

First Minister before you leave office can you please ask someone to answer the questions posed?

OFGEM is minded to approve the electrical interconnector between Orkney and the mainland of Scotland.

Your Minister granted Orkney Islands Council planning permission for three wind farms against all advice from their advisors and experts.

One on land designated as an area of significant protection in the council's 2017 strategic plan.

One on land that judges stated is too close to historic buildings.

One on an isolated uninhabited island that is a designated area of special scientific interest and a special area of conservation that hosts the second largest grey seal breeding colony in the UK.

Why?

I previously sent you a government funded report on seal disturbance has the minister read it and what is their answer to the report after granting permission for a pier roads and turbines to be constructed on the island of Faray?

Has the Scottish government or OFGEM considered that the council's community wind farm started out as wind farm to supply the council offices with electricity and when this proved to be unobtainable overnight it became a community wind farm.

Orkney Islands Council has spent millions of the people of Orkneys money to get planning permission, yet they still do not have financial permission from the full council to proceed with the project.

I have attached the planning statement for the wind farm at Hammers Hill in Evie one of the wind farms being used to meet OFGEMS requirements for the interconnector. When the application was lodged I asked the OIC if this application was to provide energy for export, because if it was I said that like the other three wind farms it should be sent to the Scottish government for determination. The reason for this is the OIC are already a major shareholder in Hammers Hill wind farm and had a clear vested interest in the planning application being passed to meet OFGEMS target for the interconnector. I was assured that the application was for two wind turbines and a hydrogen plant and not for exporting power and it was alright for the council to determine the application.

In light of the fact that this wind farm is now part of the number of turbines providing energy to meet OFGEMS requirements.

Do you think that the plans should now be submitted to the Scottish government for approval?

Do you think that I and others including OFGEM have been misled by the OIC?

Should the OIC be investigated by the standards commission?

A copy of this letter is being sent to OFGEM

Regards Jim Leitch date 22/03/2023