

FIGHT TO PROTECT BEAUTY SPOT

DON'T FAIL THE FELL

Campaigners fear council hasn't done enough to stop controversial windfarm proposal

STUART GILLESPIE

Campaigners fighting against a controversial windfarm fear the council has "failed" to protect a "precious and unique" landscape.

The local authority has told the Scottish Government it cannot provide a formal response on plans for turbines at Mochrum Fell near Corsock because the planning applications committee hasn't made a decision.

That opened the door for developers Falck Renewables to lodge an appeal to the government as a decision on the proposal had not been made within the

TURN TO PAGE 4

Battling on Trevor and Elaine Dwyer

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Fight to protect beauty spot

FROM PAGE 1

required timeframe – the fifth time this has happened with a Glenkens windfarm application since August last year.

Trevor and Elaine Procter, who are among more than 600 objectors to the plans, feel that they and other local residents aren't being protected.

They said: "The public expects that Dumfries and Galloway Council should make decisions on local wind farm planning applications to protect what is precious and unique about Galloway from inappropriate industrial development. The council has failed in this regard concerning Mochrum Fell."

"The appeal process bypasses any chance for the democratically elected councillors on the planning committee to uphold policy and come to a decision which represents the views of their constituents who are voicing their fears that rampant wind farm development is at saturation point in Dumfries and Galloway. For a reporter in Edinburgh to say yes to a wind farm on Mochrum Fell would be an outrage."

Falck had originally proposed building eight turbines, the tallest around 125m, at Mochrum Fell.

Council officials recommended approval in 2015 but members of the planning applications committee unanimously voted to reject the development.

However, planning permission was granted the following year after Falck appealed to the Scottish Government.

Last year, the Italian energy firm lodged a new application with the council for eight, 150m tall turbines.

And in August they appealed to the Scottish Government as the council had failed to make a decision.

In their initial response to the appeal, the council admitted that "demands on workload" meant they were still awaiting comments from their own landscape architect.

Earlier this month, case officer Christine Brown asked officials for a formal response by October 22 and if one was not provided "the reporter will assume that the council agrees with the appellant's submissions in all respects"

She added that should there not be a response, a hearing may be held, possibly in January.

On October 13, the council provided the reporter with copies of the objections.

before the deadline – they informed the reporter that as formal decisions on major planning applications had to be made by committee “it will not be possible” to meet the requests of the reporter within the required timescale “notwithstanding that the application is subject to an appeal for non-determination”;

The letter added that if there was a hearing, council officers would be available if necessary.

When asked by the News about a formal response – and what was being done to avoid future windfarm applications being appealed for non-determination – a council spokesman said: “The council has submitted its response to the Scottish Government planning and environmental appeals division and receipt of this was acknowledged on October 13.”

Iain Milligan of the Save Our Hills group, which is against the development, said: "It's extremely disappointing this significant planning application is now being sent uncontested to the Scottish Government. People in the area are very unhappy about the prospect of an enormous windfarm being built on their doorstep and they expect the council to stand up and defend them."



Pooling power Colin Wyper at the hook
Kirkcudbright swimming pool

Campervan waste disposal site is

A new waste disposal point for campervans is proving extremely popular.

Kirkcudbright Swimming Pool has set up a pump-out station to allow campervan owners who aren't staying in the town to get rid of their waste and fill up with fresh water.

The charity-run facility also has three electric vehicle charging stations, allowing three vehicles to spend the night. And so far they have generated some hard cash for the facility.

Pool manager Colin Wyper said: "They in September and that's without us really pub
"All that money goes back to the swimmi