

**STIRLING BEFORE PYLONS**

**acting with**

**FRIENDS OF THE OCHILS**

**as a Relevant Person Group**

**for the purposes of the**

**STIRLING SESSION**

**of the Public Inquiry into  
Scottish & Southern Energy's proposals for the  
Beauly to Denny 400 KV Steel Tower Double Circuit  
Overhead Electricity Transmission Line**

**SUMMARY PRECOGNITION**

**Peter Pearson MRTPI**

**Regeneration and Social Inclusion  
in the Eastern Villages  
of Stirling**

# **REGENERATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE EASTERN VILLAGES OF STIRLING**

## **SUMMARY PRECOGNITION**

1. My name is Peter Pearson, I have been a Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute since 1980, and I am Secretary of Stirling Before Pylons. Further details of my experience are found in my Full Precognition.
2. **Background**
  - 2.1 The Eastern Villages consist of three former coal mining communities to the east of Stirling. The pits were at Fallin : Polmaise 3&4, at Plean 4&5 and at Cowie : the Bannockburn pit. The closure of these pits had a significant impact on local employment and the viability and well being of the Eastern Villages. The communities have been identified as having poor health, high unemployment, low incomes, low educational attainment and relatively high crime rates. In order to address this a variety of renewal and regeneration measures have been initiated by central and local government in an attempt to reverse the decline of these communities.
  - 2.2 Stirling Before Pylons and witnesses from the communities are of the opinion that the impact of the Beauly to Denny 400kv Power Line will have a negative impact on the regeneration of these communities. In addition, the latest information shows that these communities issues are proving difficult to resolve. Indeed the most recent Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation shows Fallin to be suffering from greater disadvantage than previously.
  - 2.3 As the applicants have not addressed these issues in the ES, it is necessary in this submission to lay out some of the relevant national and local policy issues and to supply basic data related to these matters.
  - 2.4 We will conclude that the building of the power line adjacent to these communities will compromise other important Scottish Government policies, and that as a result other alternative routes for the power line should be more fully investigated. This precognition does not cover the potential health impacts on these communities, which is being dealt with in other evidence.

Consideration is then given to the following issues :

3. The Application

4. Scottish Government Policies
5. The Stirling Community Planning Partnership
6. A Eastern Villages Statistical Review
7. The Three year Regeneration Outcome Agreement
8. The Current Position
9. Power Line and Regeneration
10. Comments on Renewal in the Eastern Villages
11. Implications for the Eastern Villages
  - 11.1 It is not possible to say precisely what the implications of the proposed powerline will be for the Eastern Villages, in terms of the impacts on regeneration and the community. That would have to wait for a detailed analysis after the event. It is possible, however, to draw on extensive experience of other communities in similar circumstances and draw up a range of likely eventualities.
  - 11.2 We know that the regeneration of these three villages is in the balance and indeed that despite significant efforts the latest Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that Fallin has moved backwards.
  - 11.3 Regeneration is about confidence: in the community, in the housing market and its image in the wider community. We know that the local community are strongly opposed to the plans and they will view the scheme being approved, as the area being 'dumped on' again to quote Keith Brown, the local MSP. As has been said elsewhere, if there were not negative implications, there would not be a good reason for line not going through the New Growth Area.
  - 11.4 The results from a loss of confidence engendered by such a significant development as the powerline, both physically and symbolically, could easily lead to the classic cycle of decline in the area. This might include :
    - Increased incidence of a lack of hope in the community
    - Increased levels of graffiti and anti-social behaviour
    - Increased incidence of depression, alcohol and substance abuse

- Truancy increases and school performance declines
- The area's image makes properties more difficult to let
- Tenancies will only be accepted by the socially excluded
- This leads to more mobile people in the community moving out to more 'desirable' areas
- House prices stagnate and the area becomes less attractive to developers
- Local shops and other services close and cannot be relet and are boarded up

The degree to which this would happen cannot be predicted, but those are amongst the very real concerns of these communities, and good reasons why serious consideration should be given to undergrounding the proposed line.

## 12. Conclusions

1. The Scoping Report for the application made it clear that the implications on the local population and communities had to be taken account of in the ES. This does not appear to have occurred.
2. The Scottish Executive has a range of central policy initiatives, covering Social Justice, Environmental Justice and Regeneration which are not referred to in the ES and apply to the Eastern Villages.
3. The Local Authority has responded to these Executive policies with a wide ranging series of local initiatives in the Eastern Villages through its Regeneration Outcome Agreement with the Executive. Again these are not referred to in the ES.
4. These initiatives show that significant public resources are being invested to regenerate the Eastern Villages. The success of these programmes is currently in the balance.
5. The Reporters in the North Yorkshire Inquiry found that a 400kV line could have a negative impact on regeneration policies, and was a relevant factor to balance in their judgement of that application. The lack of any such analysis in the ES is a significant flaw in this application.

6. A range of case studies illustrate that re-routing or undergrounding has been seen as an alternative in relation to other regeneration strategies. The applicants did not consider this in preparing their ES.
7. The local community, councillors and MSPs have all drawn attention to the impact on the Eastern Villages, expressing their concern that the power line will have a negative impact on the communities. These concerns appear to have been ignored.
8. In addition to the evidence in this submission there is additional significant concern expressed on health grounds reported to this Inquiry. The Eastern Villages represent the most densely populated section along the whole proposed line, with by far the most people potentially at risk.
9. It is SBP's submission that the additional evidence submitted in relation to the Eastern Villages, taken with the other evidence produced against the OHL to the east, are sufficient grounds to refuse this application and to require the full investigation of other alternatives including undergrounding to the west.