



Green Cat Renewables

FINAVON HILL ESTATE
WIND TURBINE

Appeal Statement

May 2015

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Prepared for:

Mr. J Sanderson (Finavon Hill Estate) &
Construction Partner Kilmac Construction
Ltd

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Prepared by:

Green Cat Renewables Ltd



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Checked By: Graham Donnachie	Date: 08/04/2015
Approved By: Cameron Sutherland	Date: 20/04/2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Appeal is against the refusal by Angus Council of the planning application for the erection of a single wind turbine of 40m to hub height and 67m to blade tip including ancillary infrastructure at Finavon Estate, Angus. The planning application reference is **14/000827/FULL**.

This Statement has been prepared by Green Cat Renewables Ltd (The Agent) on behalf of Mr. J Sanderson (Finavon Hill Estate) and construction partner Kilmac Construction Ltd (the Appellant) to support an Appeal against the refusal by Angus Council of the planning application. The application was determined by the Planning Officer under delegated powers and as such this appeal is to the Local Review Body, in this case the Development Management Review Committee (DMRC).

The Decision Notice (**B03**) and accompanying Report of Handling (**B04**) were issued on 11th March 2015. The reason for the refusal was specified as:

- The site selected would not be capable of absorbing the proposed development to ensure it fits into the landscape, therefore resulting in unacceptable adverse landscape impacts to landscape character, setting within the immediate and wider landscape, and sensitive viewpoints.

The Appellant contends that:

1. The application is compliant with planning policy in all aspects of the development, with the exception to the turbine height recommendations made within the landscape capacity study. In this regard there have been substantial changes made to the Angus Council capacity study guidelines over the development history which the Appellant has worked hard to comply with whilst respecting operational efficiency.
2. No statutory consultee objections have been raised and approximately 80% of the public comments are supportive the development.
3. The benefits of the development to Finavon Estate and the local economy are significant, and it is considered by the Appellant that the benefits of the scheme to the local economy greatly outweigh the landscape impacts.

The Appellant therefore contends that the proposed development is in compliance with the applicable policies and guidance, and should be supported.

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LIST OF PRODUCTIONS

Applicant's documents

Reference	Description	Posted/Uploaded
A01	Environmental Report	
A02	Supporting Statement	
A03	Socioeconomic Impact Assessment	
A04	Landscape and Visual Figures	
A05	Planning Application Drawing	
A06	Elevation Drawing	

Council & Consultee documents

Reference	Description	Posted/Uploaded
B01	Screening Opinion	
B02	Application Validation Notification	
B03	Decision Notice	
B04	Report of Handling	
B05	Appeal Decision (Appeal Ref: PPA-120-2019)	
B06	Appeal Decision (Appeal Ref: PPA-120-2036)	

Other documents

Reference	Description	Posted/Uploaded
C01	Angus Local Plan Review 2009 (<i>pages 68-70 & 92-97</i>)	
C02	Angus Wind Farms Landscape Capacity and Cumulative Impacts Study (LCCIS) 2008 (<i>pages 50-52 & 57-59</i>)	
C03	Strategic Landscape Capacity Assessment for Wind Energy in Angus (SLCA) 2014 (<i>pages 1-2 & 46-49</i>)	
C04	Implementation Guide for Renewable Energy Proposals, Angus Council (IG) 2012 (<i>pages 42-48</i>)	

Note:

Paper copies of all documents can be provided on request.

1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.1 The proposal comprises the construction and operation of a single wind turbine situated on the north side of the Hill of Finavon. The turbine proposed has a hub height of 40m and a rotor diameter of 54m, giving a total tip height of 67m. The project would have an installed capacity of 0.5MW.

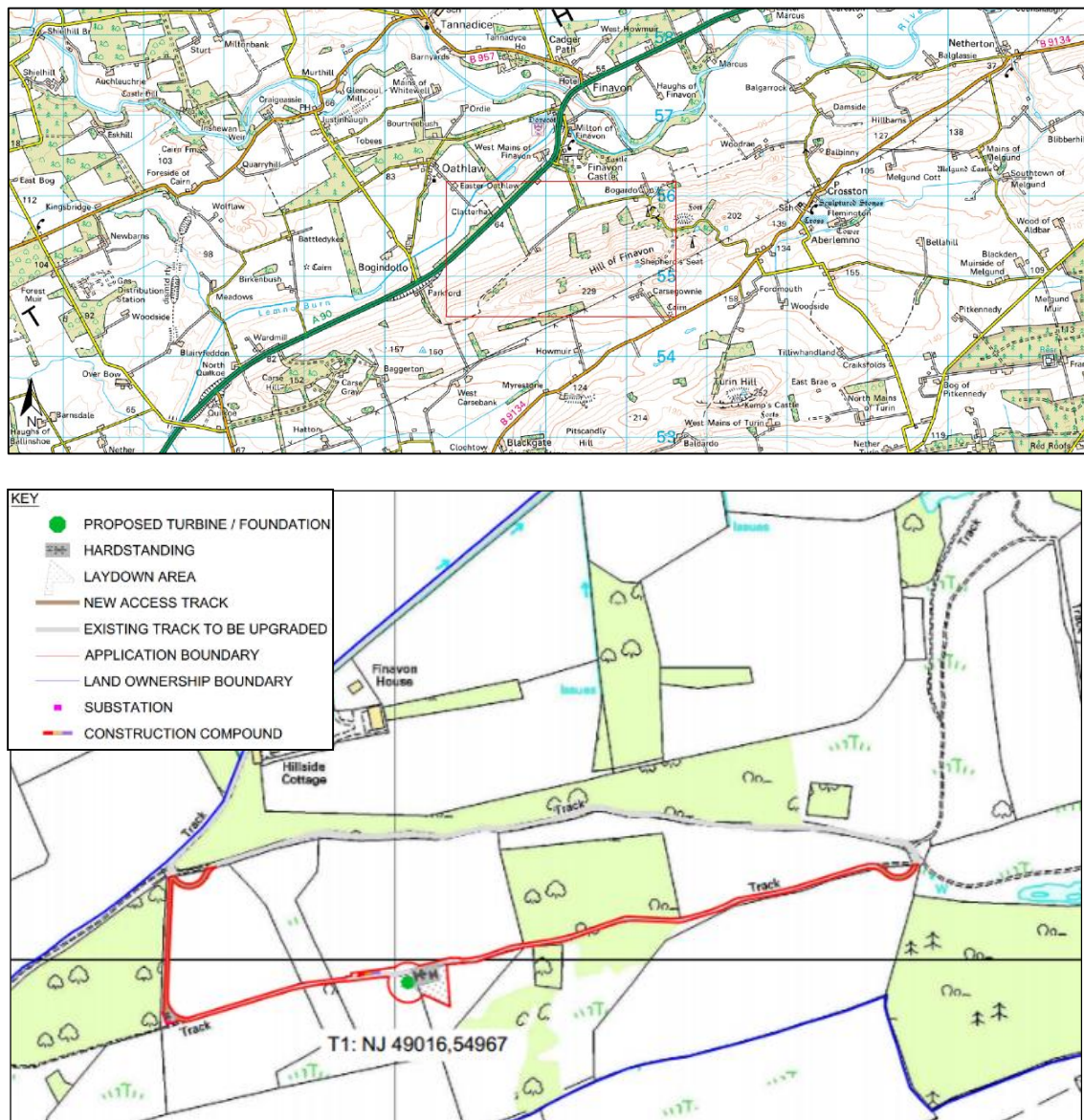


Figure 1.1 – Site location and layout

1.2 The land take of the wind turbine and associated infrastructure is small and grazing would continue, largely undisturbed, around the turbine once operational.

1.3 At the end of the project’s operational life (25 years) the wind turbine would be decommissioned, the principal elements removed, and the site restored leaving little, if any visible trace.

1.4 **Section 2** of the Environmental Report (**A01**) contains further details of the development.

2 DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Development Background

- 2.1 The Finavon Hill Estate is owned and operated by Jeffrey John Sanderson, who has been a resident of Angus for over 38 years. Mr Sanderson has been looking at the promotion of a wind project since 2010 to help secure the future of the estate and to enable the employment of additional staff. In 2010, Mr Sanderson identified Kilmac as a suitable local company to partner with him on the projects' promotion.
- 2.2 The Kilmac Group is a Perth-based privately owned construction company formed in 2004. Having diversified into the Renewables market, Kilmac now specialise in the promotion, construction and operation of onshore wind projects. Kilmac employ over 100 people predominately from the Tayside area.
- 2.3 An application for a wind turbine development was previously submitted and determined on the Finavon Estate land holding. The original application, submitted in January 2012, proposed a cluster of three wind turbines of up to 99.5m tip height along the top of the ridgeline. This application (Council Ref: 12/00002/EIAL) was appealed to the Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA) on the grounds of non-determination in August 2012, after an agreed time extension for determination had lapsed.
- 2.4 In October 2012 this appeal was dismissed by the appointed Reporter and the application was refused (Appeal Ref: PPA-120-2019) (B05).
- 2.5 It was the opinion of the Reporter that the proposed development would cause an unacceptable adverse impact on the landscape as the turbines would appear out of scale with the medium scale landscape. The appointed Reporter also concluded that the proposed development would cause an unacceptable adverse impact on a number of residential properties within 2km of the site location.
- 2.6 Kilmac Energy, in partnership with the Finavon Estate, has considered the reasons given for the refusal of the original application and firmly believe that there is an opportunity to develop a more modest wind project on the site to support the longevity and growth of the business and support surrounding established local businesses promoting employment opportunities in future years.
- 2.7 The development has been completely re-designed seeking to address the concerns of the Council and the Reporter from the original application. It is considered that the revised design is now compliant with the key concerns that prevented consent of the original scheme.

Procedural History

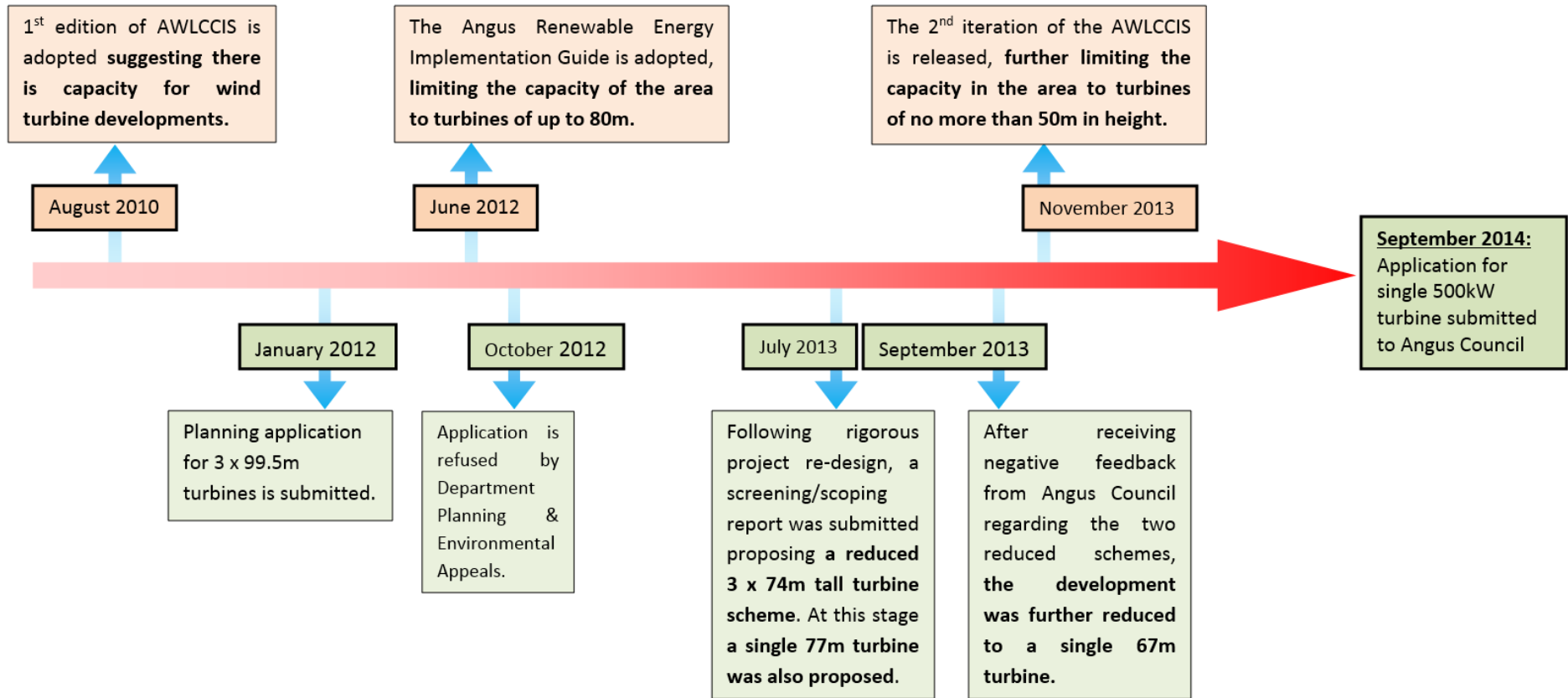
- 2.8 A key consideration in the determination of this application must be that over the lifetime of the development there have been two distinct changes in landscape capacity recommendations through various guidance documents. The Appellant has been chasing compliance with changing design guidance since the projects conception in August 2010. The key points are:
1. August 2010: Prior to submission of the original application for three 99.5m turbines, the 1st edition of the SLCA suggested that there was capacity in the landscape for a development of that scale. Full EIA work was instructed in accordance with this guidance.
 2. The application was submitted in December 2011 and during the course of this application, the REIG was adopted (June 12) which suggested that capacity of the landscape should be limited to 80m. This application was subsequently refused and the design process for a revised submission was progressed.
 3. The applicant then initiated further screening in August 2013 and during the screening stages of the revised development, Angus Council indicated that a revised SLCA was imminent. This document, published in November 2013, suggests that wind developments should be further limited to 50m in height.
- 2.9 The development was subject to a number of design iterations, of which were discussed with the Council and other consultees prior to the resubmission of the application, as a result of these changes in guidance. **Table 2.1** demonstrates the key design iterations through the project lifetime, demonstrating the significant reductions made and the efforts of the applicant to work with Angus Council.

Table 2.1 – Key Development Design Iterations

Design Refinement	No. of Turbines	Capacity	Height of Turbine(s)	Turbine Height reduction	Ground Level (AOD)*	Ground level reduction	Overall Reduction in Height
Original Application	3	6.9MW	99.5m	-	222m	-	-
Proposed Scoping Option	3	2.4MW	74m	-25.5m	211m	-11m	-36.5m
Alternative Proposed Scoping Opinion	1	500kW	77m	-22.5m	187m	-35m	-57.5m
Final Consideration	1	500kW	67m	-32.5m	187m	-35m	-67.5m

- 2.10 The timeline overleaf demonstrates how the Appellant has made significant alterations to the proposed scheme in response to the changes in guidance.

Table 2.2 - Development refinements as a result of guidance changes



- 2.11 On the basis of the design amendments set out in **Table 2.2** above, an application was submitted to Angus Council on the 26th September 2014, alongside a comprehensive Environmental Report (**A01**), Supporting Statement (**A02**), Landscape Figures (**A04**) and supporting Engineering Drawings (**A05, A06**). The application was validated on the 7th October 2014 with application number 14/00827/FULL (**B02**).
- 2.12 Consultees responded as detailed in **Section 3** overleaf. No objections were received from any statutory consultees. Angus Council's Natural and Built Environment (Landscape) department indicated that the height of positioning of the proposed turbine would be inconsistent with Council guidance relating to landscape character. No other concerns were raised from internal Council consultees.
- 2.13 In total the application received 159 letters of representation, 128 supported the proposal and 30 objected, with 1 offering comments which neither supported nor objected.
- 2.14 The Decision Notice stating the Council's refusal of planning permission was issued on 11th March 2015 (**B03**), along with the accompanying Report of Handling (**B04**).
- 2.15 This document focuses on the reason for refusal as stated in the Decision Notice (**B03**), the information contained within the Planning Officer's Report of Handling (**B04**), and other material considerations covered by the Environmental Report (**A01**) and other documents submitted with the planning application.
- 2.16 It is considered by the Appellant that the changes to the proposed development result in the compliance with Policies ER5(a) and ER34(b) and that the Planning Officer's decision to refuse the application should be overturned by Development Management Review Committee.

3 SUMMARY OF CONSULTEE RESPONSES AND PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

Compliance

- 3.1 The following table demonstrates what aspects of the proposed development were found to be acceptable in regard to policy and the consultation responses from Statutory Consultees.

Table 3.1 – Development Compliance

Assessment	Compliant	Non-compliant
Environmental & Economic Benefits		
Landscape Impact		
Visual Impact		
Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact		
Amenity (Noise/Shadow Flicker etc.)		
Impact on Natural Heritage		

Statutory Consultees	No Objection	Objection
Transport Scotland		
Angus Council (Flood Prevention)		
Dundee Airport		
Angus Council Environmental Health		
Atkins		
Civil Aviation Authority		
NERL Safeguarding		
Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service		
Historic Scotland		
Joint Radio Company		
RSPB Scotland		
Ministry of Defence (MoD)		
Scottish Water		
Angus Council (Roads)		
Natural and Built Environment (Landscape)		
Countryside Access Officer		

- 3.2 As the table demonstrates, all aspects of the development have been considered compliant with policy and acceptable in environmental impact terms, with the exception of the landscape impact only.
- 3.3 The response from the Natural and Built Environment (Landscape) department was not made available to the Agent or the public, and therefore there was no opportunity given to address these concerns or respond to the comments. However, the Report of Handling suggests that concern has been raised over the height and positioning of the proposed turbine would be inconsistent with Council guidance relating to the landscape character.

Public Representations

- 3.4 As documented on Angus Council’s planning website:
- **128 letters of support** were received in regard to this application; and
 - **30 letters of objection** were received.

3.5 The Appellant contends that the relatively small number of objections, less than 20% of public representations received are significantly outweighed by the letters of support. Approximately 80% of public representations received were supportive of the scheme which demonstrates that the proposed single turbine is not considered controversial.

4 APPRAISAL OF GROUNDS FOR REFUSAL

4.1 The application was refused under delegated powers on 11th March 2015. The Decision Notice gave the following reason for the refusal of this application:

1. *That the proposal is contrary to Policy ER5(a) of the Angus Local Plan Review (2009) because the site selected would not be capable of absorbing the proposed development to ensure that it fits into the landscape; and is contrary to Policy ER34(b) of the Angus Local Plan Review (2009) because the proposed turbine would result in unacceptable adverse landscape impacts having regard to landscape character, setting within the immediate and wider landscape, and sensitive viewpoints.*

4.2 It is worth noting that, with regard to energy, the Angus Local Plan Review (ALPR) (C01) recognises that 'in terms of sustainable development, energy efficiency and non-polluting power generation are fundamental to establishing a stable and environmentally acceptable energy policy.' The Plan also identifies that the Scottish Government's target of electricity generation from renewable sources 'will require major investment in commercial renewable energy production and distribution capacity'.

4.3 This section provides an appraisal of the policies the Report of Handling has deemed that the proposal does not comply with:

Policy ER5(a) of the Angus Local Plan Review (2009)

Conservation of Landscape Character

Development proposals should take account of the guidance provided by the Tayside Landscape Character Assessment and where appropriate will be considered against the following criteria:

- (a) Sites selection should be capable of absorbing the proposed development to ensure that it fits into the landscape.

4.4 The Finavon Hill Estate site falls within the Low Moorland Hills Landscape Character Type (LCT), as identified in the Tayside Landscape Character Assessment (TLCA), close to the border of the Broad Valley Lowlands landscape type. Its key characteristics include its rich historic heritage, areas of extensive woodland, moorland character, scattered modern settlements and the combination of low, rounded hills and craggy, ridged upland. The scale of this landscape is medium with some areas of coniferous plantation, particularly at Montreathmont Forest, and some areas of woodland in the lower ground around the farmsteads and water courses.

4.5 The Strategic Landscape Capacity Assessment for Wind Energy in Angus (SLCA) (2014) (C03) splits the LCT into two sub-types; i) Forfar Hills, and ii) Montreathmont Moor. The proposal is located within the Forfar Hills sub-type.

- 4.6 The SLCA suggests that the Low Moorland Hills area is considered to have a medium-high landscape value, which together with its medium-high sensitivity gives an overall low capacity for windfarm development.
- 4.7 It is acknowledged that large or medium windfarms would not be appropriate in this area due to scale and visual sensitivity limitations. The SLCA states that, *“Any windfarm development would have to be carefully sited and small scale to avoid prominent visibility and clashes of scale with the modest sized hills”*. Given that this proposal is for a single turbine of 67m in height, the Finavon Hill Estate development is considered to be small scale and consequently avoids prominent visibility or clashes of scale with the Finavon Hill Estate.
- 4.8 Where the earlier editions of the SLCA and Angus Wind Farms Landscape Capacity and Cumulative Impacts Study (LCCIS) 2008 (C02) suggest that there is low capacity for windfarm development, the updated document (March 2014) advises that there would only be capacity for small/medium and medium scale turbines, which would suggest that small groups of turbines under 50m would be appropriate in this area. This advice is contrary to what is recommended in the Angus Council Renewable Energy Implementation Guide (REIG) (2012) (C04).
- 4.9 The REIG describes the existing character of the Low Moorland Hills as a ‘Landscape with Views of Windfarms’, and states that the ‘Acceptable Character’ in a future scenario would be for a ‘Landscape with Occasional Windfarms’. The guide states that the LCT is *‘Considered to have scope for turbines circa 80m in height which do not disrupt the principle ridgelines or adversely affect the setting of important landscape features and monuments such as Balmashanner Monument; and Finavon and Turin hillforts’*.
- 4.10 Both the SLCA and the REIG indicate that there is capacity for turbine development within the Forfar Hills sub type landscape, however they recommend two different tip heights, 50m and 80m, in relation to the capacity of the area.
- 4.11 Taking both of these guidance documents into consideration, the design of the development sought to provide a scheme which does not diminish the scale of this landscape or become a prominent and defining feature of the hill. The Appellant contends that this is achieved by maintaining the impressive horizontal stretch of the Finavon ridgeline and not causing impact on its function as a backdrop and enclosure to the valleys to the north and south.
- 4.12 It was important that any turbine on the site did not diminish the scale of the hills either vertically or horizontally nor significantly interrupt the ridgeline, and it was through careful design that a 67m turbine, whilst seen on part of the ridgeline, did not alter its ability to function as a ridgeline nor diminish its scale. From many directions the turbine would not appear as the tallest feature on the ridgeline due to the existing pylons and trees that also breakup the ridgeline. The development is now considered to be in keeping with the 1:3 ratio advised by SNH, both horizontally and vertically.

- 4.13 It is acknowledged that the ridgeline is an important landscape feature which makes up part of the Low Moorland Hills LCA and provides a backdrop and enclosure to the Strathmore Valley to the north and the Lemno Water Valley to the south.
- 4.14 However, while the previous development occupied approximately 1km (~7%) of the horizontal aspect of the ridgeline, which is approximately 14km in length, the new scheme only occupies the diameter of the blades (54m) and therefore only a negligible extent (0.39%) of the ridgeline is actually impacted. The scale of the ridgeline is not diminished and as such, if the development were to be constructed, it would still function as a backdrop to views from both the north and south as well as providing enclosure to the valleys of Strathmore and Lemno. It is an important ridgeline and the development is sympathetic to this, only affecting a negligible section and keeping in scale with the topography, whilst still allowing it to function its primary duties.
- 4.15 The site has now been subject to two comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments, the most recent of which concluded that *“Considering the wider area, the assessment has concluded that there would be no significant indirect effects from any of the other landscape character areas within the study area.”* As a result, when the development is viewed from adjacent areas, the Low Moorland Hills LCA still maintains its character and scale and still provides both a setting and backdrop to other character areas.
- 4.16 The Appellant therefore contests that the site is capable of absorbing the proposed development and that the proposal does fit within the landscape, therefore is fully compliant with Policy ER5(a).

Policy ER34(b) of the Angus Local Plan Review (2009)

Renewable Energy Developments

Proposals for all forms of renewable energy development will be supported in principle and will be assessed against the following criteria:

- (b) There will be no unacceptable adverse landscape and visual impacts having regard to landscape character, setting within the wider landscape, and sensitive viewpoints.

- 4.17 Angus Council Planning Department used this reason for refusal when determining the original application for three, 99.5m tall wind turbines on the summit of the Finavon Hill ridgeline. It was also the opinion of the Reporter appointed by the Scottish Ministers for the appeal that the original application did not comply with section (b) of this policy. It is agreed that the development is compliant with all other aspects of the policy and the non-compliance of section (b) only relates to landscape and visual impacts.
- 4.18 In order to ensure that the revised development did comply with Policy ER34(b) and that the issue would be addressed for the submission of the subsequent application, significant reductions in the scale of the development were implemented, including:

1. Removing two turbines;
2. Relocating the proposed turbine off the ridgeline at a lower elevation (35m lower down hillside); and
3. Reducing the tip height of the turbine by 32.5m, the rotor diameter by 16m and the hub height by 24m.

4.19 The impact of the single 67m turbine on the landscape character, setting and sensitive viewpoints is not considered to be adverse. One of the primary concerns of the previous application was the impact on the vertical scale of Finavon Hill and the development viewed in conjunction with this. Not only has the scheme been reduced to a single turbine, but to combat this impact specifically, the turbine height was reduced by over 30m and the turbine location has been moved down the northern slopes of the hill to a significantly lower elevation.

4.20 The cumulative result of these alterations is a single turbine scheme that has a gross reduction of 67.5m in tip above ordnance datum. The revised development comfortably adheres to the 1:3 scale ratio advocated by SNH, and the lower overall tip height has significantly less prominence. When viewed from adjacent landscapes both the north and south of the site, the proposed turbine does not diminish the perceived scale of Finavon Hill and remains as a prominent backdrop to the Strathmore valley. The images in **Figure 4.1** overleaf illustrate the change from the original three turbine application to the smaller scale single turbine and, as can be seen, not only is the impact significantly reduced, the turbine also appears well within the scale of the ridgeline. The lower elevation allows the turbine to be considerably less prominent and does not particularly draw attention due to it being accommodated within landscape. From the southern side of the hill the impact is negligible and only a blade tip is visible, having almost no impact on the scale of the hill or its character.

4.21 The proposed turbine, being only 67m in height, has a very limited visual influence as can be seen in the Zone of Theoretical Visibility studies provided in the Landscape Figures. The turbines reduced height, combined with lower elevation means that even when visible, the impact is relatively minor. Occupying such a small horizontal section of the vast 14km ridgeline, as well as the turbine appearing an appropriate vertical scale to the height of the ridge, also mitigates its visual impact. As such, when visible, the turbine does not have an overbearing or prominent impact.

4.22 It is considered that the revised development now complies with policy ER34(b).

4.23 Further to this, it is said within the SLCA that the site area has capacity for clusters of up to three turbines of 50m in tip height. As described within the SLCA, the primary function of the Forfar Hills is to provide a backdrop and containment to this section of Strathmore. One of the strongest features of this group of hills is its distinct linear pattern and ridge which runs for ~14km. A cluster of three turbines, for which the SLCA gives potential capacity in these hills, would have a greater impact on this particular function compared to a single turbine. Despite the fact the turbine is above 50m it is still in scale with the landscape and as such has a similar impact on vertical extent of the hills that a potential cluster of 50m turbines may have. In order to achieve a similar level of electrical

generation to the proposed development, a minimum of two turbines of 50m in height would be required, which is considered to have a greater impact on the hills primary function as a backdrop to Strathmore despite being compliant with the capacity study.

- 4.24 The appropriateness of using the SLCA as grounds to formal a refusal have recently be questioned in a successful appeal determined by the Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals for two 47m tall wind turbines in Angus (PPA-120-2036). The Reporter, appointed by the Scottish Ministers stated in Paragraph 10 of the Appeal Decision Notice (B06):

Landscape capacity studies can be helpful tools in understanding the nature of the landscape impacts caused by wind turbines. However, they should not be given the attribute of detailed zonings for a particular number of turbines of a particular size. I note that paragraph 1.4 of the Strategic Landscape Capacity Assessment for Wind Energy in Angus (2014) states, *“It is emphasised that this is a strategic level landscape and visual study, providing a context for consideration of capacity for, and the cumulative effects of, existing and potential wind turbine developments in Angus. No site specific conclusions should be drawn from it in relation to current, proposed or future wind turbines and wind farms.”*

- 4.25 It is evident from the Report of Handling that the Planning Department have drawn site specific conclusions from the SLCA when the document itself advises against doing so. It is equally evident that the Planning Department have adopted a regimented stance on the application of the SLCA where the document itself states that its purpose is to provide ‘context for consideration’.
- 4.26 Lastly, it is also the case that the revised development has reached the point after which any further reductions in elevation of turbine size would have a dramatic impact on the efficiency of the wind turbine and the viability of the development. Section (a) Policy ER34 puts significant importance on the operation efficiency of developments:

(a) The siting and appearance of apparatus have been chosen to minimise the impact on amenity, while respecting operational efficiency.

- 4.27 This development represents a prime example of this policy put into practice. Any further reductions in the scale of the development would put the compliance of this policy into jeopardy.

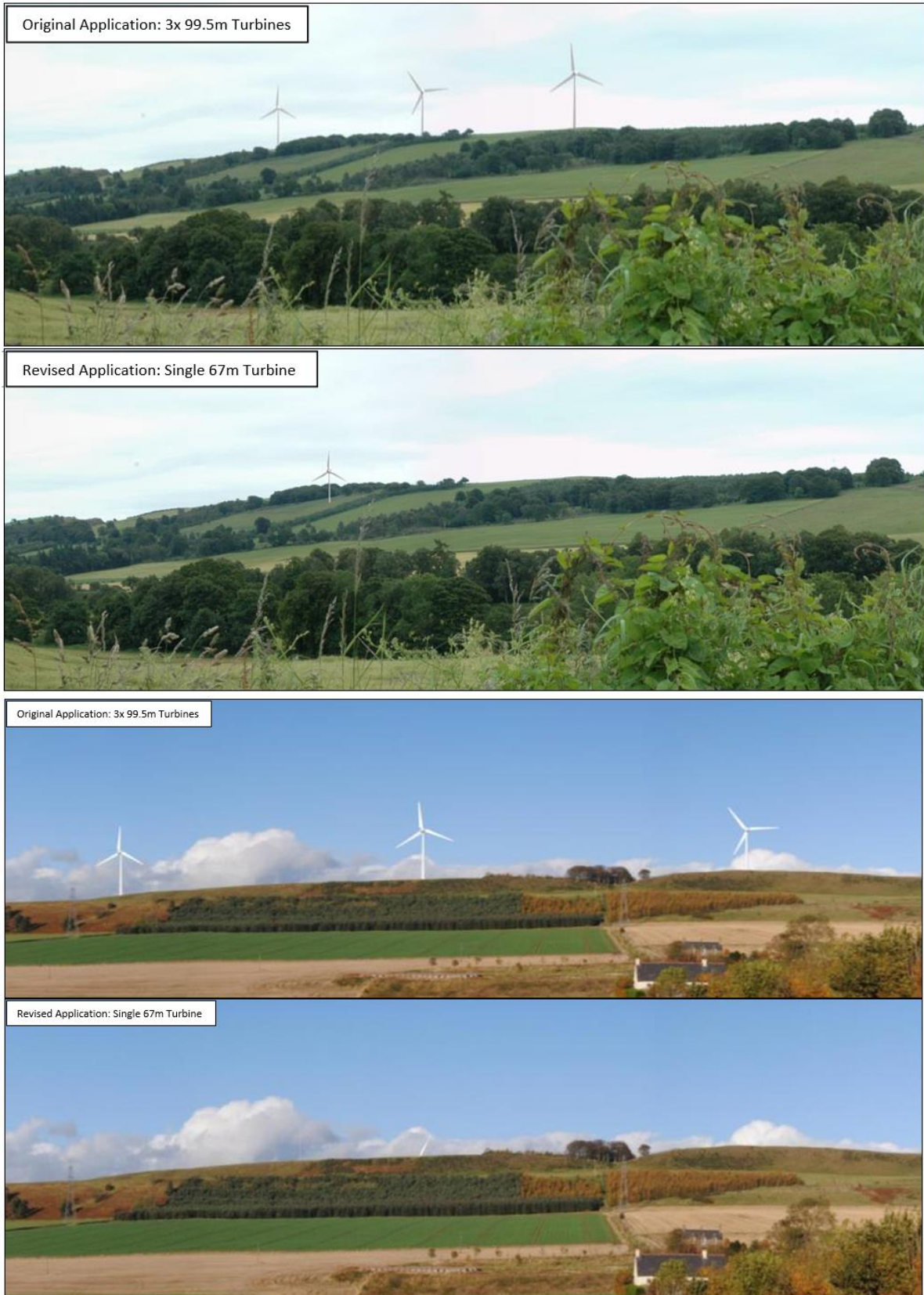


Figure 4.1 – Key Comparison Photomontages

5 BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSAL

Project Aims

- 5.1 The Applicant believes that this development represents an excellent opportunity for local contractors and suppliers to benefit from the proposed development. The Kilmac Group, who has a strong track record of working with local businesses, will lead the construction and installation stages. This will support the ambition to retain as much economic value locally as possible.
- 5.2 The main aims of the project are to:
- **Generate clean electricity.** It is estimated that the turbine is likely to generate approximately 1,800MWh of electricity annually, which based upon an average electricity consumption of 4,187¹ kWh per household, is enough electricity to provide power to approximately **430 homes**.
 - **Generate an additional income stream for the business** through the sale of any electricity. Given the current drive for renewable energy sources and sustainable development, the applicant feels that this is an opportunity to diversify into an area which takes advantage of the natural resources afforded by the sites location. It will also present an opportunity to deliver future security to the shooting estate and provide a pipeline of construction and supply work for local businesses.
 - **Reduce the businesses' carbon footprint.** Over the turbine's 20 year lifecycle, the project is expected to result in a carbon saving of ~5,900 tonnes and a CO₂ saving of ~21,800 tonnes when compared to more traditional means of electricity generation, such as coal. The development is predicted to pay back the CO₂ emitted during the construction and transport stages of the project after approximately 4 months of operation.
- 5.3 Although the Report of Handling found the development contrary to Policies ER5 and ER34, relating to subjective landscape impacts, it equally details that the application is acceptable in regard to visual impacts, cumulative impact, impact on amenities, impact on natural heritage, cultural heritage impacts or any other environmental issues.
- 5.4 The Planning Officer raised no concerns in relation to the visual amenity of local residents, following a thorough and robust residential assessment on the perceived impacts on the closest properties and settlements.
- 5.5 The Appellant believes the socioeconomics of the development are a key benefit to the local area which will result in a positive socioeconomic impact and provide a much needed boost to the local economy. As part of the application, a robust socioeconomic

¹ Sub-national local authority electricity consumption statistics 2005 to 2011, DECC worksheet, published 2012

impact assessment was undertaken by EKOS Ltd (A03). This report raises some key considerations for determining this application:

“The Angus economy has seen a notable reduction in its employment base off the back of the economic recession and has not been as resilient in comparison to other primarily rural areas. The wind turbine project presents an opportunity to address this decline by supporting new construction activities and safeguarding activity at Finavon Hill Estate, which will have a positive supply chain impact upon the wider tourism sector in Angus through attracting visitors to the area. Further, it is important that we consider the impact on the supply chain businesses that support the operation of the Estate itself. For example, agricultural suppliers (food stocks, wood, gravel), and local trades (fencers, builder, and electricians).”

- 5.6 The Estate employs three full time staff and around 20 – 25 seasonal staff that work during the peak season. The seasonal staff all live locally and feature a range of ages and backgrounds, part of which adds to the Estates friendly and welcoming atmosphere. The turbine project, through reducing overheads will support the longer term sustainability of the Estate and safeguard these existing jobs. Many other similar shooting estates have scaled back considerably in recent years or have ceased to exist.
- 5.7 In addition, the Estate owners have identified that if the project goes ahead it will encourage further investment in the Estate, in particular, making improvements to the lodge facilities. These upgrade works will be undertaken by local contractors.
- 5.8 As a construction partner in this joint venture, the Kilmac Group are keen to emphasise the opportunities for local contractors and suppliers to benefit from the project.
- 5.9 A key way in which the project can positively impact the local economy is through facilitating local employment training and apprenticeship schemes during the construction, and operational and maintenance phases. These schemes can be targeted at particular groups’ e.g. young people and, in addition to helping develop new skills, will also help to build confidence in supported individuals.
- 5.10 A recent civil engineering project undertaken by Kilmac Construction (upgrade of the South Inch play park project, Perth) included working in partnership with the local authority to provide work experience/apprenticeship positions to nine unemployed young offenders (considered by the local authority as persons most difficult to find jobs for due to the scope and scale of barriers they face to access employment opportunities).
- 5.11 After successful completion of the scheme, five of the young people were offered permanent employment with Kilmac Construction as apprentice ground workers. In addition, through working with other local businesses, Kilmac were able to support three of the young people into employment as trainee greenkeepers at Craigiehill golf club. The scheme not only provided basic training and work experience, which ultimately helped open up new employment opportunities, but also helped get the young people enthused about working.
- 5.12 Such was the success of this scheme that Kilmac have committed resources to continue this programme on future projects throughout Tayside where possible and have given

commitment to Angus Council to offer similar opportunities through the project, this includes renewable and more traditional civil based projects.

5.13 The extract below, **Figure 5.1**, from the Socioeconomic Impact Assessment shows the project logic model and how it stands to benefit the local area.

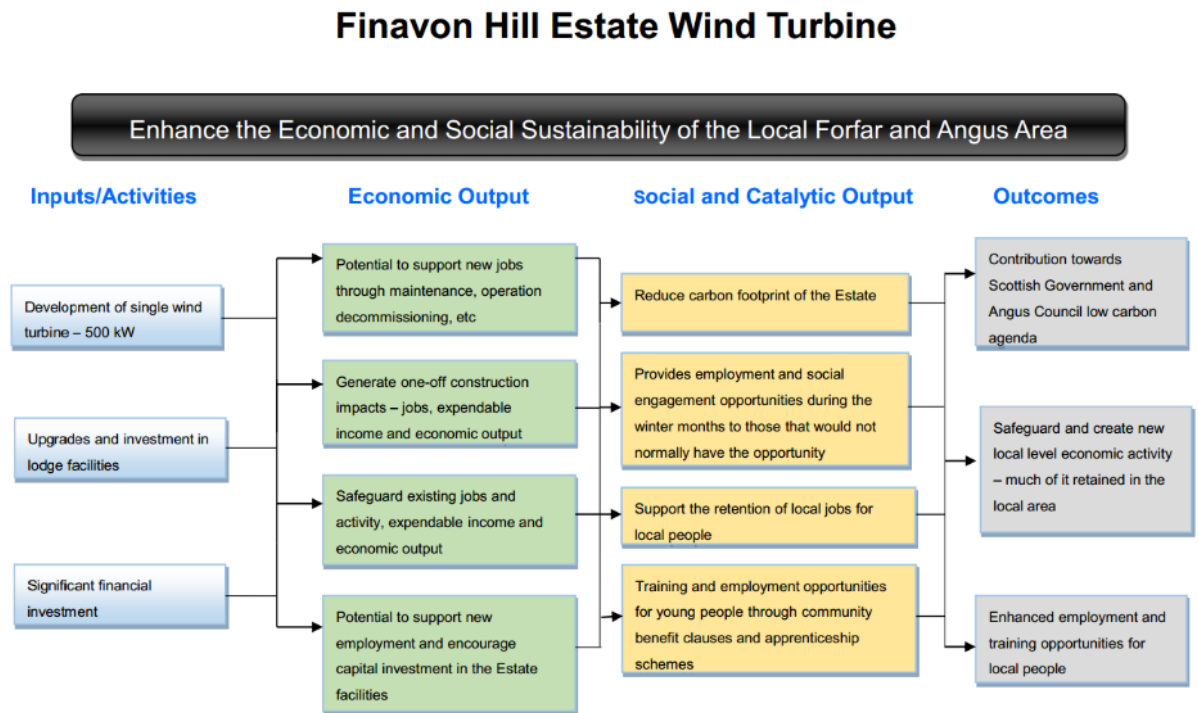


Figure 5.1 – Project Logic Model (extract from Socioeconomic Impact Assessment)

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Scottish Government is supportive of this scale of renewable project, particularly where these are locally owned and will support local businesses. The Scottish Government policy is clear that it looks to support renewable development and meet the ambitious targets set out in the 2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy in Scotland. The development would generate enough energy for the equivalent of ~430 houses, and would make a contribution to the Scottish Government's target for 500MW of community or locally owned renewable capacity by 2020.
- 6.2 In terms of Local Policy, Angus Council are supportive of renewable energy development where they are considered to be environmentally acceptable and they contribute to the development of a low carbon economy. It is considered that the potential local benefits, effectively resulting from the creation of a viable local business diversification, will be greater than any negative environmental effects.
- 6.3 The Appellant commissioned a robust Environmental Report which demonstrated that the proposal is unlikely to have significant impact in terms of Landscape impact. No objections were received from any statutory consultees.
- 6.4 The reason for refusal relates to the site not being capable of absorbing the proposed development into the landscape, yet the Finavon ridgeline is over 14km in length and the proposed turbine has a horizontal extent of 54m. Therefore, the turbine would occupy 0.39% of the Finavon ridgeline, having a very insignificant impact on the horizontal extent of the ridgeline. No other issues or concerns were raised and there were no objections from consultees.
- 6.5 The turbine project will help to safeguard the existing activity at Finavon Estate and encourage additional investment and upgrade works. Small businesses, especially those in rural areas, bring much needed income into the area and create employment for local people. The construction of a single turbine at Finavon will make a vital contribution to the income of Finavon Hill Estate and underpin business at a local level for the future. For example, the Appellant has already committed to an investment of at least £400k into the estate which is subject to the wind turbine development. The estate expansion plans include the construction of a sporting lodge on the estate, which already has planning permission, to support the requirements of the estates clients and will protect the business from future changes in legislation.
- 6.6 The proposal is not considered contentious as witnessed by the relatively low number of letters of objection received and that 80% of the public representations made were supportive of the development.
- 6.7 Accordingly, it is the Appellant's contention that the proposal complies with the Development Plan and is supported by applicable policy and guidance. The Appellant respectfully requests that permission, subject to the usual conditions for an application of this scale and nature, be granted.