

Demi Gray

From: Karen Richardson <karen.ferriby@gmail.com>
Sent: 02 September 2024 09:27
To: Econsents Admin
Subject: Howgate Community Council submissions - Cloich and Torfichen wind farm applications
Attachments: Torfichen wind farm application submission 02 09 24.docx; Cloich wind farm application HCC submission 02 09 24.docx

Hello Energy Consents Unit

Please see attached submissions by Howgate Community Council (HCC) in relation to the wind farm applications for Cloich and Torfichen. The Community Council understands these submissions will be given consideration as part of the assessment of the Cloich and Torfichen wind farm applications:

- Cloich wind farm application (ECU Reference - ECU00003288) - Submission by HCC
- Torfichen wind farm application - (ECU Reference - ECU00004661) - Holding Objection by HCC

Thank you.

Regards

Karen Richardson
(Secretary - Howgate Community Council)

2nd September 2024

Howgate District Community Council represents the local community in an area spanning from Loanstone, Pomathorn, Fallhills, Leadburn and the village of Howgate, encompassing around 300 households.

We write to express concerns raised by our residents with regard to the proposed development of wind turbines at Cloich, in particular in relation to the proposed traffic route for the turbine components.

First of all we wish to note that as a community council we understand the need and benefits of onshore wind energy generation. Climate change is an issue that affects us all, and expanding our onshore energy capacity will be inevitable if we are to reach net zero and mitigate the worst impacts of climate change. Our district already sees significant storm damage each winter, which is likely to intensify as a result of our heating world. So we are not opposed to the development of windfarms in Midlothian per se, and consider each development on a case by case basis.

In the case of this proposed development at Cloich, while this appears in general terms to be a suitable location for the proposed development, we want to note the lack of proper consideration of impacts on Midlothian in the documentation submitted by the developer. The visualisations submitted of landscape impact primarily offer views from the Borders, whereas the proposed development is only a stones throw from the Midlothian council perimeter. We believe Midlothian Council and communities in Midlothian close to the proposed development have not been adequately consulted in the development of this proposal, and as such it is difficult for us to properly assess the merits or lack of, of this proposal at this site.

Setting that aside, the main cause for significant concern within our community is the proposed traffic route of the turbine components. Based on the documentation on the developer's website, the suggested route currently travels through Howgate at a seemingly impossible right angle across the central roundabout and by way of 'scything across the village green' as one of our residents expressed it. Howgate is a conservation village, and the proposed measures needed to facilitate passage of the turbine components through our narrow road carries the risk of damage to the public areas and private property in the village.

We strongly suspect the proposed route to have been arrived at on the basis of a desk-based study only, as there are also several overhead wires along this route in the village, and residents have highlighted that other less disruptive approaches – either through the village from a different angle or circumventing it entirely – are possible and should be considered.

There is dismay among our residents at the lack of engagement both with our community and Midlothian council in developing the proposed route. As such, any consent for this development must be conditional on proper and constructive engagement with local residents to find an optimum route that minimises disruption and damage to the village. This would of course also be to the proposed developers' benefit, as local knowledge of the challenges of this route may help ease passage and save costs for them.

Howgate Community Council

We note that Scottish Borders Council have also made the withdrawal of their objection to this proposed development conditional on development of a traffic management plan for the proposed works in their council area along the route. We ask that this also considers in detail the route through the Midlothian Council area.

As such, we strongly urge the developer to engage with Midlothian Council which, regrettably, the proposed developer appears not yet to have consulted, and ourselves to discuss appropriate approaches for the traffic.

Further, Howgate Community Council would like to invite the proposed developer - in the strongest possible terms – to engage the residents of the proposed route of the turbine components immediately, i.e. before any decision is made regarding consent of the proposed development. We believe this would be not only in the best interests of residents, but of the proposed developer. We have contacted the proposed developer to that effect and at time of writing await a response.

It is vital in our efforts to combat climate change that the voice of local communities is heard and adequately considered, especially where the community is open to a constructive dialogue. In cases like Cloich, where a development is within one council area but very close to another, the potential impacts need to be considered in full for both areas and in our opinion the development of this particular proposal has consistently fallen short in doing so.