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## STRATEGIC REQUIREMENT FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATION

The need for renewable energy generation will be a material consideration with regard to this planning application.

In the Scottish Parliament debate on windfarms on 7 November 2003 - the Deputy Minister for Enterprise and Life Long Learning, Lewis Macdonald, expressed confidence in national guidance (NPPG6) and local planning system as a satisfactory way to reconcile local interests with need for renewables. Col 3123 and Col 3124 refer. He did not expect planning policy to be departed from in order to secure planning approvals for windfarms. Quite the contrary, he acknowledged the way planning authorities can set down criteria by which any application may be judged and make the judgements at local level.

In this context, we note that the Renewables Obligation was an operating part of the Scottish Executive's promotion of renewables at the time it approved Fife Council's Structure Plan. This in itself does not suggest a need for extensive departures from planning policy, when considering the present windfarm application.

While 17 turbines on Clatto Hill would have a very substantial adverse impact, the 30 MW output would only make a tiny contribution to electricity generation needs. Current generating capacity in the UK is well in excess of 100,000MW. This begs the question of how many turbines in valued landscapes would be needed for onshore wind to contribute meaningfully in the future.

This issue is reflected in the UK Government's White Paper presented to Parliament in February 2003. The Government's vision for the energy system by the year 2020 can be summarised by quoting from the White Paper:

“The backbone of the electricity system will still be a market based **grid**, balancing the supply of large power stations. But some of those power stations will be **offshore marine** plants, including **wave, tidal** and **windfarms**. Generally, smaller **onshore windfarms** will also be generating.” (Energy White Paper, Chapter 1, immediately after paragraph 1.45).

Our reading of this policy is that the Government is realistic about the relatively modest contribution of onshore wind to the development of renewable energy and the need for much larger power stations generating renewable energy by other means. Indeed, the Scottish Executive has established FREDS, a Forum for Renewable Energy Development in Scotland. This body representing the renewables industry, renewables expertise in Scottish universities, financial interests and the Scottish executive has started to identify the steps needed to bring marine energy to commercialisation. Offshore wind is starting to take off. In a report from AEA

Technology to the Scottish Executive in November 2002, attention was drawn to the massive potential of wave and tide resources and the unrivalled expertise on this in Scottish universities.

Given the long term nature of the process of replacing conventional generation by renewables, none of the foregoing suggests an overwhelming need to disfigure the landscape of central Fife with 17 wind turbines 93 metres tall.