

TravelWatch- *ISLE OF MAN*

Arrey Troailt – Ellan Vannin



Representing and promoting the interests of Isle of Man Passengers

www.travelwatch-isleofman.org

17 June 2013

Our ref: Planning InspCAJune 2013

The Planning Inspectorate
3/18 Eagle Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol, BS1 6PN

For the attention of Jessica Potter
Principal Case Manager, National Infrastructure

Dear Sirs,

Round 3: Irish Sea Zone: Rhiannon Wind Farm by Celtic Array Ltd **Public Consultation: Adverse Impacts on Shipping**

I am writing to keep you informed and to seek your assistance regarding Celtic Array's public consultation for their proposed Rhiannon Wind Farm, and with particular regard to the impact on vital shipping services.

TravelWatch Isle of Man (TWIOM) is a well-established voluntary organisation founded to represent the interests of passengers using all aspects of public transport to, from and on the Isle of Man. We have links with other TravelWatch organisations in the UK. TWIOM aims to have good working relationships with, but is totally independent of, transport operators and governments.

We neither support nor oppose wind farms. Our representations and objections to Celtic Array arise because of the adverse affects of their current proposals on ferry passengers between the Isle of Man and the ports of Heysham, and particularly Liverpool in the case of Rhiannon. The wind farm proposals impede shipping routes and restrict bad weather diversion options, with potentially damaging consequences for Isle of Man passengers. There are around 550,000 Isle of Man passenger journeys made by sea each year via the ports of Heysham and Liverpool. These ferry services are regarded as the Island's Lifeline for passengers and freight, and any disruption is detrimental to both the Island's population and visitors.

We first made our concerns known to Celtic Array in our letter of 21 June 2012, and had a very useful meeting with them on 9 August 2012. At their request, a further meeting was held on 28 Nov 2012, at which they were considerably less informative. After visiting their Community Consultation Exhibitions held on the island from 30 Nov to 3 Dec 2012, we wrote on 6 Dec 2012 to Celtic Array to raise a number of points and requested their answers to each as a matter of urgency.

Eventually, we received a letter dated 24 May 2013 from Rhiannon Wind Farm Development Manager, Kirsty McGuinness. From our appended letter dated 17 June 2013, you will see that we are not satisfied with their response. One particular area of concern is the way impacts on shipping were played down at the stage1 public exhibitions. There was no shipping information on display, and such data was 'hidden away' within lengthy reference documents.

Our other major concern is the scale of the 'Rochdale envelope' which Celtic Array adopted for Rhiannon. It is quite apparent that their target generating capacity could be achieved within a considerably smaller turbine array than they are displaying, and thus reduce the potential impact on shipping. However Celtic Array are refusing, or at best are reluctant, to admit that this is the case.

In summary, we are left with the impression that Celtic Array's approach is one of **'we decide what information to release, and we decide if and when we respond to questions.'**

We are drawing this to your attention in the hope that you will be able to encourage Celtic Array to adopt a more enlightened approach.

Yours faithfully

Brendan O'Friel

Brendan O'Friel
Chairman TWIOM

Encl:
Copy of letter to Celtic Array dated 17 June 2013