SUBMISSION FROM MIKE DALES

In responding to this consultation I would like to concentrate on one of the questions put forward by the committee.

How can national priorities be reconciled with local interests?

I recognise the problems caused by climate change and accept the need to take action, but the unacceptable impacts on landscapes and local communities caused by industrial scale onshore (and close to land offshore) wind farms has led to a situation where the public are not onboard with the renewable industry and government targets. I regard myself as being environmentally aware and want to see the causes of climate change being addressed, but I am not convinced by an industry that seeks to build bigger and bigger turbines across the entire country with an appalling disregard for those who oppose their plans.

It would be an unsatisfactory situation if Scotland were to achieve its targets by ruining its world famous natural beauty, ignoring the concerns of thousands of objectors, and public money being seen to go into funding the large multi-national companies that forced their plans through the planning process.

There needs to be widespread public support for a renewable revolution and that is sadly lacking at the moment. My view is that large scale onshore wind farms are, under the current subsidy arrangements, a good way of making money for energy companies and landowners, but they are alienating the very people that need to be onboard in terms of supporting the government’s energy targets.

Rather than forcing their plans on local communities and causing devastation to areas of wild land, the energy industry needs to find solutions that have much lower impacts on scenery and which can gain the support of those who are currently being turned away by the head long rush for big wind turbines.

I notice that Professor Tony Trewavas suggests an innovative solution in his response to this consultation:

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_EconomyEnergyandTourismCommittee/Inquiries/Trewavas_Prof_Tony.pdf

Ten metre high turbines have the potential to make a significant contribution towards our energy targets as well as gaining the kind of support that government and industry should be seeking. There will be other solutions as well, but smaller scale, less visible infrastructure, combined with a much greater emphasis on energy conservation has to be the way forward. If those were to be our national priorities then I believe there would be far greater support from local interests.

Mike Dales