

Frank Mitchell
Director, SP Energy Networks
New Alderston House,
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gh March 2011

Dear Frank,

**Beauly to Denny – ScottishPower Transmission Ltd (SPT) Consent Condition 19:
Stirling Visual Impact Mitigation Scheme**

Thank you for submitting proposals for the Stirling Visual Impact Mitigation Scheme (the Scheme) on 07 February.

In coming to a view on the best way forward, Scottish Ministers recognise the considerable work done so far by SPT, and the detailed proposals you have presented.

I have now considered these proposals, and have concluded that the process of formal consultation with Stirling Council, within the terms of the Condition to the Consent granted on 5 January 2010, cannot usefully begin at this time. I would request that SPT and Stirling Council initiate, as a matter of urgency, a process of engagement to consider mitigation measures and options which do not yet appear to have been fully explored.

Under the terms of Condition 19 of the Consent, it is for Scottish Ministers to make the final decision on a Scheme, following consultation with Stirling Council. The formal proposals now with Ministers are broadly in line with the options and recommendation SPT consulted on last September; the scheme proposes only minor additional visual mitigation. Stirling Council's consultation response to SPT, dated 10 December 2010, made clear that SPT's recommended solution at that time was unsatisfactory, and highlighted several areas of additional work which they said should be undertaken in order to properly examine the options. Stirling Council also requested within the Beauly Denny Steering Group that SPT discuss formal proposals with them before they were submitted to Scottish Ministers.

I consider that the likelihood of achieving an acceptable proposal would have been greatly increased if this dialogue had taken place, and would encourage improved and constructive dialogue between experts working for and on behalf of SPT and Stirling Council. Moreover, I consider that the options requested by Stirling Council in their consultation response to SPT

should have been subject to closer examination. Those options, in particular, include options for partial undergrounding of the main 400 kV line, and undergrounding of the 132kV line from Fallin to Glenbervie, in addition to strengthening the existing mitigation proposals.

Scottish Ministers remain firmly committed to the Beaully Denny upgrade, as a key development to enable Scotland's renewable energy future. To avoid delay to the development I recommend in the first instance that a period of no more than 60 days is set aside for SPT and Stirling Council to undertake the joint work referred to above, with a view to the submission by SPT of improved proposals by the end of June 2011.

I look forward to the Scottish Government working with SPT and Stirling Council, and trust that your future cooperation is assured. I hope that we can together develop a scheme which strikes the best possible balance for the development and its impact on the Stirling area.

Yours sincerely



JIM MATHER