

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: CONSULTATION FROM ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL: CAIRNBORROW WINDFARM, HUNTLY

Prepared by: ROBERT GRANT, PLANNING OFFICER (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT)

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED: CONSTRUCTION OF WIND FARM CONSISTING OF 10 WIND TURBINES (INCLUDING COMMUNITY TURBINE) AT CAIRNBORROW & NORRY HILL, BY HUNTLY, ABERDEENSHIRE

REFERENCE: N/A

APPLICANT: CAIRNBORROW WIND ENERGY LTD

DATE CONSULTED: 15 JUNE 2011

RECOMMENDATION: NO OBJECTION

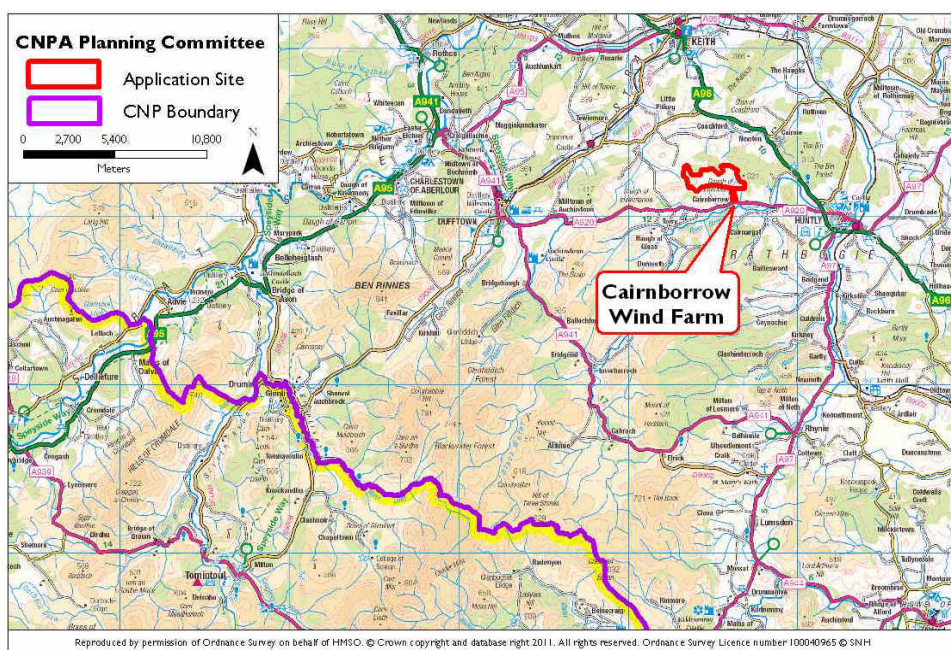


Fig. 1 - Location Plan (park boundary yellow)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to provide a consultation response to Aberdeenshire Council on a planning application for a 10 turbine wind farm, situated at Cairnborrow & Norry Hill, by Huntly. 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 at the EIA scoping stage and raised no concern regarding the proposals due to its distance away - 24km from the National Park.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

3. The site is located approximately 6km north west of Huntly, Aberdeenshire (see fig. 1) at land at Cairnborrow and Norry Hill, north of the A920 Dufftown to Huntly road. The Cairngorms National Park is 24km away to the south west. Glen Livet and Strathdon are to be found within this area of the National Park, as are the Ladder Hills.
4. The wind farm would comprise 10 wind turbines (one of which will be a dedicated community turbine) with an anticipated maximum capacity of 2.5MW each. A maximum blade tip height of 110m is proposed for each turbine.
5. The Landscape and Visual assessment within the Environmental Statement (ES) includes reference to the Cairngorms National Park. This states that a very limited area to the extreme north east tip of the National Park (located 24km SW) and a small area of the Cromdale Hills would be affected. No Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV's) or photomontages have been produced for the National Park due to its distance away from the site.

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 at this distance this wind farm is unlikely to have more than a slight or negligible effect either in its own right or cumulatively with other schemes, on the National Park

APPRAISAL

11. The proposed windfarm is located on a site which lies approximately 24km away from the north-eastern 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 only a very limited impact on the north east extent of the National Park. The CNPA Landscape Advisor confirms that she is in agreement with this position and has no concerns.
13. Due to the considerable distance away from the north east corner of the Cairngorms National Park, some 24km away, it is considered that the proposed wind farm at Cairnborrow and Norry Hill, Huntly would not have any adverse visual or landscape 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

11. That Members of the Committee support a recommendation of **NO OBJECTION** to the construction of wind farm consisting of 10 (unspecified) wind turbines (including community turbine) hub height up to 70m tip height up to 110m, (total capacity 25mw) at Cairnborrow, Huntly.

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09 July 2011

The map on the first page of this report has been produced to aid in the statutory process of dealing with planning applications. The map is to help identify the site and its surroundings and to aid Planning Officers, Committee Members and the Public in the determination of the proposal. Maps shown in the Planning Committee Report can only be used for the purposes of the Planning Committee. Any other use risks infringing Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Maps produced within this Planning Committee Report can only be reproduced with the express permission of the Cairngorms National Park Authority and other Copyright holders. This permission must be granted in advance.