

Dear Sir or Madam

As someone who lives in the Weisdale Valley, I am writing to strongly object to the proposed SSN interconnector cable from Shetland to the mainland Scotland and the Viking Windfarm Plans as they currently stand.

Firstly I must point out that the timing of this consultation is very poor - in the middle of a pandemic when many of us have other things to be dealing with. I am a NHS key worker and therefore have been extremely busy - it is only by chance I saw that this was happening. The project has been on the go for so many years, leaving the consultation for a little long but would have made no difference to the project, but could have made a huge difference to the people who want to respond.

I do not have time to go into as much detail as I want to as I am afraid NHS work and looking after my family and community in the pandemic comes first!

The Viking Energy Windfarm and associated inter connector cable and converter station as currently planned is a ridiculous and damaging idea for Shetland - it will devastate the natural environment, is likely to cause significant health effects on people living in the middle of it and I do not believe it will be cost effective or actually bring much benefit to Shetland in the long term. It is going to be the biggest onshore windfarm in the UK in one of the smallest counties - an island where you cannot get away from it. Apart from anything else this shows complete disregard for the people of Shetland - who ( despite what the local council and anyone else might say) have not been properly consulted or involved with these plans, especially those of us living in the middle of it.

When the project was first suggested, it was on a much smaller scale , with smaller windmills , in a central unpopulated area of Shetland, to harness power for Shetland. I was utterly in favour.

However it has expanded beyond recognition, covering a huge part of central Shetland, with much bigger turbines to generate electricity for the rest of Scotland. A few people will make a lot of money, but many of us will be left living in the middle of a wind farm with all the consequent noise and flicker problems - we won't know the full health effects until we are living with them. The environment will be devastated, the peat lands and wildlife are supposed to be protected. The Scottish Government has just announced a ban on unlicensed culling of mountain hares - they live in the very areas that the windfarm, converter station and all the roads are planned to be built - that will kill many more hares than any culling.

I do not understand why this project is still being pushed through when everywhere else is moving into offshore windfarms and other forms of green renewable energy. I think the whole project is at least 10 years behind the times, probably more. If it had been built at the original scale, when first suggested, then I think it would have shown benefits, but it has really missed its chance.

The huge cost of this project, especially at the current time, is a massive risk and will only lead to electricity prices being inflated with the people of Shetland being disproportionately affected as we already pay more for fuel costs. This will only tip more households into fuel poverty because our climate means we need more fuel to heat our houses. And we do not have the same choices of fuel as on the mainland ( no piped gas).

Building this in one of the most remote parts of the UK and all the associated costs of transporting materials here and the inclement weather for building seems a waste of money - appreciate that our geography makes it windier here- but enough to justify the costs, for windmills that will last for ( I understand) just 25 years ?

I understand that the project will produce employment - but this will mostly be in the building works and will no doubt involve people from outwith Shetland rather than

creating local jobs. Also does not take into account the loss to the tourism industry when it becomes clear that large parts of Shetland are no longer the unspoilt, wild, flora and fauna rich, unique habitats that tourists come to experience - they will move on somewhere else.

Not to mention that when the wind is too strong the turbines will have to be switched off. And I sincerely hope there is no risk of blades breaking and flying off as seen in some places.

Again a smaller windfarm providing cheap electricity for Shetland was what we needed but instead the desire of a few people to make money has taken over.

I understand that another reason for the inter connector is to connect to national grid so we don't have to rely on the current power station which is due for replacement. That is fine except there is now an alternative to the power station which I understand will be much cheaper - and this has never been factored into any option appraisal as far as I can tell.

I urge you to seriously consider what the true cost implications and risks of this project are and what the long term devastating consequences for Shetland will be compared to any benefits.

Yours faithfully