

Struan Community Council Planning Application Consultee Response:

Ben Aketil Repowered and Extended Wind Farm

PLANNING AUTHORITY REFERENCE: 23/02998/S36

Background

Struan is a small community of approx. 250 residents in North West of the Isle of Skye, the whole area can be fairly stated as being “fragile”, Struan particularly so, unlike its near neighbours, Struan has no school, no hotel, no pub, no community facility, no regular public transport services and extremely inadequate internet provision.

There are several developers and operators of wind farms looking to upgrade, replace or build from new within the North West of Skye, on the basis all approved this will result there being in the region of 100/150 wind turbines of circa 140m to 200m in height, all in a small area in and around Struan fundamentally changing the whole look and feel of the area.

The build or replacement programmes are all expected to take place around the time that the new Skye Enhancement programme from SSE is taking place, with build times in the region of 2 to 3 years.

It has to be acknowledged that during the build phase it will result in some 1000 to 1500 AIL deliveries to the area (plus a further 1000 to 1500 empty return journeys) all starting in Kyle or thereabouts and moving at a slow speed on the only road between the Skye Bridge and Sligachan, then onward via Portree or Struan to get to the specific site, a journey of some 39 miles. The AILs will move we understand at circa 8MPH, take in the region of 5 to 7 hours, due to the geography of the road will without doubt create a significant obstruction in both lanes of the highway.

AIL Transit to Site & Traffic Management

In relation to this specific Planning Application the Developer has not fully taken into consideration the cumulative effect of the movement of AILs and HGVs throughout the Construction Phase of their Development in addition to the other consented and proposed Developments that will undoubtedly be ongoing within the same timeframe. It must be noted that from Kyle of Lochalsh to Sligachan, the main arterial route through the Isle of Skye, there is no alternative diversion route. Therefore, in the event of an incident involving an AIL where the road could be closed for a prolonged period of time the delays would be significant, causing severe issues for other road users, travellers connecting to ferries to the Outer Isles & the Isle of Raasay and even more importantly Emergency Services movements around the island.

Therefore, it is our contention in relation to the movement of AILs and HGVs that all the Developers with intentions to repower or construct post the SSE repowering application being consented should be required to come together to submit a comprehensive Joint Traffic Management programme for scrutiny by Highland Council and/or the ECU, whichever ultimately has the decision on consenting any of these Applications, only on the submission of this can it be assessed if they are to be granted the opportunity to utilise the main arterial route on the island for the movement of the turbines