

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Rampion Offshore Windfarm</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>17 October 2013</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Alan Buck</b>	<b>Tel:</b> 29-2287
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 In August this year the council submitted representations to the Planning Inspectorate in respect of EON's application for development consent for the Rampion Offshore Windfarm, to be located in the English Channel and which would be visible from Brighton & Hove and other local authority areas to the east and west.
- 1.2 This report has been prepared to inform the committee of the council's representations and to request that these be endorsed as representing the corporate view of Brighton & Hove City Council with regard to the Rampion Offshore Windfarm.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the committee notes the council's representations (appendices 1 and 2 of this report) to the Planning Inspectorate on the Rampion Offshore Windfarm and endorses these as representing the council's formal response to the Planning Inspectorate.

**3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:**

- 3.1 EON submitted their planning application (ref. EN010032) to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) earlier this year. In common with large infrastructure projects of this nature, the application will be determined by PINS following an Examination into the proposal.
- 3.2 On 25 June 2013 Brighton & Hove City Council was formally notified by PINS that as a local authority it falls within the categories of s88(3) of the Planning Act 2008 and was invited to submit a Local Impact Report with regard to its administrative area by 8 August.

- 3.3 The Examination process is handled largely through written representations and commenced in the summer. In order to meet the PINS timetable, in early August this council submitted a Local Impact Report and written representations into the issues that this council deemed should be taken into account in the examination process. The committee timetable has meant that Policy & Resources Committee on 17 October has presented the first practicable opportunity for the views of the council, as reflected in the above documents, to be formally endorsed at Policy & Resources Committee.
- 3.4 Both of the above documents were compiled by council officers, with input from relevant service areas from across the council. In essence, the representations that have been submitted are as follows:
- 3.5 Overall the council supports the principle of the windfarm, which will provide the following benefits:
- 3.6 Environmental
- An important contribution in helping tackle climate change.
  - Locally raising the profile, understanding and acceptability of renewable energy – in line with the council's Zero Carbon ambition for all energy to come from renewable sources.
  - Positively contributing to the city's One Planet Living objectives and international Biosphere Reserve aspirations for the city region.
- 3.7 Economic
- A modest creation of jobs and associated spin-off benefits for the local economy.
  - Helping secure Newhaven port's future and role, in line with area's proposed City Deal and vision for the Greater Brighton Area economy
  - Potential economic benefits through boat trips from Brighton Marina to the windfarm for sight seeing and fishing.
  - Benefits for local supply chains with estimates of 700 sub-contractors in the city region potentially involved.

### **Concerns**

- 3.8 The seafront is fundamental in determining the city's role as a major visitor attraction (as has recently been reflected in the results of public consultation for the council's draft Seafront Strategy). The seafront continues to attract investment for new facilities such as the Brighton Bathing Pavilion proposal in Madeira Drive, the Brighton Wheel, and the i360 observation tower project. The council therefore requests that consideration of the planning application fully explores the issues below:
- 3.9 Noise and Visual
- A precautionary approach should be taken to ensure that this application does not negatively affect by way of noise and visual intrusion the assets and benefits that the seafront brings to the city.

### 3.10 Community Mitigation & Engagement

Options should be explored to:

- Involve people in a local share offer/community ownership of a turbine in the array through a community energy scheme.
- Provide a visitor / interpretation /education centre with potential links with the city's proposed i360 seafront observation tower as the best place to view the array. Great Yarmouth's interpretation / visitor centre attracts 40,000 visitors per year for 30 small turbines; with 8 million visitors to the city annually and a much larger array, a centre for Brighton & Hove could be expected to have larger visitor numbers and a bigger impact.

### 3.11 Shoreham Port

- Further discussion with Shoreham Port Authority is strongly encouraged to minimise any adverse impact to commercial shipping using the port arising from the siting of turbines.

### 3.12 Other issues

- Concerns regarding marine ecology should continue to be taken up with Sussex Wildlife Trust. Concerns regarding the cable route impact on the South Downs National Park should continue to be addressed with the Park Authority and other key local stakeholders. The impact on Heritage Coast views should also be reduced further if possible.

## 4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

4.1 Public consultation has been carried out by the applicant EON at the pre-submission stage and by PINS since accepting the application.

4.2 Internal officer consultation has been carried out in compiling the council's responses. The Chair's of P&R, Environment, Transport & Sustainability, and Economic Development and Culture Committees have been kept informed and consulted on the council's submitted representations.

## 5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

### Financial Implications:

5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Jeff Coates*

*Date: 16/09/2013*

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 As stated in the body of the report the jurisdiction to determine the planning application lies with the Planning Inspectorate under the provisions of the Planning Act 2008. Although the Council is not the local planning authority for this matter the Planning Inspectorate has invited the Council to submit representations and these must be considered in the determination process.

It is not considered that there are any adverse human rights implications arising from the report.

*Lawyer Consulted:*                      *Name Hilary Woodward*                      *Date: 25/09/13*

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 None.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 As reflected in the council's response to PINS, assuming that the windfarm receives consent and is constructed, it will:
- make an important contribution in helping tackle climate change,
  - locally raise the profile, understanding and acceptability of renewable energy – in line with the council's Zero Carbon ambition for all energy to come from renewable sources,
  - positively contribute to the city's One Planet Living objectives and international Biosphere Reserve aspirations for the city region.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 None apparent.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 None for the council.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 Positive long term benefits associated with a reduced reliance on fossil fuels.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 These are covered in the council's representations to PINS (see paras 3.5 - 3.12 of this report).

**6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

- 6.1 The alternative option would have been to submit no representations to PINS, which would have meant that any views from this council would not have been considered in the Examination.

## **7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 In order to ensure that the submissions that have been made to PINS properly reflect the corporate views of the council.

### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

#### **Appendices:**

1. Rampion Windfarm – Brighton & Hove City Council Representation to Planning Inspectorate
2. Local Impact Report for Rampion Windfarm by Brighton & Hove City Council

#### **Background Documents**

1. Planning application by EON for Rampion Offshore Windfarm

