The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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5 July 2023

Dear Gillian,

Thank you for taking part in my Members' Business debate, "Ensuring a Just Transition for Rural Communities", a couple of weeks ago and responding to questions from a number of speakers in the debate.

I trust that the debate brought to light the very significant concerns my constituents and rural communities across Scotland have with the current planning process for onshore windfarms generating over 50 megawatts per year and the outdated guidance for the construction of onshore windfarms and the community benefit package.

I would be grateful therefore if you could answer the following questions, which sadly you did not have the opportunity to respond to in the debate, given time constraints.

- Will policies be updated to require the Energy Consents Unit to meet with local communities impacted by planning applications they are considering?

- Currently no elected representative, at any level, gets a vote on applications for onshore windfarms generating over 50 megawatts per year. Will the Scottish Government conduct a review of the planning process to ensure local authorities have a vote or veto on these proposals?

- Do you agree that planning applications for onshore windfarms should also include the infrastructure required to connect them to grid, as opposed to them being treated as two separate applications?

- What protections will the Scottish Government give to rural communities to ensure that historic and archaeological sites of important value to local communities are protected from onshore windfarm developments?

- Will the Scottish Government conduct a review on the community benefit communities receive, similar to the UK Government review taking place for developments in England?

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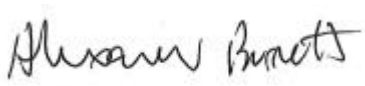
- How much money did the Scottish Government contribute to the WSP review into ETSU-R97?

- When will the Scottish Government consider the recommendations of this review?

- Do you agree that there should be a moratorium on new onshore windfarm applications until the recommendations of the ETSU-R-97 have been implemented?

Kind regards,



Alexander Burnett

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Aberdeenshire West Constituency