

## **Objecting To Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm (24/01404/FUL)**

An application to increase the height of the already consented Ben Sca Wind Farm (7 turbines 135m high) and Ben Sca Extension (2 turbines 149.9m high) so that all turbines will be 149.9m, vary the position of the turbines, move the substation.

The wind farm will be prominent along the ridge between Edinbane wind farm and Ben Aketil wind farm and will have major visual impact for the residents of Edinbane, Flashader, Kildonan and Greshornish. All above Loch Greshornish.

The visual impact was noted by Planning and Landscape Officers when planning consent was originally granted in 2020. Consent was only granted after the two highest turbines proposed were removed from the application through negotiation with the council.

Increasing the height of the turbines will significantly increase the visual impact of the wind farm (undoing the benefits of removing the two highest turbines from the first application).

The increase in height will cause other problems...including an anticipated increase of white tailed eagle deaths from collision with the blades from 2.03 to an eye watering 3.47 per year!

The developers Wind 2 are also have a "live" planning application for 10 turbines at Balmeanach wind farm which will be immediately adjacent to Ben Sca...with Edinbane wind farm on the other side. Balmeanach and Ben Sca have been submitted as separate "salami sliced" applications where as they will be functionally one wind farm built on the same hill. The developer has requested to move the Ben Sca substation from it's original location to a new position to service both wind farms. This would result in a wind farm of greater than 50MW so planning permission should be determined by the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit.

**Classic example of developers gaining planning permission for a wind farm at one size, and then pushing to make it bigger. "Mission creep"...**

As current proposal would result in a wind farm of less than 50MW capacity the planning application will be determined by the Highland Council.

The advertised cut off date for objections/representations is 23rd May 2024.

### **Object to The Highland Council**

The planning application can be viewed here:

<https://wam.highland.gov.uk/wam/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=SBQCDNIHH7300>

Please either register on the Council website to make an objection or email [eplanning@highland.gov.uk](mailto:eplanning@highland.gov.uk) or write to The Highland Council Eplanning, Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness. IV3 5NX.

Email is the easiest way.....

Need to quote reference 24/01404/FUL

Then copy in our Councillors and maybe the planning officer: email addresses:

[drew.millar.cllr@highland.gov.uk](mailto:drew.millar.cllr@highland.gov.uk) (Chair of North Area Planning Committee and Skye Councillor)  
[john.Finlayson.cllr@highland.gov.uk](mailto:john.Finlayson.cllr@highland.gov.uk)  
[calum.Munro.cllr@highland.gov.uk](mailto:calum.Munro.cllr@highland.gov.uk)  
[ruraidh.Stewart.cllr@highland.gov.uk](mailto:ruraidh.Stewart.cllr@highland.gov.uk)  
[dafydd.jones@highland.gov.uk](mailto:dafydd.jones@highland.gov.uk) (Planning officer - Area Manager North Highland)

### **Key Points (Suggest you concentrate on the issues of most concern to you).**

1. The proposal to increase the height of the turbines at Ben Sca will significantly increase the visual impact of the wind farm. The developers recognise that there will be major/moderate and adverse effects for visual receptors (people living) at Edinbane, Kildonan and Flashader (EIA section 3.180). Classic example of developers gaining planning permission for a wind farm at one size, and then pushing to make it bigger. "Mission creep"...
2. Ben Sca will dominate the skyline above Loch Greshornish as shown by the developers own visual projections. An 11% increase in height beyond the consented scheme will significantly increase the impact on the landscape.
3. The visual impact was of concern to planning and landscape officers when planning permission was originally granted in 2020. (see HC Report of Handling 20/00013/FUL 1st December 2020). Consent was only granted after the two highest turbines proposed were removed from the application through negotiation with the council. The proposal to increase the height of 7 turbines by 15m will negate the visual advantages of removing the two highest turbines.
4. The developers Wind 2 have also submitted a planning application for Balmeanach wind farm - 10 turbines 150m high on the other side of the same hill as Ben Sca. If consented, Ben Sca and Balmeanach will be functionally one wind farm, as shown by the developer's request to relocate their substation to serve both the applications. The developers have "salami sliced" their planning applications (illegal in planning law). If presented as one wind farm, Ben Sca and Balmeanach would be greater than 50MW and the planning decision would be ultimately determined by the Energy Consents Unit.
5. Ben Sca Redesign and Balmeanach if both consented as proposed will visually join with the existing Edinbane Wind Farm to form a continuous line of visible turbines above Loch Greshornish. This was also of concern to officers during the original application in 2020. Will be highly visible from the Special Landscape Area at Greshornish point.
6. The redesign will increase the length of the turbine blades by up to 7.5m to a total of 66m. This will make them more difficult to transport across Skye. Current transport management proposals from the applicant are to bring the blades from Kyle of Lochalsh, over the bridge, store them at Breakish airstrip, then transport them up the island and through Portree, including negotiating the corner at the High School. This will cause road traffic chaos with multiple Abnormal Load Convoys.
7. Increasing the height of the seven turbines will increase the likely collision kill rate of white tailed eagles from 2.03 to 3.47 a year according to the developers own figures (TA 4.3 Avian Collision Risk Assessment). An increase of 71%. A cumulative assessment of all the wind farms proposed for Skye suggests 10 or more birds will be killed each year, leading to population collapse, especially given the recent impact of bird flu.
8. The nearest residential property to Ben Sca "Upperglen" has not received the information leaflet recently sent out to households in the area, nor have they been visited by the applicants or the Council's planning officers despite being regularly featured in the applicants Environmental Impact Assessment.
9. Public "consultation" exercises were tokenistic. Poorly advertised and attended and feedback was ignored.