope of Mortlich which faces away from the Park. Effectively, the higher slopes of Mortlich screen the turbine from many viewpoints on the eastern boundary of the Park. This taken together with the distance away and the size of the turbine means that this single turbine would not have any adverse landscape or visual impact upon the character or the setting of the National Park. The proposal has been considered with respect to the statutory aims of the National Park and it is recommended that the CNPA raise no objection to the proposal.

RECOMMENDATION

14. That Members of the Committee support a recommendation of **NO OBJECTION** to the construction of one wind turbine of a maximum height of 79.6 metres on land SW of Hirnley, Lumphanan

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10 August 2011

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