

External Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Meeting to be held on 21 July 2005

Part I - Item No 7

Electoral Division affected:
All

Large Scale Renewable Energy - Update

Contact for further information:

Jennifer Coy, Environmental Policy Officer, Tel (01772) 533906

Environment Directorate

Executive Summary

In January 2005, the Environmental Policy Team presented to the External Overview and Scrutiny Committee details of three commercial renewable energy developments proposed for Lancashire. This report provides an update on those proposals six months on.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note the update.

Background

In January 2005 the Environmental Policy Team attended the External Overview and Scrutiny Task Group meeting to give a presentation on commercial renewable energy programmes proposed for Lancashire. Three schemes in particular were discussed. These were the Morecambe Bay Tidal Barrage, the Shell flats offshore wind farm and the Scout Moor onshore wind farm proposals.

This report provides a review of these projects and any progress that has been made.

Morecambe Bay Tidal Barrage

Proposals have been put forward to build a 12-mile toll road and pedestrian route between Heysham and Barrow, which will harness both tidal and wind power. If undertaken it is predicted that there would be the potential to save 87,000 tonnes of CO2 per annum but there is significant opposition as the site is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Update

There have been no further developments on this proposal.

Shell Flats offshore wind farm.

A proposal has been put forward for an off shore wind farm on the shell flat sand bank off the coast of Blackpool. The sand bank protrudes 20KM (14 miles) off the coast of between Blackpool and Cleveleys. The development would cover 44km with the nearest turbine 7km from the shore. It would consist of 90 turbines in total, in 8 rows at right angles to the Blackpool Shoreline. The project capacity would be 270 MW, which would power nearly a quarter of a million homes each year.

Update

Scottish Power is still in discussions with English Nature, the RSPB and the MOD to come to agreement so that it will be possible to develop the site. The project manager has reported that these discussions are taking much longer than anticipated and so the project is no further on than 6 months ago.

The MOD has objections on the basis that the wind farm is located in close proximity to the Warton air base, where BAE undertakes aircraft training for the RAF. There is a fear that the turbines moving blades may be picked up as moving objects on the radar.

The RSPB is objecting to the development on the grounds that the site is home to one of the most important flocks of wintering bird the Common Scoter. A large number of the sea duck, listed on UK 'red list' of species of conservation concern, nest in the area.

Scout Moor onshore wind farm.

The scout moor wind farm development is proposed on open, elevated moorland approximately 4km to the west of Whitworth, 1.5 km to the east of Edenfield and 6km to the northwest of Rochdale. It is one of the largest wind farm proposals in England consisting of 26 turbines producing a combined energy output of 65MW. This is enough energy to power about 40,000 homes annually. Each turbine will have a 3 – bladed rotor 80 meters in diameter and a tower 60 meters in height to the rotor hub.

Update

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has now given formal consent to the application for the development of the wind-farm. The decision was made in May 2005 following the public enquiry in Nov/Dev 2004 and based on the report put forward by the inspector at this Inquiry. The Inquiry was held due to objections from the County Council, Rochdale Metropolitan Council and Rosendale Borough. The County Council objected on the grounds of Landscape.

Under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) the applicant will be required to establish a habitat management plan. Other conditions have been placed on the development including that:-

- Access tracks to all areas to and around the turbine bases shall remain unfenced. Access will be allowed on the site for the whole of the life of the development for members of the public and grazing stock.
- Construction will take place outside the bird nesting season.
- A survey will take place to establish the presence of badgers in the area before development takes place.
- No development shall take place until there is a full archaeological investigation.

More conditions have been attached to the consent and various surveys and assessments must be carried out by the applicant before development can commence.

Conclusion

There have been differing levels of progress made on the three commercial renewable energy projects presented to External Overview and Scrutiny in January. The Scout Moor wind farm application for planning permission has now been approved by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. Development will commence providing the conditions attached to the consent are met. The progress on the shell flats project has been slow as detailed discussions with the RSPB and the MOD continue. Finally there has been no progress on the Morecambe Bay Barrage Scheme.

Consultations

N/A.

Advice

N/A.

Alternative options to be considered

N/A.

Implications: e.g. Financial, Legal, Personnel, Human Rights, Crime and Disorder or Other

This item has the following implications:

N/A.

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Ext
-------	------	-------------------------

Nil.

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A.