

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**CUMBRAE COMMUNITY COUNCIL VOICES CONCERN OVER PLANNERS' DECISION**

Community Councils are statutory consultees for planning matters. This means when a planning application is received, the Community Council is informed. It then shares details of proposals with residents and asks their views. However, the Community Council on Cumbrae is concerned that its views are being ignored.

Graham Wallace, former Chair of Cumbrae Community Council said: "Over the last five years certain planning decisions on more major applications (in island terms) have been taken by the Council which have ignored local concerns and objections and on occasion been contrary to the Local Development Plan and the recommendations of North Ayrshire Council's own planning officials."

The issue has been highlighted again recently by the resubmission of a lapsed planning application to install a huge 16-hectare solar farm at the highest point of the island, one of the its key beauty spots.

John McHenery, Vice Chair of Cumbrae Community Council said: "We asked North Ayrshire Council to require an Environmental Impact Assessment for the planning application. This would have ensured that the proposed location for the development would be compared with other possible sites to see which has the least environmental impact.

"It seems highly unlikely that the top of Cumbrae is the best place for a fenced-off solar farm on agricultural land which will occupy a massive 1.25% of our small island. The proposed site surrounds a recognised viewpoint and no indication is given as to how the power will be stored or taken from Cumbrae to the grid. But our views have been ignored yet again and an Environmental Impact Assessment will not be required. North Ayrshire Council has written to say our concerns have 'been noted' but our residents don't think that's good enough. The community's voice must be heard in decisions that will have a major impact on their lives."

Editor's notes

**About Cumbrae Community Council**

Cumbrae Community Council was created to listen to islanders' views about key issues affecting the island and to make sure they are heard.

Community Councils are Scotland's most local tier of statutory representation (ie their purpose is set out in law). Members of the Community Council are democratically elected by those who live on the island.

Community Councils form an important connection between communities and the local council (as well as other public bodies) by sharing views and needs. In North Ayrshire, Community Councils also act as formal members of Locality Planning Partnerships.