

Mr James Norman
Offgem

26 May 2019

Dear Mr Norman

Shetland transmission project: Consultation on Final Needs Case and Delivery Model

I am writing to you to raise concerns regarding the consultation for/against the proposed Interconnector cable between Shetland and Scotland.

I do not believe that the proposal has been done in a fair or transparent manner as the local Council is giving the impression that they are trying to promote Green Energy. Nothing could be further from the truth. They have a vested interest, through invested Charitable Trust funds, and it is all about money.

The first point is that the Green Energy 'Tick-box' is unlikely to be true with experts to the local environment giving reasons why that is the case; namely the disturbance in the landscape (pristine peat bog), new roads and energy and resources used for construction far outweigh potential returns over a 25 year period.

To many locals it is an affront that as much pressure as possible is being brought to bear to strengthen the case for the Interconnector cable with MPs declaring that they have been working 'behind the scenes' towards it. This is an affront to me and, possibly, more than 50% of islanders who were told that none of this would go ahead without 'Public Approval'. This was never sought nor given.

Other financial pressure is in the granting of Planning Permission to Peel Energy to build 12 wind turbines at Mossy Hill. In this case I have personal experience because I objected to the proposal on 6 points. I will focus on this as I have personal experience of the behaviour and attitude of those in authority.

1. The proposal included 4 wind turbines in close proximity to the A970, one of the busiest roads in Shetland, which includes 2 accident blackspots where fatalities have occurred. Following construction of the nearby Burradale Windfarm, I know of two accidents; one involving 2 vehicles, the other 3 vehicles, directly due to the windfarm. I have been told of another accident since then which was directly caused by the same distraction.
2. The Peel turbines follow the same route as the burn of Fitch. This is used by migrating fish, which are protected by law. To build there would destroy this habitat, whilst also contravening the local planning regulations which require waterways to be kept clean
3. When Peel Energy first came to Shetland they showed proposals at local venues, where we met them and discussed their plans. One of their promises was that because we are nearest to their site, we would be shown pictures showing what they would look like from our own dwellings. This did not happen. They also admitted that the proposal was all about the grant money they would receive and nothing to do with green energy!
4. Because these windfarms require significant public money subsidies in order to be viable for operators they must be placed/sited where there is wind, not in a sheltered spot. 4 of the 12 Peel turbines are to be located in a valley, sheltered from the prevalent South to South East/ North to Norwest winds.
5. Disturbance; noise and flicker

6. For windmills closer than 2 kilometres to a dwelling, Scottish Government guidelines state that special consideration has to be given. Peels' windmills are about 800m from our dwellings.

The only visualisations given were from the south and Bressay from the east, three miles away. None were given where promised, from the north, where they will be most seen; clearly a tactic as they will have most visual impact in this direction.

To sum up the planning approval meeting some discussion was given to the need to minimise the flicker on dwellings; no mention was made to the effect on drivers.

In closing, one councillor stated she would not be able to look herself in the mirror if she approved the proposal and raised a motion to deny. She was supported by one other Councillor. The Chair motioned to pass with a vote of 6 in favour.

More significantly, the Chair said that in future they would have to revisit requirements but that would not effect this decision. **To me this appeared an urgency to pass to bring more pressure on an Interconnector decision as even a delay in that approval would put it beyond the Interconnector consultation.**

Given past experience, it is highly likely there will be accidents if this and the proposed Viking Energy windfarm are built. The local councillors went against their own planning authority's advice when they passed the plans for the Viking wind farm. Shetland is too small for wind generator construction on a large scale and turning these islands into an onshore windfarm will destroy other industries, such as tourism. Many locals have voiced concerns and plan to leave should these go ahead. Some have already chosen to live in areas less affected by wind turbines. Not everyone has this option!

Although raised, the mental health, and other medical conditions related to living in close proximity to windfarms was totally ignored. The local Council has invested heavily in Viking Energy through the Charitable Trust and because of this they are clearly biased in their actions in order to protect their investment.

After objecting to Peel Energy's application, I was astonished at the number of people contacting me in support of my actions. From where I am, the majority of people in Shetland appear to be against windfarms. If the Interconnector goes ahead, the windfarms will go ahead and affect Shetland negatively for the foreseeable future and be a huge waste of public money.

Yours faithfully