



Landscape Task Force

Thursday, 6th March 2014

Dear Allen,

SNH WINDFARM VISUALISATION GUIDANCE

I am contacting you in my capacity as convenor of Scottish Environment LINK's Landscape Task Force. As it happens, I was also until I retired in 2011 the SNH director with responsibility for landscape, energy and planning policy matters.

As you are well aware, there has been much controversy in recent years over the verisimilitude of the various techniques used to illustrate the potential landscape and visual impacts of proposed windfarms. The shortcomings of some of the existing methodologies and the lack of a single preferred one have contributed significantly to the difficulties faced by those commenting on, and determining, individual applications. This in turn has only compounded the strife surrounding this type of development and the waste of effort on the part of all involved in trying to get the "right development in the right place".

LINK members have therefore very much welcomed the steps that SNH has taken to update its guidance on such visualisation techniques. The Landscape Task Force recently received a presentation on the process that had been followed, the issues that it had exposed and the conclusions that had been reached. Members declared themselves very satisfied with the outcome and strongly endorsed the approach recommended in SNH's revised draft guidance.

We understand that this draft guidance is now with Scottish Government. On behalf of the Landscape Task Force and indeed the whole LINK network, I would like to urge you to clear it, as submitted, for release as soon as possible. Its availability, preferably with a statement of firm support from the Scottish Government, would represent a significant step forward and remove one unnecessary bone of contention from what will remain, even without it, a highly complex and divisive field of decision-making.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

John Thomson.