

PLANNING ACT 2008 (as amended)

INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING (EXAMINATION PROCEDURE) RULES 2010

LOCAL IMPACT REPORT

SUBJECT: HORNSEA OFFSHORE WIND FARM (Zone 4) – PROJECT
TWO

APPLICANT: SMART WIND LIMITED

INTERESTED PARTY:

NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

YOUR REF: EN010053

OUR REF: HOR2-AFP185

INTRODUCTION

1. Following a letter dated 22nd June 2015, sent on behalf of the Examining Authority and setting out the examination timetable and procedure, North East Lincolnshire Council (NELC) has given further consideration to the scheme and its implications. As the unitary Local Planning Authority, NELC is an interested party.
2. NELC is mindful that, whilst the greater part of the cable route is through North East Lincolnshire, albeit with a comparatively short stretch within the area of West Lindsey District Council (south-east of the A1173), the two “ends” are respectively within the boundaries of the Councils of North Lincolnshire and East Lindsey.
3. North East Lincolnshire has a number of pipes and cables running through the Borough, some of which originate in the vicinity of Immingham. As with earlier projects of a comparable nature, once construction work is complete, there should be little or no visible evidence of the cable route.
4. There have been on-going discussions with Smart Wind (the applicant) as to possible implications of a cable route through North East Lincolnshire. Following these discussions between the applicant and NELC, a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been signed.
5. On the basis that the terms of the SoCG are implemented in due course NELC does not at present anticipate a need to raise issues of principle or detail.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

6. The Development Plan is the North East Lincolnshire Local Plan (LP) adopted in November, 2003. In September, 2007 the Secretary of State formally “saved” the bulk of the LP policies.
7. For the purposes of this application especially relevant saved LP policies are:

- GEN2 – Development in Open Countryside
- NH5 – Protection of Trees
- NH6 – Protection of Hedgerows
- NH9 – Landscape Areas of Strategic Importance

8. These four policies are individually and collectively intended to ensure the amenity of the countryside and the businesses and people living and working there, together with the landscape and natural environment generally, are given proper consideration when decisions are being made. Policy GEN2 makes specific reference to proposals for the generation of energy from sources of renewable energy. They are considered compatible with the sustainability emphasis of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and should be given full weight in line with its Paragraph 215.

9. In relation to renewable energy developments, relevant paragraphs in the NPPF may be summarised:

- Para 93: Planning is important in supporting the delivery of renewable energy and low carbon technology
- Para 97: LPA's need to have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources. Further, they need to design policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy developments whilst ensuring that adverse effects are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts.
- Para 98: LPA's should approve an application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable, always assuming that material considerations do not indicate otherwise.

10. Whilst building a strong and competitive economy (Section 1) and supporting a prosperous rural economy (Section 3) are clearly leading components of the NPPF approach to sustainable development, at the same time landscape and visual implications are expected to be taken into account when reaching decisions. Thus conserving and enhancing

both the natural and historic environments (Sections 11 and 12) are also highlighted.

11. These strands of material considerations are summarised in the 12 core planning principles of the NPPF. These include ensuring a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, encouraging the use of renewable resources and helping to conserve the natural environment and heritage assets.

RELEVANT ISSUES

12. North East Lincolnshire Council supports the application by Smartwind for Hornsea Offshore Wind Farm Project Two in that Grimsby Port is developing as the main centre on the east coast for the operation and maintenance of off shore wind turbine sites and would ideally serve this proposal. This potential fits within the overall aspirations and plans which are regenerating the Port of Grimsby to support the offshore wind sector which is resulting in somewhat of an industrial renaissance in the Port. The further potential for investment and jobs created in Grimsby is welcomed fitting within the overall regeneration/economic development targets of the Council Partnership with renewables a key sector for development and growth.
13. NELC is pleased to note that no long term, adverse effects should result from the cable route and appropriate safeguarding controls are proposed through the draft DCO.
14. An Environmental Statement (ES) by the applicant indicates there should be no undue adverse effects as a result of the project. There are similarities in baseline, assessment and mitigation between Hornsea Project One and Project Two and the agreed SoCG outlines these details.

15. With regard to highway matters as referenced in the SoCG the applicant and NELC are discussing the Councils response to Question CL14 and CL15 of the Examining Authority's first series of written questions. This discussion is expected to conclude shortly, but after deadline 1 of the Examination.

CONCLUSION

16. NELC supports the proposal and is content with the SoCG signed with the applicant. That being said, NELC will respond to any fresh questions or issues that may arise.