



**ARDROSS COMMUNITY
COUNCIL**

John Edmondson
Secretary
Ardross Community Council



Development Plans Team
Council HQ
Highland Council
Glenurquhart Road
INVERNESS
IV3 5NX

14th January 2015

Dear Sirs,

Re: Planning for Onshore Wind Energy November 2014

The Ardross Community Council would firstly like to thank the Development Plans Team for allowing us to respond to the consultation leaflet and the extension time to respond.

We have been told that the pamphlet consultation applies to Caithness Local Plan. Our concern is that some of the questions asked in this consultation are general and not specific to Caithness and that the responses for essentially the Caithness Local Plan will form Policy for the whole of the Highland Council area in the future. This is not acceptable in our view. If Policy is to be adopted Highland wide it should be consulted Highland wide, and well publicised, something it has been admitted by the Highland Council is not the case here. We seek assurances on this matter.

The Community Council is also surprised that our Local Members were unaware of this consultation. Whilst it might ostensibly pertain to Caithness, it seems that neither the Vice-Convener nor the Leader of the Opposition knew anything about it.

It is now well recognised that Ardross and the surrounding area are under extreme pressure from onshore wind energy development. It is time the Highland Council reflected this in their Policy and offered our community some protection from further development. The Highland Council have resolutely failed to produce the promised CVLA for Easter Ardross. Many of the issues and pressures that Caithness is experiencing are the same in Ardross. As late as September 2012 Ardross had more operational turbines than the whole of Caithness. Yet it was Caithness that got the CVLA first.

Question 1

10 MW installed capacity.

Question 2

The following restraints should be considered: Special Landscape Areas (it is surprising that these have not been included in SPP); deep peat (SNH are carrying out a consultation and mapping exercise on this issue at the moment); some consideration should be given to landscapes of Regional and Local Importance; cumulative impact. SNH hold data on the first two and the Highland Council on the third as part of their development plans. Cumulative impact considerations have sadly only been

done for limited areas of the Highlands, and regrettably not those under the severest pressure. It really is time a CVLA is done for the Easter Ross and Ardross area as promised.

Question 3

As well as the restraints outlined in SPP Table 1, matters listed opposite the question should be considered. But as Scotland's renewable energy production increases as a percentage of the total consumed in Scotland then the following although being considered should carry increasingly less weight: scale of contributions to renewable energy targets and the net economic impact which is notoriously difficult to balance (how much of the money earned in Scotland stays in Scotland - balanced against the money it takes out in subsidies for instance).

Conversely as Scotland's renewable energy production increases as a percentage of the whole then the importance of limiting building on peat and carbon rich soils, should be given greater weight. The current bench mark figures for the Carbon Calculator are woefully out of date. And they do not take into account the fact sufficiently that wind energy is no longer replacing carbon rich energy mix anymore.

Question 4

This question is regarding the Caithness CVLA. We await the CVLA for the Easter Ardross area. We would like to point out that the consultants recommendations for Caithness would not necessarily apply to any other area in the Highland Region including Ardross. The principle of establishing clusters and gaps is not one that we can necessarily approve of. In any case how big is a cluster, how do you define a cluster, is it fair on residents who live in these clusters, shouldn't everyone bear the burden of the current energy policy?

Yours sincerely,



John Edmondson
Secretary on behalf of Ardross Community Council