

## **DONG Energy proposed Walney Offshore Wind farm Extension**

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### **Summary and Recommendation:**

DONG Energy is a wind farm developer preparing to submit a Development Consent Order (DCO) for a proposed extension to the existing Offshore Wind Farm at Walney. The application will extend the existing farm to the West and therefore will be visible off the coast from Millom to Egremont.

As a result of which DONG is prepared to enter into a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with Copeland Borough Council to fund our assessment of the visual impacts of the proposed development.

Recommendation:

That members agree to enter into a PPA with DONG Energy and that authority to sign the agreement is delegated to the Director of People and Places.

### **1. Introduction**

The proposed development is an extension of the completed Walney offshore wind farm and currently consists of an area up to 149Km<sup>2</sup> and a capacity of up to 750MW. The site is located approximately 19 km WSW off the Isle of Walney coast in Cumbria, 26km SW from the Millom coast, and 31 km SE from the Isle of Man. The Project lies within English territorial waters and beyond, within the UK Renewable Energy Zone (also the UK exclusive economic zone).

The offshore cable(s) route landfall will be brought to shore at Heysham, where a generator build offer was accepted with the National Grid interface point at the Heysham 400kV substation.

A number of different scenarios are being considered and the number and size of the turbines will differ depending on which scenario is taken forward.

- Scenario 1: 209 x 3.6 MW Turbines
- Scenario 2: 108 x 7 MW Turbines
- Scenario 3: 40 x 3.6MW and 91 x 6MW Turbines

The developer has already held initial consultation events at Egremont Market Hall in September 2011 and Millom in October of last year. The developer intends to hold further events in the area in September of this year the details of where and when these drop in sessions will be held are not yet available.

DONG Energy consultation team is also giving a presentation to all members on the 26<sup>th</sup> July at 10am.

## **2. The Development Consent Process**

The proposed development is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and therefore will be dealt with through a Development Consent Order (DCO) to be determined by the Secretary Of State following recommendations from the Planning Inspectorate.

The Council is not the determining body, nor are we constituted as a 'prescribed body' under the guidance issued by the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) (The IPC has now been replaced by the Planning Inspectorate but the guidance remains applicable). A prescribed body is defined as the Local Authority in which the application is situated within and the neighboring authorities. As the proposed development is located at sea Copeland Borough Council do not constitute a prescribed body.

The proposed application will touch land and connect to the grid in Lancaster District therefore they shall be known as the 'B' authority (the authority in which the development is located), all neighboring Local Authorities will be known as 'A' Authorities. Please refer to Appendix 1 for a map illustration of Local Authorities affected by the proposed development.

Local Authorities and neighboring Local Authorities will be invited to make representations regarding the adequacy of consultation and invited to submit a Local Impact report (LIR).

Copeland Borough Council is known as a non-prescribed body as we are neither an 'A' nor 'B' Authority and therefore will not be invited to submit a LIR. However, as we are within 35km of the development we are within the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI), as a result of which we will be consulted in relation to visual impacts.

As a non-prescribed authority the visual impact assessment is the Councils only opportunity to make representations on the proposed development.

## **3. The Planning Performance Agreement (PPA)**

Copeland Borough Council, Cumbria County Council and the 'A' and 'B' authorities have been invited by DONG to enter into a PPA. The PPA would fund Copeland to make an assessment of the visual impact of the proposed development, assess the communication strategy and ensure that the community are adequately consulted on the proposed development.

The PPA is a mechanism through which DONG Energy will fund the Local Authorities to assess the application much in the same way as a planning fee. It does not oblige the Authorities to agree with the application. It establishes a financial agreement whereby the developer agrees to fund the work carried out by the Authorities needed to assess the application and the Authorities agree to provide a level of service to the developer as set out in the PPA.

The existence of the PPA in no way predetermines any element of the project.

By agreeing to enter into a PPA with DONG we agree to provide advice to the National Infrastructure Directorate (NID), to assist the community in the consultation process and provide the project team with regular information concerning agreed budgets, relevant expenditure and costs as agreed by the project team.

At this stage no details have been finalised as to the extent of the work involved in completing the proposed work and therefore no costings have been agreed. Cumbria County Council has proposed that they are the accountable body for the project, therefore they will manage the finances, invoicing and project management.

### **Way Forward**

If we do not sign the PPA we will have to either fund the assessment through the Councils budget or not assess the implications of the proposed development on the area.

It is recommended that Copeland Borough Council sign the proposed PPA as it will provide the council with a means of funding the visual impact assessment and fund the additional work that will need to be done advising the community on the proposed project.

Funding through the PPA will enable the Council to adequately resource and assess the proposed scheme.

It is recommended that we agree to enter into a PPA with DONG and that the Director of People and Places is given delegated authority to agree and sign the final document .

**List of Appendices** - Appendix A – Proposed Walney extension indicating the Zone of Visual Influence Up to 35km

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