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Director Scotland
Bob McIntosh

Our ref: 226851

02 December 2011

Dear Mrs Metcalfe

Open Information Request: Supporting information in relation to Environmental Impact Assessment, Consent ref: 033901226

I am writing further to your request of 05 November to my colleague Nick Mainprize for supporting information in relation to the above Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regarding alternative routes.

Our policy is to be as open with the information that we hold as possible, however the only information on alternative routes that FCS holds, as the competent authority under the EIA process, is that information as detailed in the West Loch Awe Timber Haul Route Environmental Statement, as previously provided to Avich and Kilchrenan Community Council.

For ease of reference, I have attached a copy of the relevant page. This section appears in the Environmental Statement – Main Report (November 2008) - Section 4.3: Alternatives.

Please note that the supply of this information does not provide an automatic right to re-use the documents in a way that would infringe copyright or intellectual property rights, for example, by making multiple copies, publishing and issuing copies to the public. If you do wish to reuse information supplied please contact me.

We have tried to deal with your request as fully and as promptly as possible, however, should you wish to complain about the way your request has been handled please contact Dr Bob McIntosh at the address at the top of this letter.

Complaints regarding non-compliance with the open access legislation obligations should initially be made to the Forestry Commission itself. We aim to resolve any complaints with you directly.



Forestry Commission Scotland
Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba

However, should the matter fail to be resolved, you may make an appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office at:

FOI Compliance Team (complaints)
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Tel: 01625 545 700
Fax: 01625 524 510
E-mail: mail@ico.gov.uk

If I can be of any further assistance please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Nicky Whitaker
Head of Corporate Services

take account of certain environmental sensitivities, and in others it was not possible to avoid sensitivities and as such suitable mitigation will be proposed. Issues such as construction cost have been given less weight than haulage costs due to the high use and long term nature of this proposal. However, the final route choice has been reached through discussion and understanding between Engineers, Environmental Consultants and Applicants rather than any formulaic weighting of factors.

4.3 ALTERNATIVES

4.3.1 Strategic Timber Haul Route

Alternatives for bypassing Kilchrenan have been previously considered. However, without the wind farm (and as such the need for tracks to cross the land at a higher elevation) this proposal has largely focussed on a bypass utilising existing routes through Nant Forest and utilising the Hydro road to reach the B845 at H (Figure 2(iv)). The disadvantage of this approach is the altitude required to be gained when passing through Nant Forest (approx 150m climb) before descending to the B845. Aside from the increased costs of haulage, this would appear particularly pointless for timber extracted from the majority of Inverinan Forest, where the timber is already at this sort of altitude and would be initially hauled down hill to the public road before it had again to be hauled back up hill to pass through Nant Forest and along the proposed bypass.

Proposals to cross Fernoch Farm at a slightly lower elevation than proposed here were also considered. However, commercial terms were not reached with the landowner.

4.3.2 Carraig Gheal Wind Farm Access

It had always been maintained that the maximum benefits would accrue if the access route for Carraig Gheal Wind Farm could be utilised in the long term to support timber extraction in the West Loch Awe forest areas. Initially, wind farm access had been sought from the north, with 2 alternatives proposed:

- Upgrading of the B845 and roughly following the line of the WLATHR north of the Wind Farm; or
- Upgrading of existing track and creation of some sections of new track along a route passing Loch Nant, Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm and through Fearnoch Forest to the A85.

These proposals were put before Argyll and Bute Council and their preference was to utilise the second route for wind farm construction traffic, and resolved to support the Wind Farm Application subject to access being taken through Fearnoch Forest and not upgrading the B845.

Results of EIA fieldwork indicated that there was unlikely to be any environmental effects that would prevent the construction and operation of the Fearnoch route. However, further discussions with FCS revealed that there could be weather problems in its use for timber haulage year round and concern was expressed regarding the additional timber haulage costs of the additional distance and the changes in altitude required on those forest roads. It was for these technical and economic reasons that this option was discounted and efforts put into developing the combined route to the south which is proposed here.

4.4 INTERPRETATION OF "RELEVANT PROJECT"

A request was made to the Commissioners to determine whether the proposal was a "Relevant Project" as defined under the The Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (Scotland) Regulations 1999. It was confirmed that the proposal was a "Relevant Project" and that EIA would be required. However, marine works are not specified under Regulation 3 and 2 of the EIA regulations and should not be considered here.

4.5 EIA METHODOLOGY

Project design has been informed by the preliminary results of EIA in an iterative process. Where impacts are predicted, the alignment of the route has been examined and where possible mitigation against the impact incorporated into the project design.

When addressing potential environmental effects arising from the Proposed Development, mitigating those potential impacts has been dealt with in a sequential manner, in order of preference, as outlined below:

- **Avoid:** Where possible project design takes account of environmental sensitivities and seeks to avoid creating an impact in the first place. In this way we consider the final Proposed Development to have inherent mitigation built in. An example would be re-routing to avoid a sensitivity;
- **Reduce:** Where it is not possible to completely avoid an impact, measures are taken to reduce the magnitude of the impact – through a reduction in the extent, duration, severity or through imposing management protocols that are designed to reduce the likelihood of that impact taking place (or even to ensure that an impact is responded to where it does take place). Examples of reduction of environmental impact might include reducing the length of road crossing a sensitive habitat or changing working practices to reduce the probability of accidents;
- **Compensate:** The final stage to mitigation is to identify potential compensation – which might for example balance the negative effect of habitat loss in one location with habitat restoration in another;
- **Enhance:** In addition to mitigation processes, other ways in which the development of the project can lead to benefits for the local environment are examined. This might be achieved through project design or by the addition of ancillary components to the project. Strictly speaking, enhancement goes beyond the requirements of EIA.

Methodologies for the assessment of impacts are set out in each of the following EIA chapters, authored by independent EIA consultants. Each chapter assesses the likely significant effects and puts them in the EIA context, and proposes methods to reduce and/or compensate for the effects. The residual likely significant effects, post mitigation, are then assessed.

The Applicant makes their commitments to the mitigation proposed in Chapter 13 with the resultant environmental effects summarised in Chapter 14.

226851 Deadline: 2/12/11

Kirk, Liz

From: Whitaker, Nicky
Sent: 08 November 2011 14:37
To: May, Sheryl; Kirk, Liz
Cc: Hymers, Michael; Mainprize, Nick
Subject: Fw: Re. WLATHR Consent.
Importance: High
Attachments: CONSENT. WLATHR pdf.pdf

Sheryl,
 See below from Nick. Haven't read it all but if it's an foi we should deal.
 Have copied in Michael as there may be bits for Fes.
 Happy to discuss when I get back from leave.
 Nicky
 Sent from my blackberry

From: Mainprize, Nick
To: Whitaker, Nicky
Cc: House, Syd; Mckay, Chrissy
Sent: Tue Nov 08 13:19:25 2011
Subject: FW: Re. WLATHR Consent.

Nicky

Please see e-mail below from Christine Metcalfe requesting further information under the Fol regs. In relation to the Environmental Statement there is a short section that covers the information being looked for and I am sure that I have previously directed Christine to the relevant section. The developers i.e Forest Enterprise and Greenpower may hold information on alternative routes which FCS as the competent authority have not had sight of. I happy to provide a response to Christine with regard to FCS in our role as the competent authority but not FE as the developer. However as the request has been made under the Fol regs and given your recent correspondence with Christine do you wish to respond on behalf of FCS and FE or just FE?

Can you please let me know how you would like to proceed? Please note that I have yet to acknowledge Christine's e-mail.

Regards

**Nick Mainprize –
 Operations Manager**
 Forestry Commission Scotland
 Perth and Argyll Conservancy
 Algo Business Centre
 Glenearn Road
 Perth
 PH2 0NJ

Direct Dial: +44 (0) 1738 450788
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www.forestry.gov.uk

From: Christine [mailto:luanam@btinternet.com]
Sent: 06 November 2011 12:14
To: Mainprize, Nick
Subject: FW: Re. WLATHR Consent.
Importance: High

11/11/2011

Nick apologies, I also meant to add that searches into past records involving the WLATHR have failed to find any references to an outline of the main alternatives studied by the developer and an indication of the main reasons for his choice, taking into account the environmental effects.

If they do exist, could you please send these too under Fol regs., I'm sure the answers to both questions will be readily and quickly accessible to you. Our own documents are somewhat scattered as there have been changes of responsibility for the retention and holding of records within the Community Council, as this subject now spans a considerable length of time!

Many thanks,

Best wishes,

Christine M.

From: Christine [<mailto:luanam@btinternet.com>]

Sent: 05 November 2011 10:25

To: Mainprize, Nick

Subject: Re. WLATHR Consent.

Importance: High

Dear Nick,

Do you know whether any supporting information has been produced by FCS at any stage in respect of points 5 & 6 of Schedule 3 of the Consent document (attached)?

Sincerely,

Christine M.

This email was received from the INTERNET and scanned by the Government Secure Intranet anti-virus service supplied by Cable&Wireless Worldwide in partnership with MessageLabs. (CCTM Certificate Number 2009/09/0052.) In case of problems, please call your organisation's IT Helpdesk.

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