

Application for Development Consent by Able Humber Ports Ltd for the Proposed Able Marine Energy Park

Open Floor Hearing: Immingham Civic Centre Thursday, 6 September, 2012

Statement of Marcus J Walker, BA Hons, Dip URP, MA, MRTPI - Head of Planning and Regeneration, North Lincolnshire Council

I am responsible for economic development, regeneration and planning at North Lincolnshire Council and have led work on behalf of the council on strategic planning since 1996 including the North Lincolnshire Local Plan (adopted May 2001), Yorkshire and Humber Regional Plan and the North Lincolnshire Local Development Framework (adopted August 2011). Since 2006 and in addition to running the council's statutory planning functions I have directed the council's economic development team and led work on the Able Marine Energy Park development.

I should start by confirming that in my view the Able Marine Energy Park development is totally compliant with the principles of Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI).

The announcement of the Crown Estate's £100 billion Round 3 Offshore Wind programme has the potential to provide a renaissance in British engineering and manufacturing. The Humber has the optimal location for the Round 3 sites and has a once in a lifetime opportunity to transform its economy and indeed of the whole northern UK region. This opportunity is entirely predicated upon the development of the South Humber Bank AMEP development. Without it, the UK's ability to attract overseas manufacturers and supply chain will be seriously compromised and could result in the UK becoming little more than an installation facility for offshore wind.

The social and economic impact of the AMEP development will quite simply be to place the whole of the Humber on a brand new economic trajectory and create prosperity and wealth not experienced for generations. The project has the potential to reverse decades of industrial decline and social deprivation. The AMEP will not only attract a brand new industry to the Humber it will support and consolidate our manufacturing, steel and ports sectors which are the mainstay of our present economy. The Able Marine Energy Park, South Humber Bank site is a nationally recognised asset – the UK's last undeveloped strategic site fronting a deep water estuary. There is nowhere else in the Humber, and almost certainly nowhere else in the UK, that has the advantages of a deep-water channel adjacent to such a large accessible undeveloped flat space. Smaller developed areas of space are available in the Humber such as Greenport Hull (no more than 80 hectares) alongside one or two smaller undeveloped sites. These sites can make a telling contribution to the development of a wider Humber offshore cluster offer but the AMEP with its sheer scale is at the heart of delivering a genuine fully integrated offshore wind manufacturing supply chain in the Humber. In fact the AMEP is unique and cannot be replicated or duplicated anywhere else in the UK or Europe and its location to the Round 3 North Sea sites is unrivalled.

The Able Marine Energy Park, South Humber Bank site provides offshore wind manufacturers the potential for scalability, a crucial benefit given the industries need to develop increasingly larger turbines. The need for super-sites to create the capacity to accommodate the full manufacturing, construction, and assembly is essential given the abnormal costs of moving such large components and structures off-site. Indeed, those manufacturers that are considering smaller UK sites have made it clear that such developments will be restricted to the provision of installation and assembly plants with relatively low impacts on UK GVA and providing relatively few jobs (e.g. Greenport, Hull). There is simply nowhere else in the country that hosts such a large flat space with deep-water access. At present, the largest offshore wind energy port is Bremerhaven, around 200 ha whilst the AMEP proposal is some 325 ha. It is this industry need for large flat spaces with deep-water access that led to a major search for suitable manufacturing sites at some 85 European ports - a search that rapidly diminishes to less than a handful. The AMEP is quite simply the optimal site for offshore wind development that cannot be replicated or relocated elsewhere in the Humber or frankly in any other part of the UK.

The imperative reasons for overriding public interest for the AMEP development are clear. The AMEP has the potential to transform the Humber economy and with it economic and social fortunes of the one million people living around the estuary though its impact will have a spread way beyond these boundaries. Nationally, the AMEP has the capacity to ensure that UK plc can attract a viable offshore manufacturing and supply chain that is presently located entirely overseas. The Crown Estates Round 3 programme amounts to one of the largest UK engineering projects in the history of the UK and it stands to gain tens of thousands of manufacturing jobs but this is not automatic. An offshore wind manufacturing and supply chain based almost entirely overseas will only relocate to the UK if there are compelling economic reasons to do so. The establishment of a few sites capable of supporting fully integrated clusters is a prerequisite to this happening and the AMEP is quite simply the optimal UK site with shortest sailing times of any UK port and an unrivalled wide estuary.

Turning to planning issues the development of the AMEP will have a significant impact upon the housing requirements of Northern Lincolnshire. These impacts have been fully accounted for within future housing forecasts and reflected within our planned 15 year housing land supply. Additional housing is also being catered for by neighbouring councils in Lincolnshire who are seeking to regenerate and develop existing towns on the back of the AMEP development and the further need for homes that this will bring.

The council's ambitions in developing the South Humber Bank are fully aligned with our planned increase in housing provision. The council is at an advanced stage in delivering the Lincolnshire Lakes development for 6,000 homes at Scunthorpe. An international investor (Lucent) is working alongside the council and seeking to twin track a planning application to accompany the emerging Area Action Plan Development Plan Document to enable a start date from as early as 2014. Further housing growth opportunities are accommodated within the 100 or so towns and villages within North Lincolnshire set out in the North Lincolnshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy adopted

in June 2011. The LDF Core Strategy public examination probed deeply into the relationship between the creation of thousands of jobs on the South Humber Bank and the development of a major new development at the Lincolnshire Lakes project at Scunthorpe and endorsed the sustainable connectivity between the two. The Government's Planning Inspector fully backed these proposals without amendment and issued the report that fully endorsed these proposals.

North Lincolnshire Council is also a member of the Greater Lincolnshire Local Economic Partnership (GLLEP). The Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) also fully supports South Humber Bank / Able Marine Energy Park. The Lincolnshire LEP also prioritises the renewables energy sector given its strong engineering base in Lincoln, Gainsborough and Northern Lincolnshire. Lincolnshire County's connections with engineering are strong and Siemens sponsor a state of the art facility and graduate and post graduate courses in energy power engineering at Lincoln University.

The GLEEP as well as focussing upon renewables a growth sector also recognises the AMEP as a vehicle for housing led regeneration in its many market towns and villages. The Greater Lincolnshire LEP has an aspiration for housing growth in Lincoln and many of its market towns including Gainsborough (awarded Growth Point status) and Caistor.

In conclusion, there is an absolute and unequivocal imperative reason of overriding public interest for the AMEP development and the full impacts have been fully considered and catered for in up to date strategic and statutory plans.

NLC Leader - AMEP Public Examination

Introduction

I am speaking as the elected Leader of North Lincolnshire Council – the host Authority of the proposed development.

Can I say at the outset that the South Humber Bank is central to transforming not only the economy of North Lincolnshire but I believe the entire region. For almost 70 years the South Humber Bank has been recognized as a national strategic asset but so far has promised so much but in reality it has delivered so very little.

The South Humber Bank development area is the largest undeveloped site fronting a deep-water estuary in the UK. This four square miles site of prime river frontage asset has been recognized as a key economic driver for Northern Lincolnshire.

I believe that with the announcement of the Round 3 offshore wind programme, the UK has an opportunity rebuild its manufacturing economy based on its capacity to provide a super cluster for the industry of which the Able development is undoubtedly the jewel in the renewable

crown. We now have a once in a lifetime opportunity to transform the economy of the whole of the Humber based upon providing a renewable energy cluster centred on the South Humber Bank.

Our government is fully supportive of our proposals to bring the offshore wind sector onto the South Humber Bank and have awarded us the largest ever Enterprise Zone in the country, being some 248 hectares.

The development of the Able Marine Energy Park is not only vital, it will be a life line for bringing a brand new offshore wind industry cluster to the Humber it is now critical to providing the shot in the arm to boost our struggling manufacturing sector. Not least of all, our biggest private sector employer TATA steel based at Scunthorpe that has within the last year been forced to reduce its workforce by over a thousand. The Government response to this major economic shock was to endorse a £10 million regional growth fund bid which as a key strand stand aims to assist the renewable energy sector locate into our area to support the future of the steel industry. TATA, like ourselves are working tirelessly to secure the offshore wind energy in the Humber which if successful will go a long way to securing the industries future. Our area's strength is in its local manufacturing and engineering capability. The manufacturing sector makes up 21% of the North Lincolnshire and we employing over

14,300 people compared with the 8.8% UK average. The Able Marine Energy Park will provide a huge boost for our engineering and manufacturing sector and could make the difference in terms of keeping a viable steel industry in the future. In North and North East Lincolnshire are manufacturing represents over 32% of our GVA (Gross Value Added) accounting for some £1.728 billion.

In short, the Able Marine Energy Park is critical to the prosperity of Northern Lincolnshire and the Humber and it simply has to happen and with timing being of the essence. Our national planning regime is just far too slow in delivering major infrastructure projects like this which are imperative to our nation's economic recovery. I welcome that the current Chancellor of the Exchequer has only last Sunday announced his intention to consider speeding up the delivery of large infrastructure projects. The Able Marine Energy Park – project that promises to deliver more than 4,000 jobs and I trust that the National Infrastructure Directorate will deliver a speedy and positive decision for the Able proposal.

The Able Marine Energy Park proposal remains at the heart of my Councils Economic Strategy and with this extensive planning application is, we believe, set to positively transform the economy of the area, create

unprecedented opportunities for local businesses and to provide many thousands of much needed job and apprenticeship opportunities.

There are however one or two issues where I believe it would be irresponsible for my Council not to comment on and, to some extent, to be able to set the record straight.

On this point I would like to again congratulate Associated British Ports on their on-going efforts to secure Siemens at the Greenport of Hull.

Just like the Applicant - ABLE – we were among the very first to publicly welcome this potential success.

I am however, frankly dismayed at the behavior of that organisation, a member of the LEP, and their veritable army of professional advisors in terms of their response to the Able Marine Energy Park proposal. In my view it is incongruous with their membership of the Humber Local Enterprise Partnership, smacks of naked self-interest and protectionism and is clearly damaging the potential prosperity of the Humber.

Yes their virtual monopoly of the river is under threat – but they say that they welcome competition but their continued actions speaks volumes.

We are in a unique position and well aware of the dynamics of our local economy and are well qualified to make comment.

Mr Upton I am being very direct here this morning - and to some extent it goes against the grain to criticize a local company to this extent - but we cannot just sit back and say nothing.

As I said at the outset we are not seeking to say that every detail of every aspect of this application is faultless – that can never be the case for a project of this size – but I am urging you to appreciate the motivation of the principal critics of the project – the attitude of this Council towards them and to reassure you that the community is wholeheartedly behind the development of the Able Marine Energy Park and the very considerable and significant benefits that it will bring – a renaissance for the Humber Bank.