Dear Sirs

I am writing to raise an objection as part of the above consultation. These developments will cause serious blight to the islands in many ways, and it is very disappointing that none of these appear to carry any significance. No-one can rationally dispute that climate change is an issue and must be addressed, however this is not an effective way of doing so because of the collateral damage involved. It is not acceptable to "solve" one problem by causing another, nor is it acceptable to give a false impression of how local residents feel about the plans as the GHD report has done.

Visual impact and tourism

Viking Energy and the other proposed windfarms are visually intrusive, vastly out of scale with the surrounding environment, and will dominate the skyline to the point where everything else is lost among towers and blades. There will consequently be an adverse impact on tourism. Shetland's selling point is its natural environment – peaceful, unspoiled and beautiful, and recognised as such only a few days ago by the Lonely Planet. None of these will still be the case if the landscape is covered in giant wind turbines. The tourist industry has developed hugely over the past 20+ years, is a thriving part of the economy, and provides income for many people across the whole of the islands. Shetland is an expensive place to travel so, and if the peace and scenery are lost, there will be little reason to come. Tourism-related businesses are local and help maintain the local economy – their interest is in long-term stewardship of where they live, not short-term profits for a remote organisation.

Environmental impact

Construction of these windfarms, especially Viking Energy, will cause enormous environmental damage. The proposed location is on peat, which in itself is a valuable carbon sink; this calls into question the "green" credentials of the project, especially when one considers the unpredictable nature of wind and the need for other means of generating energy as a back-up.

Ground stability

Peat is also inherently unstable, as has been demonstrated on numerous occasions by slides. It is not unreasonable to foresee a peat slide taking out several turbines, and worst case starting a moorland fire and escalating environmental damage.

Impact on wildlife

The location of the Viking Energy windfarm includes areas of environmental sensitivity and breeding grounds for birds. The best "habitat management plan" is to leave well alone.

Health impacts

The proposed developments have caused, are causing, and will continue to cause significant health concerns (physical and mental) for those living in close proximity. Health-related issues and wind turbines are well-known, yet continue to be glossed over. Those who are affected cannot gloss over them however, and they are not being listened to or taken account of. This is a clear failing on behalf of the developers.

Property devaluation

In addition to health concerns for those living near the proposed developments, their own economic situation is under threat. The value of their properties will decrease, probably quite significantly, and it may be well-nigh impossible for them to move. Financial compensation may or may not be forthcoming (has that been factored into the project costings?), but quite frankly they would rather stay where they are and have been for often several generations.

Local opposition

There are many reasons why the industrialisation of Shetland for windfarm development is undesirable and unsuitable, and these have been raised on countless occasions. The GHD Report - Shetland contains a statement quoting “a lack of opposition from residents”. Sustainable Shetland was formed back in 2008 (11 years ago) to coalesce local opposition to Viking Energy, and it is still an active organisation to this day. There have been demonstrations, petitions and court challenges over the intervening years, and this statement is therefore blatantly untrue. To make such a fundamental error calls into question the reliability of the report, as it can only have arisen from either ignorance or wilful negligence.

Shetland should not be exploited for the benefit of remote investors, nor to make political gains. These developments are not in the interests of the local community, nor are they a good mitigation for climate change, and they should not be allowed to go ahead.

Yours faithfully