

## **Consultation on National Planning Framework for Scotland 2**

I am writing in response to the consultation draft of the above document, on behalf of my clients Beinn Mhòr Power Limited, who have a specific interest in the emerging advice in the light of their current Electricity Act Section 36 application on the Isle of Lewis. I have been instructed to comment on the draft which they consider provides an excellent framework for addressing the type of proposal in which they are currently engaged.

The support of the framework not just for renewable energy developments generally, but the sub-sea interconnector which is required from the mainland to the Outer Hebrides is particularly welcomed. This is defined in the document in one of the seven strategic initiatives that the Scottish Government is committed to supporting, as part of the objective of opening up the remoter island communities (including the Northern Isles) to the benefits that flow from renewable energy developments. The aim of increasing the Highlands and Islands population to some 500,000 people (an increase of 15% on 2005) must involve attention to the outer islands, and particularly the Western Isles, which is still losing population while other parts of the Highlands are gaining it. We endorse the comment at para 273 that energy has an important role to play in the future of the Highlands and Islands and that the sub-sea interconnector to the Western Isles is needed to realise their potential for this resource. The need for targeted support for the remoter communities (para 277) goes hand in hand with private sector initiatives which will be needed to underpin the financial case for the interconnector. Growing the economy in the Western Isles as set out in para 280 will rely on a range of both community and private initiatives, of which large-scale renewable energy projects have the ability not just to support the local economy and social structure, but also provide that support at an early stage.

We also endorse the setting out of the National Developments – Statement of Need in the Annex with its strategic mapping, since this supports the approach taken by our clients that the major local benefits that can be provided from renewable energy developments also connect with the national strategic initiatives in a very significant way, raising the importance of such development to one of national strategic need.

Regards David Stewart