



THE MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL OF SCOTLAND

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Kieron Hanson
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Hydroplan

Dear Mr Hanson

Glen Quoich Hydro Development Draft Map & Photosets – MCoFS Initial Response

The MCoFS main interests in planning applications, such as this hydro scheme, are the potential impacts on recreation access, ecology, visual amenity and landscape.

Landscape

Wildness is a material consideration as in the National Planning Framework² and Scottish Planning Policy, including the concept of landscape capacity and limits. The landscape in this area has high wildness value, and as such this aspect must be fully assessed while avoiding incorrectly using SNHs Search Areas of Wild Land as pseudo-designations. Visible tracks, intakes and pipes would all have a significant impact on the landscape and should be minimised.

Visual Amenity

This is a popular area for tourism and hill walkers, surrounded by a high concentration of Munros and Corbetts. The established approaches and descents for some of these mountains go directly through the proposed development area. For this reason the visual amenity impact (static viewpoints and cumulative) must be fully assessed and the effects minimised. This must include undergrounding pipelines/penstocks and avoiding addition of new tracks wherever possible beyond those that already exist. The distinction between a path and a track must be recognised and that a track has a far greater impact on visual amenity and the landscape than a path, either made or formed through use. New tracks or changing use from footpath use to vehicular-capable track could be avoided through temporary tracking and low impact vehicles.

Access

Access routes through Glen Quoich and along the current stalker paths in the vicinity of the proposed development are popular and established in the hill walking literature. Numerous examples of satisfactory multi-use of tracks for construction / forestry traffic and access users exist, and this development should continue the trend. Where diversions are necessary due to engineering works immediately on the paths, these should be for the minimum distance and minimum length of time. These details should be specified in the construction plan such that access users and contractors know what rights and responsibilities there are on for both parties.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss these issues further.

Yours sincerely

Hebe Carus (Ms)
Access & Conservation Officer