

'Unauthorised' change of tack

The wind farm issue is not about council participation – entirely proper – but the later unauthorised nature of that participation, quickly moving from official neutrality to strong, unauthorised opposition.

Critical comments on my letter to the editor are fully rebutted by the facts. My final contribution is for the facts, from the official transcript together with media reports, to speak for themselves:

1. Shortly before the confused hearing ended, the mayor publicly affirmed the council's neutrality in a press statement on March 19, 2010, stating: "We've always said we will maintain a neutral stance."

2. The council's unauthorised, quickly-developed hearing hostility led the applicant to submit that its "so-called neutrality" had changed to being "plainly opposed".

3. The by then concerned judge intervened to ask the sole council officer witness how this major change occurred. This mid-level officer admitted that the new opposition had not been authorised by the mayor and councillors, or by the chief executive. In summary, he replied that despite such a lack of authority, the change from neutrality to opposition had "been led by the evidence".

The board was therefore seriously misled into believing the council, despite its neutrality, was strongly opposed to more than 28 turbines.

On a city-wide divided issue, the council's official neutrality properly reflected its decision neither to support nor oppose the application.

The unauthorised degeneration from objective neutrality to subjective opposition cost ratepayers and

residents true costs of over \$500,000.

All incredibly bizarre.

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