

Wind Generated Energy

Head of Service: Tim Capper, Head of Democratic Services
Report Author: Neil White, Scrutiny Support Officer

Recommendation: that

(A) An Energy Task and Review Group be constituted,

(B) The membership of the Group be agreed as:

(C) The Terms of Reference for the Group be agreed as: , and

(D) The issues and potential witnesses be agreed as: .

BACKGROUND

Full council at its meeting on 13 January 2009 received a motion that:

“Copeland Borough Council wish to support the motion that was passed by Cumbria County Council on Thursday November 20th 2008 in that the County Council has grave concerns that the current targets for onshore wind-generated energy ride rough shod over the capacity of our landscapes and seascapes to satisfactorily accommodate further wind farms. Cumbria’s environment is a key asset for economic wellbeing. The County Council believes that a proliferation of wind farms will undermine efforts to address the county’s economic problems.

The County Council calls on the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change to give a commitment to seek to ensure that Government will reduce its over reliance on onshore wind, reduce current wind – related targets and invest, as a matter of urgency, in other low carbon energy generation.”

An amendment to the motion was also submitted that stated:

“Copeland Borough Council wish to support the concerns raised in the motion passed by the County Council on Thursday 20 November 2008, and resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, the local MP and the county council as follows:

The Copeland Borough Council calls on the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change to give a commitment to seek to ensure that Government will reduce its over-reliance on onshore wind, reduce current wind-related targets and invest, as a matter of urgency, in other low carbon energy generation.”

The Council agreed that that the Notice of Motion and amendment under Standing Order 8 submitted by Councillor N Clarkson be referred without discussion to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Economic Development and Enterprise.

This Committee considered this matter at its meeting on 5 March 2009 and during the debate on this item Members stressed the importance of reaffirming Councils support of the Energy Coast Masterplan and as such a further amendment was moved by Councillor Whiteside duly seconded and agreed that

“Copeland Borough Council wish to support the concerns raised in the motion passed by the County Council on Thursday 20 November 2008, and resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, the local MP and the County council as follows:

The Copeland Borough Council calls on the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change to give a commitment to seek to ensure that Government will reduce its over-reliance on onshore wind, reduce current wind-related targets and invest, as a matter of urgency, in other low carbon energy generation such as tidal power this will reaffirm Councils commitment to the Energy Coast Masterplan.”

This further motion was considered by full council at its meeting on 31 March 2009 where the matter was referred back to this Committee for further consideration by a Task and Finish Group.

The Committee at its last meeting on 16 April 2009 agreed that the Wind Generated Energy item should be deferred until the first meeting of the new municipal year. At this time Committee members would be known and a Task and Finish Group could be formed.

TASK AND FINISH GROUP

It is suggested that the membership of the Task and Finish Group be 4 or 5 members to make sure there are enough members at each meeting.

There are a number of possible issues that this Group could look at and the previous report to the committee is attached as it highlights these issues. If each of these issues were to be considered it would require a number of meetings that would take several months to complete. Potential witnesses would need to be requested from regional and national bodies depending on the issues considered.

The group would also need to establish its terms of reference. It may want to test the validity of its last recommendation to full council.

However in doing so it is worth noting the response that this council and the county council made to the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West where concerns were expressed about the principle of target setting for renewables and whether West Cumbria is a suitable host for any given its previous energy contributions.

CONCLUSION

The Committee is invited to consider this report and advise on the membership of the Task and Finish Group, its Terms of Reference and the issues and potential witnesses that the Group should look at.

List of Appendices

Appendix "A" – Report to this committee on 19 February 2009

Appendix "B" - Copeland Council and Cumbria county council response to the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West

List of Background Documents:

None