

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 14th December, 2012

PRESENT: Councillor R.Ll.Jones – Chairman
Councillor E.G.Davies - Vice-Chair

Councillors Lewis Davies; R.Anthony Dew;
Ff.M.Hughes, K.P.Hughes; R.Ll.Hughes;T.Ll.Hughes;
W.l.Hughes; W.T.Hughes; Vaughan Hughes; A.Morris
Jones; Eric Jones; G.O.Jones; Tom Jones; C.McGregor;
A. Mummery; Bryan Owen; J.V.Owen; E.Schofield;
Selwyn Williams.

IN ATTENDANCE: Director of Sustainable Development
Chief Planning Officer (EGJ)
Legal Services Manager
Committee Services Manager.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Jim Evans; Keith Evans; H.E.Jones; O.Glyn
Jones; Raymond Jones; R.Dylan Jones; Rhian Medi;
R.L.Owen; R.G.Parry,OBE; G.O.Parry,MBE; Eric Roberts;
G.Winston Roberts,OBE.
Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive; Director of
Lifelong Learning.

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None to declare.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE.

The Chair took the opportunity of thanking the members and officers for their hard work over the past 12 months. He wished everyone a Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

3. NORTH WALES CONNECTION PROJECT – RESPONSE TO NATIONAL GRID'S PREFERRED OPTION – PRELIMINARY AND INFORMAL CONSULTATION

Reported – That the report summarised the Preliminary Preferred Options (PMO) documents produced by National Grid for consideration during a preliminary and informal consultation period for this major national infrastructure project and also set out

a recommended non-statutory consultation response on the PMO. An approved response to National Grid's preliminary and informal consultation explained that National Grid's approach to select and consult on its PMO at this point was flawed and it also had the potential to have significant negative environmental and socio-economic impacts in Anglesey in comparison to other possible options.

Five strategic options had been identified by National Grid and taken forward for strategic options appraisal. National Grid favoured Option 3, namely, new onshore circuits connecting Wylfa and Pentir (AC or HVDC), one new AC circuit between Pentir and Trawsfynydd to be installed on existing pylons, a new connection between Wern and Y Garth, a new sub-station in West Gwynedd, re-conductoring of existing circuits in North Wales, the installation of series compensation equipment and modifications at existing substations.

A number of route corridors were being suggested by National Grid and these were identified at Para 5.3 of this report, as well as possible sites to accommodate a new substation near Bryncir, Gwynedd. National Grid acknowledged that a number of additional works would also be required to strengthen the electricity network. These would include work on existing overhead lines in North Wales, installation of equipment to boost transmission strength and work on existing substations at Wylfa, Pentir and Trawsfynydd.

Detailed comments about various sections of the consultation document were presented at Appendix 1 of this report.

National Grid needed to reinforce the existing electricity transmission network in North Wales to provide the necessary connections, otherwise National Significant Infrastructure Projects, e.g. nuclear new build at Wylfa would not go ahead. It was crucial therefore, that this Council continue its engagement with National Grid on the North Wales Connections Project and respond to this current non-statutory consultation, ensuring that the relevant environmental and socio-economic impacts have been adequately considered at the outset by National Grid.

Nonetheless, the Council was disappointed and concerned that National Grid had already selected its strategic preferred option without first giving the Council and other stakeholders an opportunity to:-

- consider and comment on its range of possible strategic options, or
- suggest other possible alternative strategic options, which would still deliver the necessary connections to the electricity network, but reduce the impacts in Anglesey.

The Council was concerned that in selecting its preliminary preferred option, National Grid had placed greater weight on what it considered to be a less costly option compared to the environmental and socio-economic impacts in Anglesey and the mainland.

The following observations were made by Members during discussion on the matter:-

- The Members were completely unhappy regarding the manner in which National Grid has carried out its consultation in that it has failed to undertake any initial consultation with stakeholders and the public on the various overall Strategic Options. National Grid has unilaterally 'parked' the numerous strategic options, reduced them to 5 options and thereafter singled out its 'preferred' options i.e. Option 3 which is:

"new onshore circuits connecting Wylfa and Pentir (AC or HVDC), one new AC circuit between Pentir and Trawsfynydd to be installed on existing pylons, a new connection between Wylfa and Y Garth, a new substation in West Gwynedd, re-conductoring of existing circuits in North Wales, the installation of series compensation equipment and modifications at existing substations".
- Members are not at all in favour of seeing any further pylons erected above ground on the Island.
- Any intention to place pylons over the Menai Straits will be strongly resisted owing to its special designation and beauty.
- Members are concerned that National Grid are placing great emphasis upon the cost differential between the various options and that it will eventually be the energy users who will have to pay for most costly option if that was to be the case.
- Members questioned the range of cost figures quoted by National Grid and confirmed that as an Authority we will need to challenge them through seeking independent advice.
- One Member was concerned that should National Grid pursue its preferred option then whichever route was chosen it would impact upon his community ward (Llanfechell) and residents.
- One Member raised questions regarding the overall generating capacity which would derive from the various major infrastructure developments, both affecting Anglesey as well as Gwynedd, and how such capacity could be accommodated in light of National Grid's proposed preferred option(s).
- Members considered that special treatment was being given to undergrounding part of the network at Aber y Glaslyn and criticised the fact that Anglesey, or part of it, does not merit the same special consideration.
- Although presumably beyond the remit of National Grid there is concern that the National Infrastructure Directorate has only 1 Welsh Speaking Commissioner on its Panel. Anglesey has its own identity and culture which needs to be appreciated and understood in terms of the impacts of the various major infrastructure developments such as that proposed by National Grid.

Members were fully supportive of the recommendations contained within the report and further proposed that an Advisory Panel be established (1 member from each of the 4 Political Groups and one unaffiliated member), whose role will be consultative. [The Advisory Panel should not consist of members from the Planning and Orders Committee].

RESOLVED

- **To endorse the officer's proposed response to the consultation as detailed in the report and that it be forwarded to National Grid before the 21st December deadline;**
- **That an Advisory Panel be established, consisting of one member from each of the Political Groups together with an Unaffiliated Member, to act as a consultative body for officers.**

4. RHIANNON OFFSHORE WIND FARM – RESPONSE TO CELTIC ARRAY LIMITED'S STAGE 1 CONSULTATION.

Reported – That the report provided the response of the Council to the Stage 1 Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) published by Celtic Array Limited for the Rhiannon Offshore Wind Farm. The Council was requested to consider, comment and endorse the contents of the report as well as Appendix 1 as its formal response to the consultation by the 20th December, 2012 deadline.

It was important that the Council engaged with the developer as part of the statutory consultation process in order to comment upon and endeavor to influence and mitigate the potential impact of the Off-shore Wind Farm upon the Island and its residents. At this stage Celtic Array were seeking the views of the Council and other consultees on the contents of the PEI. The Authority had already commented on their SOCC. This first stage was a precursor to the next stage consultation in Quarter 3 2013 when Celtic Array Ltd, would have worked up and refined its development proposals including its Environmental Impact Assessment as part of its submission of the Development Consent Order.

Whilst the wind farm was located 19km offshore and north of the Island, Officers would engage further with the developer on the issues highlighted within the report as well as onshore developments linked to the wind farm. The Council would be consulted early next year on the Scoping Report which would cover landfall locations and substation requirements. These elements of the development which were deemed to be associated developments would fall to the Authority to be considered and determined.

The following observations were made by Members during discussion on the matter:-

- Members raised concerns regarding the cumulative impacts of the wind farm in relation to the other major infrastructure projects, including onshore wind energy developments.

- Anglesey should ensure that it benefits economically from the major scheme and that Holyhead as a Port should positively be considered as a base for the manufacturing, assembly and employment of workers in connection with the Rhiannon Wind Farm.
- The Authority should maximise opportunities deriving from Community Benefits, in particular in respect of the location, of the proposed onshore substation site.
- Members have concerns regarding the impact of the wind farm upon the Island's tourism industry.
- Celtic Array should undertake nighttime impact and illumination assessments.
- Noise assessments should be carried out in order to consider such impacts upon affected residents as well as the aquatic environment.
- Consideration should be given at the appropriate stage to the colour of the proposed wind turbines in order to minimise their visual impacts.

Members were fully supportive of the recommendation contained within the report.

RESOLVED to endorse the proposed response to the consultation as detailed in this report and at Appendix 1 and that it be submitted prior to the 20th December, 2012 deadline.

The meeting concluded at 11:55 a.m.

**COUNCILLOR R.LI.JONES
CHAIRMAN**