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Brian MacKenzie
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Our ref: LDP-270-3/25

5 September 2011

Dear Mr McKenzie

**THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT PLANNING)
(SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2008
HIGHLAND COUNCIL – HIGHLAND WIDE LOCAL PLAN
NOTICE: REQUEST FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

I am writing regarding Highland Wide Local Development Plan which has been submitted to DPEA for examination by Scottish Ministers. Under Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning)(Scotland) Regulations 2008 the appointed reporters can request, by way of notice, further information in connection with the examination. This letter is a notice under Regulation 22.

The reporters have identified that further information, as listed below, should be provided by the Highland Council. It would be helpful if you could send this information to me, to pass on to the reporter, by 19 September 2011.

Issue 70 Electricity Transmission Infrastructure

Policy tests

1. The policy sets a threshold for electricity transmission infrastructure proposals to pass. It is argued in representations for SSE that this is at odds with the legislative test set out under section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989. The policy test could be regarded as potentially more onerous. How does the council respond to those points, given the general support within NPF2 for facilitating transmission from new generators?

2. It is argued for Cube Engineering that electricity transmission infrastructure will unavoidably have a significantly detrimental impact on the environment, and therefore fail the policy test. How does the council respond to that? The council's response should take account of the matters regarding "significant detriment" etc raised in the further information request on policy 68.
3. As expressed, the policy does not explicitly allow for the balancing exercise which the council refers to in its response to representations. The council is invited to make observations as appropriate and to submit amended wording for the policy.
4. The test given in the policy for underground or sub-sea alternatives to overground route proposals is the same as that for all other proposals, except that it is qualified by the word "generally". This implies that the council's intention is to afford lesser support to underground or sub-sea alternatives, whereas its response to representations suggests the opposite. The council is invited to clarify its position and submit amended wording, if appropriate.

Criteria

SEPA would like to see this policy include the same criteria as policy 68: Renewable Energy Developments because both types of developments have features in common. The council is invited to respond to that suggestion.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter and confirm that it and, in due course, the council's responses, have been posted on the council's website. Please do not hesitate to contact me if there is anything you would like to clarify.

Yours sincerely

Morag I Smith

Morag I Smith
Development Plan Assistant