

## **Western Isles transmission project: Consultation on Final Needs Case and Delivery Model**

### **Response from Uig Development Trust SCIO (Scottish Charity SC 047581)**

We write in response to Ofgem's "minded to" response with regard to refusing a 600MW Transmission cable to the Western Isles in favour of a 450MW Cable. The Uig Development Trust is a SCIO tasked with the management of community land and associated assets in Uig for the benefit of the Community and the public in general following principles of sustainable development.

We believe that a 450MW Cable would leave local Development Trusts, such as ourselves, with limited opportunity for development in renewable energies, which in turn will also reduce our ability in the future to self-fund vital local projects. As highlighted in the Community Energy Scotland (CES) response it would be extremely difficult for a community group such as ourselves to embark on a time consuming and financially complicated renewables project without the certainty that there will be future capacity. We, therefore, strongly support SHE-Ts GHD-S3 and GHD-S4 options.

Looking at the larger picture we are also concerned that the current "minded-to" decision is short-sighted and that a 450MW limit would cost the consumer significantly more in the long term. An additional 5% of total investment [£30m] at this stage would unlock a further 150MW [33% additional capacity]. To limit the future capacity and in turn the ability for both public and private enterprises on the islands to capitalise and benefit from our natural resources for the sake of a minimal short-term saving seems non-sensical. It also does not support the current aims of the Government around socio-economic growth and environmental policies relating to carbon-neutral targets.

We support CES in their request that the Government/Ofgem should support community energy by:

- Retaining the Feed in Tariff (FIT) generation and export tariffs for community energy projects – or introducing a modified 'Community Feed in Tariff'.
- Reinstating the Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS) and Social Investment Tax Relief (SITR) to community energy projects
- Extending the Contract for Differences (CfD) mechanism to sub-5MWe schemes and create a specific tranche for community energy generation projects, with a clear schedule of when rounds were to be announced.

Community groups, such as ourselves, look to make a real and tangible difference to the socio-economic status of our community. One way of doing this is by directing funds obtained from renewable energy projects to key needs and priorities such as housing, employment, health and fuel poverty. Given certainty around future capacity and the right support to develop we could make significant improvements to the lives of those most vulnerable in our Community.

Uig Development Trust

24 May 2019