

Dyce and Stoneywood Community Council

Precognition presented to the Local Public Enquiry regarding outline planning permission for a golf resort and associated development at Menie House, Aberdeenshire by Dyce and Stoneywood Community Council.

1) The applicant's submitted Transport Assessment and Environmental Assessment are incomplete and misleading.

2) The applicant plans to use helicopters to ferry guests from Aberdeen Airport to Menie.¹ More than 150 flights per day may be involved, based on the stated capacity of the resort. Frankly, this makes a mockery of any claims for "sustainability" or a green travel plan. We note with concern that such flights, which are beyond planning controls (see point 4 below), are already a proliferating feature of "luxury" golf tourism.²

3) Noise and air pollution arising from helicopters will have a potentially catastrophic effect on the fragile ecosystem of the SSSI at Menie. Residents in the vicinity of Aberdeen Airport will also be seriously affected by a huge increase in helicopter activity at the airport.³

4) As the applicant will be well aware, helicopter activity can, in planning law, be classed as "incidental or ancillary" to the main purpose of a development and therefore no planning permission is needed and no environmental controls can be enforced.⁴ This means, for example, that proposed conditions 30 and 31 re noise levels at the boundary of the development in the Aberdeenshire Planners' report⁵ F/APP/2006/4605 of 20 November 2007 are unenforceable in terms of helicopter noise.

5) We therefore believe that if planning permission for the resort is recommended by the Report's Office and eventually granted by Scottish Ministers, a section-75 planning agreement to ban all helicopter landings at Menie is necessary. This S75 agreement is needed to protect the integrity of the SSSI at Menie and to maintain the amenity and safety of residents in the vicinity of Aberdeen Airport and Balmedie and surrounding communities.

Supporting documents:

¹Extract of a letter from Will Dougherty (Customer Service Director, Aberdeen Airport) to Dyce and Stoneywood Community Council.

²A copy of a typical Internet advertisement for “executive” golf helicopter transport (original at <http://www.execgolf-leisure.com/concierge/helicopter-transfers.html>).

³David O’Neill’s comments, as noted on page 33 of the minute of the special meeting of the Formartine Area Committee of Aberdeenshire Council of 27 September 2007. Mr O’Neill is head of customer service at BAA Aberdeen Airport.

⁴Extract from Scottish Executive planning advice note PAN56 Planning and Noise (section 33) at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library/pan/pan56-00.htm>

⁵Extract from planners’ report F/APP/2006/4605 of Aberdeenshire Council.