

Heather Donald
Director of Onshore Wind
SSE Renewables
Inveralmond House
200 Dunkeld Rd.
PERTH
PH1 3 AQ

C.C. by email:
Pauline Allison
pauline.allison@sse.com



Save Glen Lednock
c/o Andrew Thompson
Ellangowan
Comrie
Perthshire
PH6 2HJ

Dear Low Carbon and SSE Renewables,

Glen Lednock and Glentarken Wind Farms

This is an open letter from the Save Glen Lednock campaign group to your two businesses, calling on you to withdraw your misguided applications for the proposed wind farms in Glen Lednock and Glentarken. Although your companies have submitted separate planning applications, the two wind farms are immediately next to each other and would, in effect, be one gigantic industrial complex comprising 31 turbines up to 200m high, nearly 30 miles of new access roads and hardstanding areas, substations and a controversial Battery Energy Storage System.

Then there are also the grid connections that are not even included in the planning applications. As we're sure you will be aware, the recent Court of Session ruling on the Wull Muir wind farm proposal requiring developers to assess the impact of grid connections as part of their Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for wind farms has major implications for your projects.

Together these developments would blight an area of the Southern Highlands that has remained thankfully free from wind farm development. The value of the area that you are planning to devastate is demonstrated by the fact that it is surrounded by the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, two National Scenic Areas and five protected Local Landscape Areas.

Both Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) and the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority have voted unanimously to object to both of your planning applications. Hundreds of members of the general public have also taken the time to object to proposals that would destroy the glens that they love. If you continue with these schemes, your applications would potentially be decided by a long-winded Public Local Inquiry. But why should local communities have to dedicate their time and resources to continuing the campaign against these wind farms at an Inquiry, when the proposals are so flawed?

And why should PKC have to continue to fight the applications when their professional planning officers have already recommended objection and the Council agrees unanimously? A Public Local Inquiry would cost the Council thousands of pounds of taxpayers' money that should instead be used to protect local services, such as social care and the rural libraries that are threatened with closure.

And nationally, why should the Scottish Government have to waste staff time to encompass a Public Local Inquiry, when their own advisor – NatureScot – objects to the schemes so strongly that they cannot envisage any way that the wind farms could be built without (a) completely destroying the qualities of nationally-protected landscapes and (b) making a mockery of national planning policy?

Ironically the website of Oxygen Conservation, the sister company of Low Carbon and owner of the Invergeldie Estate within which the Glen Lednock Wind Farm would be built, describes the glen as being 'breath-taking' and a 'true treasure of the Scottish Highlands' They boast of promoting

eco-tourism on the estate. They state that you will be 'greeted by the majestic peaks of Scotland's great mountains, creating a truly unforgettable experience'. However, that experience would be unforgettable for quite different reasons if the wind farms were built – lovers of wild nature would be confronted by an industrialised landscape and the whirling distraction of serried ranks of massive wind turbines.

They mention being able to 'hike Ben Chonzie for expansive views across Perthshire.' Ben Chonzie is one of the closest (and most easily climbed) Munro mountains to the Central Belt and, as such, is extremely popular. For many hill walkers, this is one of the first Munros that they climb, but it is unlikely that they would come back if the views are dominated by 200m high wind turbines and a mini-motorway up the Glen.

Not only Ben Chonzie, but many of Scotland's most iconic and popular Munros would have their views ruined by your proposals. The questionable quality of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) for both Glen Lednock and Glentarken is a common theme in the objections from the various consultees. Mountaineering Scotland comment on the Glen Lednock LVIA: 'The presentation of the LVIA assessment appears most peculiar' and that they 'cannot recollect such an incoherent and incomplete approach to the presentation of the LVIA judgement'. Their criticism of the assessment from Ben Vorlich suggests that it cannot be correct unless 'blinkers are involved'. Nature Scot have stated that the landscape assessment undertaken by the developer 'underplays' the visual impact of the wind farm and that, in some cases, it is 'not fit for purpose.'

This theme is repeated in the Glentarken application. Time and again, the SSE assessment is criticised by NatureScot and Mountaineering Scotland for using poor-quality photographs as a basis for their visualisations, to the extent that SSE have now been told by the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit that they have to submit new visualisations from iconic viewpoints, including Ben Vorlich and Ben Lawers, in order 'to ensure the completeness and quality' of the assessment.

Not only would these two wind farms desecrate a highly scenic part of Perthshire that forms a gateway to the Highlands, but also there is absolutely no need for the electricity that would be generated. Scotland is already totally self-sufficient in renewable electricity generation, with surplus power being exported to England. Due to the serious constraints on the transmission grid network there is a huge excess of electricity generation, resulting in massive 'curtailment' payments being made to operators.

Recent reforms by the National Energy System Operator mean that, in order to clear the grid backlog, connections for proposed onshore wind farms in Scotland will have to be seriously limited – at least for the next ten years – to those projects that are ready to build and are aligned with long-term energy needs. As the organisation Action to Protect Rural Scotland has commented, 'Any [Battery Energy Storage System] or onshore wind development entering the planning system now has an absolutely microscopic chance of getting a grid connection in the next 15 years'

These are but a few of the reasons we call on Low Carbon and SSE to withdraw your planning applications now – and save any further waste of public money and the needless diversion of community effort.

Please be in no doubt. If you do not withdraw the proposed Glen Lednock/Glen Tarken development, we will continue to fight tooth and nail to stop these misguided proposals – buoyed not only by strong community support, but also by the new NESO policy and the Court of Session's landmark ruling.

We respectfully request and hope to receive your substantive response to the case we have set out for your withdrawal from this proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Thompson

on behalf of Save Glen Lednock