

## Provision of support and advice to planning authorities on the preparation of Supplementary Planning Guidance for wind energy development

### Summary of responses

Enviros Consulting Ltd and MacRoberts have been appointed by the Scottish Government to provide support and advice to planning authorities and national park authorities on the preparation of their supplementary planning guidance (SPG) for on-shore wind energy development over the period of the next 12 months.

This briefing note summarises the responses to the questionnaire sent out by Enviros and MacRoberts in order to establish a baseline of information from which to work from in developing SPGs for on-shore wind energy developments in Scotland. The questionnaire was sent to all 34 planning authorities and national park authorities and 23 responses have been received so far.

The first sections (Q1 – 3) of the questionnaire sought to identify baseline information on each authority including key contact, current local plan stage and to identify progress on developing an SPG for on-shore wind farm development. Of the 23 respondents 17% haven adopted SPG for on-shore wind development; a further 9% had begun the process and 74% did not have an SPG although nearly half of those had identified a timetable.

Question 4 sought to enable us to identify the type of pressure that local planning authorities are under in relation to planning applications for wind energy developments. Figure 1 below summarises the responses of the local planning authorities. It shows that there is a significant amount of wind energy development in Scotland with some 9.6GW either with planning permission or in the process of seeking planning permission of which nearly 50% is actually with local planning authorities either as a planning application, scoping or as pre-application discussions. There are also a significant proportion of application that are permitted but not operational.

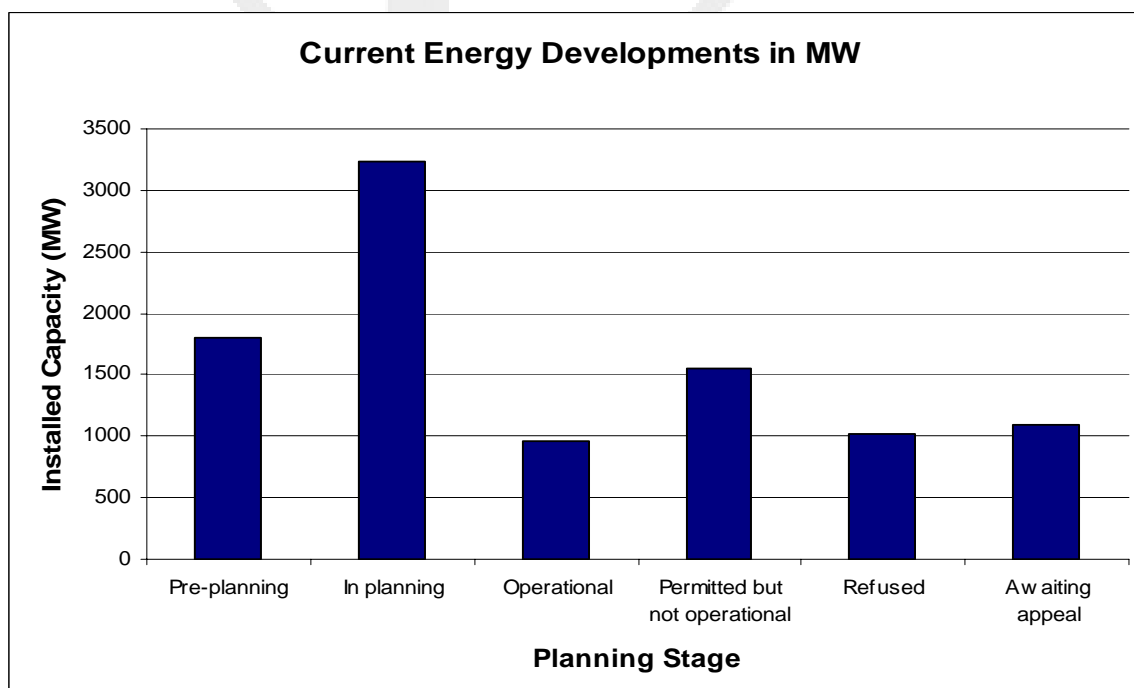


Figure 1: Response to question 4



The questionnaire then moves onto looking specifically at the development of the SPG for on-shore wind energy developments for each authority and the type of assistance that authorities require. In terms of responses an aggregate score has been calculated and we have ranked responses as follows;

- 1pt = Low / Not important
- 2pts = Medium
- 3pts = High / Very important

Question 5 seeks to identify what the planning issues are within each authority. Out of the 23 authorities who respond the main planning issues that were identified were landscape, ecology, cumulative and communities.

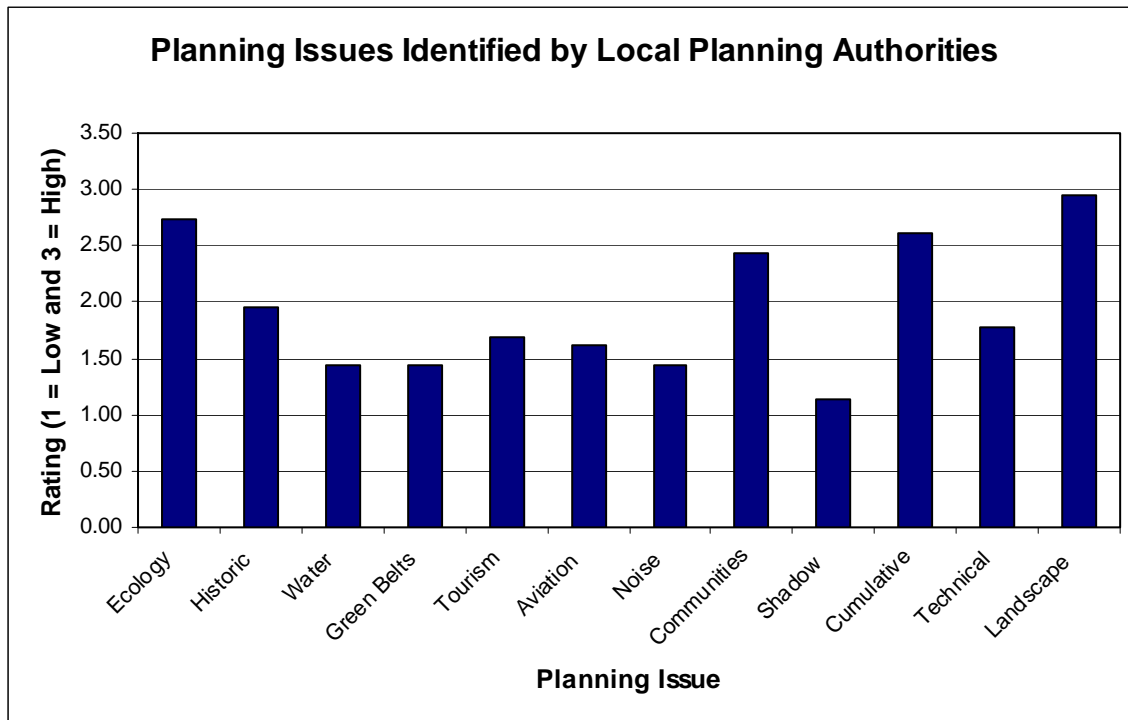


Figure 2: Response to question 5

Question 6a asks for the areas where local authority officers require additional information on particular wind energy development topics. This has identified that the areas where officers require most help are cumulative impacts, landscape, technical and communities. In addition some further information on the assessment of ecology, tourism, aviation and noise is also required.

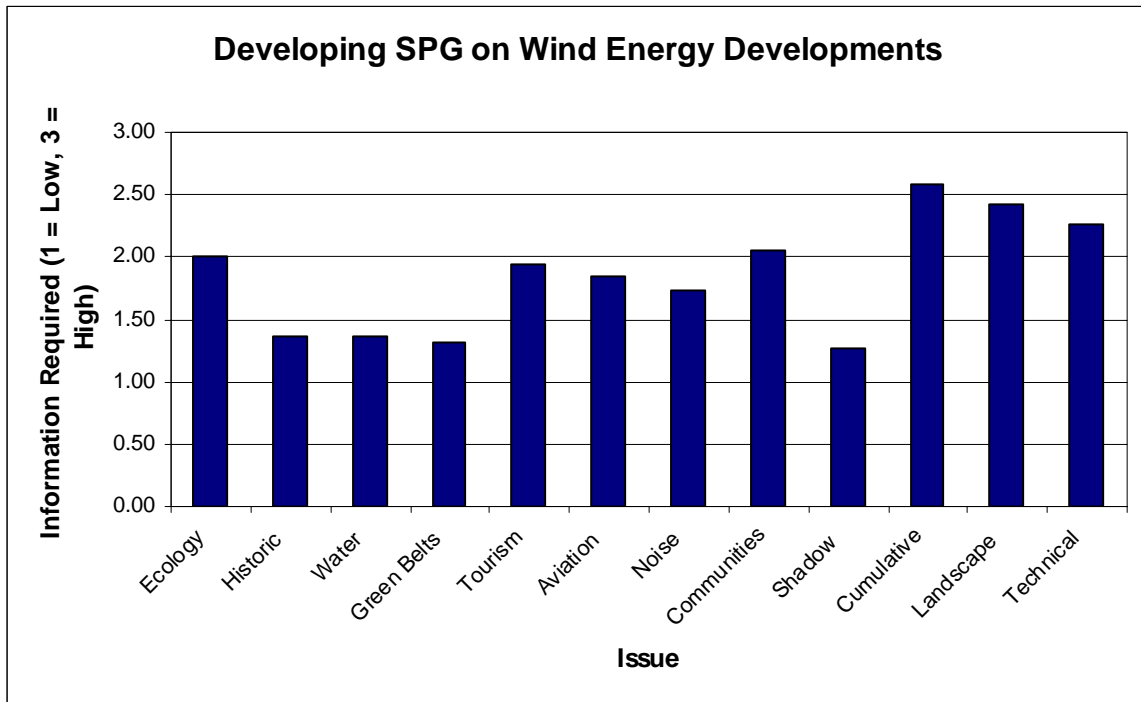


Figure 3: Response to question 6a

The questionnaire, in question 6b, sought to identify the method by which officers would wish to receive information. This has identified that the preferred method of information provision would be through website and workshop. In addition officers liked the idea of undertaking an independent review of draft policy and the sharing of good practice.

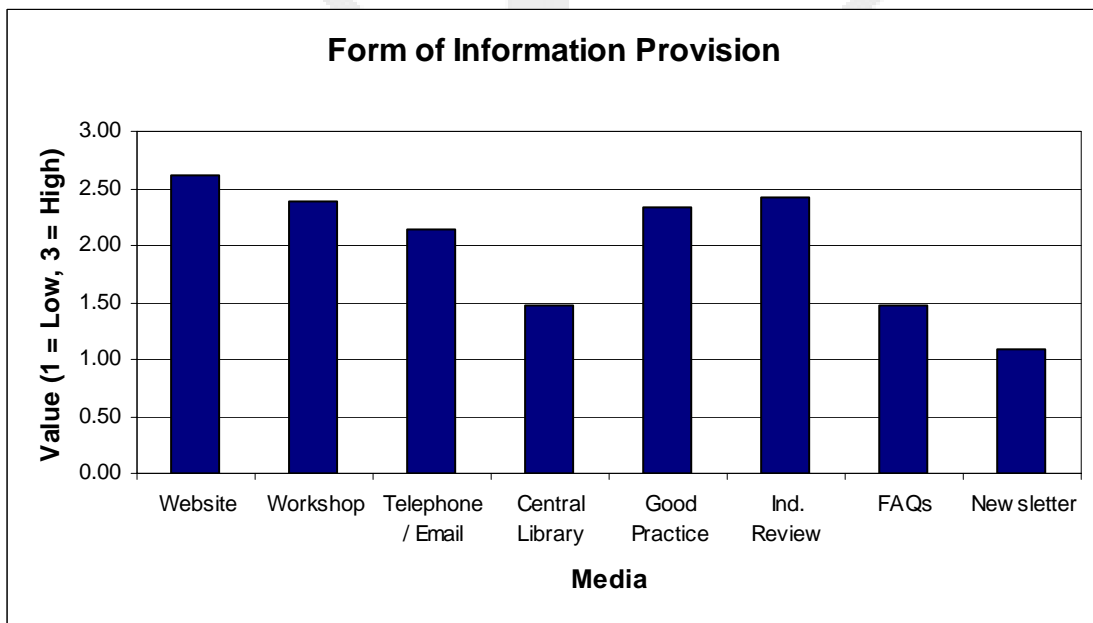


Figure 4: Response to question 6b

Question 7a provides a broad indication of likely attendees for the workshops in March. Generally authorities opted for the closest venue, and most authorities said that they would be sending more than one officers. Further confirmation and clarity of final numbers will be sought in response to this letter.



Local Planning Authorities were asked to identify the issues that officers would wish to see discussed at the second workshop. The clear topics were cumulative impact and landscape. In addition officers identified that they would welcome advice on tourism, communities and technical issues

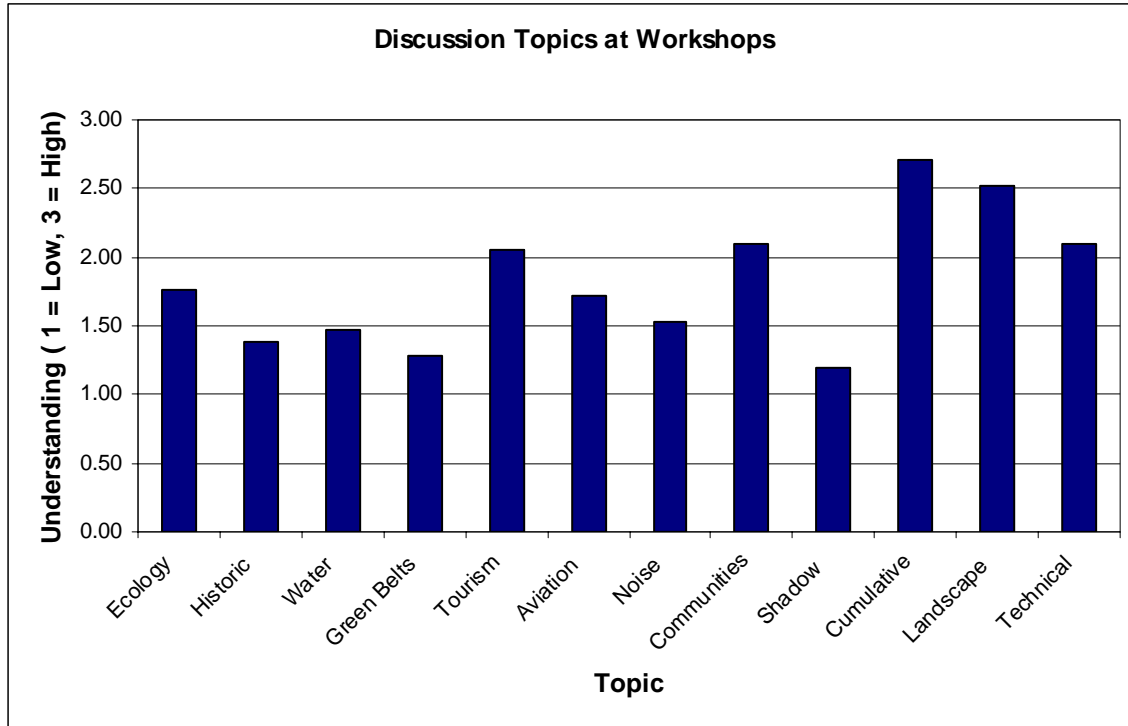


Figure 5: Response to question 7b

There was also an opportunity for local authorities to identify which neighbouring authorities would wish to work with. The result of this will, if possible, inform the working groups at the workshops. This is shown in Appendix 1 of this report.

The final question sought to pick up any issues that respondents felt to be missing from the questionnaire. These included:

- An attempt to bring the anti-wind media on board
- Do we need further SPGs or just robust local plan policy?
- Need for consistency of policy across authority boundaries
- Need to understand infrastructure availability
- Need to monitor progress against targets
- National policy is currently unclear and do not consider local issues
- There needs to be a national spatial strategy
- Do small authorities where demand is minimal need an SPG
- How will the City Regions interact with neighbouring authorities
- SPG must be objective and free from value judgements
- SPG should be regionalised
- There is a need for a clear national steer for areas of search
- There is a need for more localised workshops
- There are some localised factors that override all others i.e. airports
- Need to consider cumulative in terms of a number of sites and a number of issues
- Need national statement on SPG vs Local Plan adopted policy
- Will there be acceptance if SPG defines capacity



- Need to bring economics in the mix

It is anticipated that these will be dealt with by the relevant organisations at the workshops. At the first workshop we will present and discuss the national perspective for on-shore wind energy development. We will be looking to discuss balancing local and national policy frameworks as well as seeking to identify the likely scope and approach to developing SPGs.

I would like to thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire and look forward to meeting with you in the near future.





**APPENDIX 1: Table identifying Local Authority working partners**



