

## **Nuclear Projects Update**

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### **Summary and Recommendation:**

This paper provides a summary update of key projects relating to the Council's nuclear activities and Members are asked to note the current position and way forward.

## **1. NUCLEAR NEW BUILD**

Proposals by NuGeneration Ltd to develop a new nuclear power generating facility at a site known as Moorside just to the north of Sellafield are progressing. Key points of update worth noting are;

- The Council is in the final stages of considering the final draft of a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with NuGeneration Ltd the developer proposing to build a new nuclear power generator at Moorside.
- Officials from NuGeneration Ltd have been given a tour of the Borough and work has commenced on determining the content of the first work package around transport and accommodation.
- Initial site investigation work on the site just north of the existing Sellafield site is scheduled to commence in the Autumn following delays due to mineral rights issues. A detailed communications plan is being prepared by NuGeneration Ltd to ensure all stakeholders are kept informed of progress.

## **2. NORTH WEST COAST CONNECTIONS PROJECT**

The North West Coast Connections project is led by National Grid and is looking at options to enhance the power transmission connections from the Cumbrian west coast to take new power generated by nuclear new build proposals and other renewable proposals to the national electricity market. Key points of update worth noting;

- The stakeholder consultation seeking comments on 6 strategic route options for new grid connections across Cumbria and parts of Lancashire has now closed.
- Following the consultation National Grid will be issuing their final preferred option(s) in the Autumn and are currently putting in place arrangements to

allow discussion around detailed route corridors which will commence soon after the referred strategic route option(s) is announced.

### **3. WEST CUMBRIA MANAGING RADIOACTIVE WASTE SAFELY**

The Borough Council has been a member of the West Cumbria Managing Radioactive Waste Safely Partnership which has been meeting and delivering a work programme with a view to preparing a final report about participating in the next stage of the Governments process to Copeland and Allerdale Borough Councils and Cumbria County Council. It held its final meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> July.

The Partnership has now published its final report. The report contains detail of the Partnerships work and its opinions and advice to the three Councils, as Decision Making Bodies (DMBs), to consider a Decision about Participation (DaP) into the next stage of the process, Stage 4. This stage would be the start of the process to identify a site for a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) for higher level radioactive wastes. Copies have been sent to all Members of the Council and a Special Council meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> September provided an opportunity for Members to debate the findings of the report. A decision about participation, which was to have been considered at a meeting of Executive on October 11<sup>th</sup> has now been deferred by 3 months to allow the 3 DMBs extra time to consider a number of issues including the right of withdrawal, community benefits principles and alternative storage options.

### **4. WALNEY EXTENSION OFFSHORE WIND FARMS**

DONG Energy have now formally begun the Development Consent Order (DCO) process by submitting a notice to the Secretary of State via the inspectorate and consulted all statutory Consultees under Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008.

Formal consultation under S42 begun on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sep 2012 and is due to close on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2012. The consultation involved reviewing and assessing the Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI). The PEI was supposed to be delivered after the Technical reports, however to date we have not received the Technical Reports which inform much of the decisions and assumptions made in the PEI.

The technical reports are due to be published shortly and there will be a separate 6 week assessment stage for these. Without the supporting evidence the review of the PEI was a very high level overview scrutinizing the methodology and providing feedback on any gaps in the process.

Copeland Borough Council has agreed to provide a joint response to the S42 consultation with the other authorities that are potentially signing up to a PPA with DONG –

- Lancashire County Council
- Lancaster District Council
- Copeland Borough Council
- South Lakes District Council
- Lake District National Park
- Cumbria County Council (CCC)

A draft copy of some of the issues raised by Copeland is attached as appendix 1 to this report, although this does not include our peer assessment of the Shore Line Visual Impact Assessment carried out by WYG. CCC as accountable body for this project is coordinating the S42 response and a completed joint response will be forwarded to members when available.

## **Appendix 1 – Copeland input into the PEI assessment of the Walney Off Shore Wind Farm Extension**

### **Walney Extension – Offshore Wind Farm - Copeland Borough Council**

#### **Preliminary Environmental Information**

##### **Socio-Economic (Onshore) Impacts**

To assess the socio-economic impacts of the development it may be useful to establish a series of baseline indicators, for example, the number of people currently employed in the wind energy sector, the number and type of local services currently available, the current annual number of visitors and visitor spend. The indicators could then be used to measure the long term impact of the development.

We welcome the in-depth study that DONG plans to undertake of the economic impacts of three of DONG Energy's previous wind farm projects (Walney I and II and West of Duddon Sands). Where appropriate we request that the study takes into account the impact on the local and regional tourism industry. We encourage reference to independent research on this topic.

We would welcome further clarification of how the recreational and tourist baseline was set. The report identifies recreational and tourist facilities within the study area including those with views of the extension from Barrow in Furness and Walney. We think the study should include South and West Cumbria. If the development potentially has a cumulative visual impact as far as St. Bees as indicated in Chart 48, the EA should take into account the impact on all recreational and tourist facilities within the zone of visibility, which includes those viewpoints identified in table 55, and those communities where the impact will be greater around Millom, Haverigg, Silecroft, Black Combe and up to Seascale and Ravenglass. These settlements should be referred to in the document. Tourism and in particular eco-tourism is a key element of the strategy for increasing visitor numbers to this outstanding coastline and the impact of the turbines on this aspiration should not be underestimated.

We would like further clarification of what impact the development will have on Copeland's communities during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases. We also seek clarification on what is referred to as 'locations along the nearby coastline'. Where negative impacts cannot be addressed through physical mitigation, we would expect communities to be compensated through other means. This may take the form of a Community Benefit Contribution package. We would welcome an early discussion with DONG regarding this matter and would like to share our experience of establishing the Copeland Community Fund. The Copeland Community Fund is an agreement negotiated with Government to recognise the service the Borough provides to the nation for hosting the Low Level Waste Repository at Drigg.

We expect the EIA to have more detail in terms of numbers and types of jobs created, skill requirements, how local people will be supported to access job and apprenticeship opportunities, how the local supply chain will be engaged and local businesses encouraged to partake in procurement opportunities. We hope that the development will bring sustainable employment benefits to the local area. Copeland Borough Council would be happy to share our experience of

delivering apprenticeship schemes and developing supply chain networks and would like to be engaged in this process.

(As a note - the chapter states that no national cycle routes or national trails are crossed by the proposed cable routes or substation sites. However consideration should be given to future development of the England Coastal Path).

#### Community Consultation

Whilst it is noted from conversations at the Egremont Consultation event and from newsletter 2 that DONG will attend other events on request, the two consultation Copeland events in round two were poorly planned. Interest at these could have been increased simply by reversing the days, as Millom Network Centre is primarily used by businesses and does not have considerable weekend use, and the supermarket in Egremont is more greatly used on Friday and Saturday. However, the main omission is any events in Haverigg, Seascale, Ravenglass or St Bees. We would seek further consultation with particular reference to Seascale.

Copeland express concern that the second round consultation events including the satellite ones were too low key and exhibited relatively little information. Egremont Coop event was disappointing. It was difficult locating it in the shop as it was tucked in a corner behind the cash tills. Although the staff manning the exhibition was knowledgeable the actual information provided was poor i.e. there was no PEI / technical reports to examine – with limited visuals. It felt a little misrepresentative.

#### Visual Impact Assessment

Insufficient visuals accompany the PEI – the only photomontages provided at the rear of the document do not showcase the four scenarios/ options for the development - only one which is very misleading. Transpires only the smaller sized turbine limit scenario is depicted i.e. the 207 x 142m high turbines which incidentally is the same height as the Walney 1 and 2 (as opposed for example to 80 X 222m high option). The impact of all the scenarios would vary considerably on our Borough with the 207 x 142m high arguably having the least impact of those with this being seen as a continuation of Walney 1 and 2. Restricting the visuals to this scenario implies that it is the 142m high option only that has been chosen. However, it is understood that this is not the case and that the application will be based on any of the four options. Request that photomontages be provided to accompany the EIA application from all the viewpoints which are representative depicting all four of the possible options. This will then allow a comprehensive and more informed assessment to be made of the visual impact of the proposed extension on our Borough.

It is noted that full mitigation measures are yet to be determined. In view of the likely significant visual impact of the proposal on Copeland we would ask that we are included in any discussion and consideration of mitigation measures.

#### 10.4.2 Methodology

It is reassuring that the methodology used follows that set out in the National Policy Statements EN1 and EN3 – the Council welcomes this. With regards to the viewpoints selected, it was mentioned by a member of DONG's technical team that the sea could not actually be viewed from some of the agreed viewpoints. This is not mentioned in the PEI. The Council is assuming that this will be covered in the Visual Impact technical report. Will it be possible to change the viewpoint grid references to those which do give a view of the sea and therefore the development? More detail is required in relation to the exact viewpoints used and the reason for their selection. Including a description from each view point with some detail as to why that VP was selected would be useful for VPs where the sea is not visible.

The agreed methodology 'stage 4' is to assess the effects of the Project in combination with other offshore and onshore developments. The list of onshore wind turbines taken into account (on p. 362) does not include any in the South Copeland area where there is a large number of small wind farms clustered together. The Council believes that the following wind farms should be taken into account: Askham – Far Old Park (7 turbines), Haverigg 2, 3 & 4 (8 turbines), Kirkby Moor (12 turbines) and Harlock Hill (5 turbines). There are two further schemes in the planning system at the moment (five 120m tall turbines at Haverigg and six 100m turbines at Langthwaite, near Millom). A decision on both these schemes has yet to be taken. These are both in the Copeland plan area. There could be additional schemes in the planning system in Barrow and South Lakes as well.

#### 10.4.3 Measures incorporated into the project and the likely worst-case scenario

A better understanding of how the worst case scenario was chosen would be useful. Table 57 refers to the 207 smaller turbines as the worst case scenario and this certainly would be during the construction and decommissioning phases in terms of the amount of activity out to sea and the night-time impact of safety lighting on top of the turbines etc. However, the Council would like to see photo montages for all the scenarios, especially those for the 222m high turbines. It would also be useful to see photo montages for some of the other viewpoints further up the Cumbrian coast, showing the larger turbines, as these will be more visible from the more distant viewpoints than the smaller turbines.

It would be helpful to see a plan showing the Regional Seascape units referred to on page 244. Other Seascape Visual Impact Assessment guidance has advocated using smaller units called Local Seascape Units. Is there an argument for using smaller seascape units in order to get a greater level of baseline detail for what is a sensitive landscape area?

This section mentions the visual impact of the offshore substations. These are not visible on the photo montages provided. Is this because they would not be visible from these viewpoints, or has this detail not been superimposed? If the latter, it would be useful for the Council to see the montages with the substations included.

Table 57 mentions night time visual impacts during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases. It would be helpful to see a photo montage from any location showing each of the 4 layout scenarios in the operational phase as there will be a much larger number of aircraft warning lights out to sea than there is currently. Failing this it we would seek clarity on how many additional warning lights there will be i.e. one for each turbine?

#### 10.4.4 Baseline

The Cumbria and Lancashire coastlines are described as hugely varied coastal landscapes. This suggests that Local Seascape Units should be used for reporting baseline data, rather than Regional units. Further comments will be provided in response to the publication of the Visual Impact Assessment technical report.

#### 10.4.5 Preliminary Review of potential effects

Comments will be made in response to the release of the Visual Impact Assessment technical report.

#### 10.4.6 Preliminary Assessment of Likely Worst-case scenarios of Construction Effects

The Council agrees that, whilst there will be a period of intense activity during the construction phase, and that this will be visible, this is a temporary situation and therefore the impact will not be overly significant. It would be useful to know, for each of the 4 scenarios, what timeframe would be involved.

#### 10.4.7 Preliminary Assessment of Likely Worst-Case Scenarios during operation

The Council agrees with the logical conclusion that the most affected seascape units will be those closest to the development.

There is reference in para 10.4.7.3 to more scattered onshore wind farms. The wind farms around the Duddon Estuary are not very scattered and do all contribute to a cumulative effect viewed from the South Copeland viewpoints and particularly from the top of Black Combe in the National Park. The same impact can be felt on top of the foothills to the south of Black Combe (although there is no assessment viewpoint in this area). It is agreed that this landscape/seascape has already been altered by the presence of the operating wind farms in the vicinity and to some degree the Walney Extension will be hidden behind those that are already in place, but the cumulative impact that will be felt when viewing the area from more elevated locations may be significant. Therefore mitigation through design and layout will be very important.

#### 10.4.8 Preliminary Assessment of Likely Worst-case scenarios during decommissioning

The Council agrees that, whilst there will be a period of intense activity during the decommissioning phase, and that this will be visible, this is a temporary situation and therefore the impact will not be overly significant. It would be useful to know, for each of the 4 scenarios, what timeframe would be involved

#### 10.4.9 Preliminary Assessment of cumulative impact

As mentioned in 10.4.2 and 10.4.7, there is a cluster of onshore wind farms around the Duddon estuary. This para states that cumulative impacts are most likely to arise from offshore wind farm development in the Irish Sea. It is hoped that the work that led to this conclusion is laid out in the technical report as the Council feels that there could be cumulative effects with onshore wind farms

in the Duddon Estuary/Haverigg areas. More detailed comments will be made in response to the release of the technical report.

#### 10.4.10 Inter-relationships

The Council welcomes the acknowledgement in table 73 of the relationship between visual impact and archaeology and cultural heritage aspects. There are a number of scheduled ancient monuments (SAMs) in the south Copeland area e.g. standing stones, stone circles etc. in the foothills to the south of Black Combe. These elevated positions allow a very clear view of the sea and the fells and one could presume that this is why these monuments were placed here. As to whether the impact on these valued assets is negative or positive will be down to the views of the individual visiting these sites. However, there is an arguably significant impact on these SAMs.

#### 10.4.11 Mitigation

Comments will be made in response to the publication of the Visual Impact Technical Report.

It is reiterated that there is no information relating to a comparative land based cumulative impact assessment of existing wind farms and individual turbines on land opposite the proposed site – taking into account for example existing wind farms in South Lakeland and Haverigg 1 & 2, as viewed from the Millom / Haverigg areas, the proposed Haverigg Extension and Langthwaite Windfarms. In addition a number of individual turbines have recently been erected / approved on the coastal plain south of St Bees (ie. Fairladies, Whangs, Bailey Ground, Seascale, and current appeals pending relating to Drigg Moorside and Yeorton Hall etc..) The Council would request that an extended and updated SLVIA be undertaken to take potential 360 degree impact of these ones further north / northwest into account.

#### **Noise**

As yet we do not know the construction of the turbines, the place of manufacture (Barrow or possibly Belfast), whether the Port of Workington or Barrow will be used as part of the turbine specification or the different layout options. All of the above will have a bearing on noise during and after construction. It was noticed during the earlier Walney Island phases the piling operations were heard inland on a clear still day but until we get the full technical details we cannot be certain of the potential impacts.

Further comments will be made in response to the publication of the technical reports, it is noted that the inland connections will not be located within Cumbria.