

Mr Brearley,

I have just finished reading a blog post by yourself where you state energy firms need to take the public with them. I'm not sure if you are aware of the situation in Shetland where we are currently awaiting an OFGEM decision on an interconnector cable joining us to the mainland. I can tell you that a lot of the community does not trust SSE and their Viking Energy windfarm project.

Here in Shetland, swathes of peat moorland habitat is under threat in the name of supposed 'green' energy. Viking Energy wishes to erect 103 155m wind turbines in this beautiful area which is home to much wildlife - including curlews and lapwings, mountain hares, merlin, otters and much more, destroying peat moorland and releasing tonnes of co2 into the atmosphere. Peat that is becoming valued as a carbon sink and a fragile habitat. A huge windfarm to add to the number collecting constraint payments at the expense of the consumer.

The investigative ground works for which they applied for retrospective planning permission last year used tracked vehicles destroying the top layer of peat, a helicopter to deliver materials and personnel disturbing a loch with red throated diver chicks not yet fledged (endangered species). Photographs of the activities can be seen on the Stop Viking Energy Windfarm Facebook page where you can also see evidence of run off into water courses from toxic materials used in drilling. Viking Energy are currently working on an access road to their planned convertor station during bird nesting season and have also started work on a laydown area. It seems that they are taking OFGEM's decision as a foregone conclusion in their favour.

The destruction of the hills will be massive with huge amounts of peat removed, huge 'borrow pits' (quarries) dug out to surface the necessary roads, one pit alone will need the equivalent of 5000 trucks to transport the rock. Concrete slabs will be poured necessitating more trucks. The turbines will have to be transported by sea then road on an island where roads are not made for items of this size. How can this be green?

This project requires an interconnector cable to join it to the mainland, this does not yet exist. It requires subsidies, it seems they assume this is all assured as they are charging ahead. Money for subsidies is driving this project. Wind power is not guaranteed. In Shetland the small turbines we have are often braked because the wind is too strong. There is already overcapacity on the mainland with wind farms being paid not to produce energy as the grid can't take it, why are we being turned into an offshore wind farm for a mainland that can't take it? Money, profit, is the only answer.

We need support to protect this fragile, important environment which attracts wildlife enthusiasts and wild places lovers from all over the world. We would like to keep our lonely planet top ten places to visit in Europe designation. While we appreciate the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gases, climate change cannot be stopped by the destruction of a habitat such as this which releases the very gases into the atmosphere!

The recent proposal to build a gas powered power station on Shetland requires serious consideration. Viking Energy claim public support, I can tell you many people in Shetland do NOT support this venture, and we have never had chance to have a public inquiry to be heard. Our council made decisions in secret, denied a public inquiry and consultations that have taken place are largely deemed to be a tick box exercise, often held with little notice. Sustainable Shetland, a group of locals, took the project to court but to no avail. There are people despairing that their views are unheard, people planning moves from homes owned by generations of their family, tourism businesses dreading what this may do to their fragile trade.

SNH has removed SSSI status from the area of the convertor station which has some of the few tree plantations in Shetland. Their Landscape Assessment for Shetland <https://www.nature.scot/snh-review-93-landscape-assessment-shetland-isles> contains recommendations that are being ignored, I have attached some screenshots of pages for your attention. The Shetland Windfarm Environmental Advisory Group, the formation of which is a planning condition, has yet to have its first meeting.

There are many concerns about this project, I hope OFGEM will give fair consideration to all sides and not just hand out the approval that SSE are anticipating.