

# Locals say 'No' to 209 wind farms – only to be overruled by SNP

By Georgia Edkins

HUNDREDS of 'unsightly' wind farms have been approved by Scottish Ministers, despite being rejected by residents and councils.

In 209 cases, local authorities refused permission for turbines to be built, but the Scottish Government overturned their decisions.

Since the SNP came to power in 2007, nearly half of the 470 appeals submitted by rejected developers were later given approval by the Scottish Government.

And during the pandemic – when most consultations with the public were online only – five new wind farms have been approved, in flagrant disregard of local opinion and council decisions.

Iain Milligan, spokesman for Save Our Hills, last night urged Ministers to heed rejections from councils and listen to communities blighted by the massive turbines.

He said: 'Local authorities refuse wind farm applications because they don't fit with local development plans – plans which have been put in place following extensive consultation. In waving through



**IMPACT:** Wind turbines have been slammed as a blot on the landscape

these applications, the Scottish Government pays no more than lip service to the views of the very communities they're supposed to serve and are almost invariably opposed to these applications.'

Mr Milligan added: 'These decisions are made by civil servants who are not elected representa-

tives and therefore don't need to answer to the people who have to live with these enormous and damaging developments.'

'This trend of overturning local authority decisions on such important issues simply cannot continue.'

The Scottish Government has a 'net-zero' target for the year 2045, which means the amount of harmful greenhouse gases produced will be at least matched by the amount

---

## 'Trend of overturning local authority decisions'

---

removed from the atmosphere, with a growth in wind power set to play a major part.

Latest Scottish Government figures show that 44 per cent of all rejected applications for wind farms since 2007 – 209 of them – were later approved by ministers. Ninety-four of them were single-turbine developments.

Since April 2020, during the Covid pandemic, civil servants have

allowed a further five wind farms to start construction.

Last year, critics slammed the decision to hold virtual consultations for proposals brought by two wind farm developers who wanted to build in Kirkcudbrightshire at Whiteneuk, near Corsock, and at Gargrogo, east of Balmaclellan, near Outlander star Sam Heughan's childhood home.

In the absence of physical model exhibitions, they were concerned that locals could not get a proper feel for what the plans entailed.

Mr Milligan said: 'Given all manner of things were put on hold during the pandemic, it's not unreasonable for communities to expect a moratorium on major onshore wind farm developments too.'

'People were not able to go out and examine these plans.'

Last year, Historic Environment Scotland voiced its concerns about the 'cumulative' impact of turbine developments on the country's majestic castles, picturesque ruins and historic buildings.

The Scottish Government said last night: 'Scottish Ministers are committed to seeing the right developments in the right places.'