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Compromise sought over Findhorn Bay wildfowling conflict

Moray councillors today agreed to explore a possible compromise between local residents and wildfowling over shooting in Findhorn Bay.

The council's economic development and infrastructure services committee was presented with a petition signed by more than 800 local people calling for a complete ban on wildfowling in the bay, which is part of a designated nature reserve.

They were particularly concerned that wildfowling was taking place in close

proximity to residential areas and that people living in the area were suffering increasing disturbance from indiscriminate shooting and noise.

The committee also heard that a counter petition had been submitted by the pro-wildfowling lobby and that it was currently being validated.

Councillors were advised in a report by council officers that the introduction of a ban on wildfowling would require the creation of a byelaw which, if challenged, could cost the council an estimated £30,000 to £35,000.

Given that there were conflicting views on the introduction of a ban, it was likely that a public inquiry would be required.

Local councillor Anne Skene said the issue of wildfowling in the bay was an emotive one and had become highly charged.

She suggested that an existing voluntary 'no shoot' area in the north part of Findhorn Bay could be extended to include the south-east corner where the proximity of wildfowling to residential properties was causing most conflict.

Councillor Skene said that would reduce noise disturbance and eliminate the need for either a permit system for wildfowling or an outright ban and would safeguard the interests of all parties.

Redefining the 'no shoot' area would allow wildfowling to continue shooting in the south and south-west parts of the bay.

The committee agreed to adopt Councillor Skene's suggested compromise as the basis for discussions with all interested parties with a view to achieving a solution.

Moray Council area stretches from Tomintoul in the south to the shores of the Moray Firth, from Keith in the east to Forres in the west. The council and its 4,500 employees respond to the needs of 92,500 residents in this beautiful part of Scotland, which nestles between Aberdeenshire and the Highlands.

Famous for its colony of dolphins, fabulous beaches and more malt whisky distilleries than any where else in Scotland, Moray is a thriving area and a great place to live.

Headquartered in Elgin, the administrative capital of Moray.

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