

NAVITUS BAY WIND PARK.

COUNCIL PLANNING BOARD 16 July 2012 MINUTES

PLANNING BOARD

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| Subject: | Pre - application consultation on the Wind Park |
| Application No. | n/a |
| Applicant: | Eneco Round 3 Development Limited (Eneco) |
| Application Valid | n/a |
| Status: | Public |
| Ward: | n/a |
| Director: | Planning and Transport |
| Meeting Date: | 16 July 2012 |
| Contact: | Steve Davies, Principal Planning Officer ☎ 01202 451323 ✉ planning@bournemouth.gov.uk |

1.0 Purpose:

To consider the proposed methodologies for assessing the likely environmental impacts of the proposed overall development. Responses are required by the 30 July 2012.

The report is a technical approach to dealing with how things are assessed rather than giving an opinion or discussing the merits of the proposal.

However, this is the first opportunity the Council has had to formally respond. Whilst the consultation seeks only comment on the methodology it would be appropriate in my view to set out any concerns about the overall project.

2.0 Recommendation:

That Navitus Bay is asked to consider providing additional information in respect of the methodologies to assess the impact on Microclimate, Noise and Vibration as set out in the report. Also Eneco are asked to consult with the Council at an early stage in the preparation of any visual material to ensure that the local perspective is fully and comprehensively considered.

Although the Council is not being formally consulted on the merits of the proposal it wishes to highlight at this stage their strategic and in principle concerns about the potential visual impact of the Wind Park. The proposed Wind Park could be a noticeable feature in the Bay because of the number and scale of the turbines. It could have a marked impact on the horizon. The view from Bournemouth beach and cliff top is world-renowned. The distant horizon is framed between The Needles on the Isle of Wight and Old Harry Rocks on the Isle of Purbeck. It is open and unspoilt apart from the occasional boat travelling across the bay. Sea views are very important to the people of and visitors to Bournemouth. For several years now a significant amount of negative publicity has centred on the Waterfront Building culminating in the decision recently to demolish the building. This is an example of the strength of public opinion and how cherished the sea views are to the Town.

3.0 Reason for recommendation:

The Council has a duty to respond positively and proactively to the consultation process. The proposal is a forerunner to the Navitus Bay Wind Park Project in Poole Bay. That project is subject to consideration by the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) (now incorporated into the Planning Inspectorate).

Background detail: as set out above we are at the early stages of consultation process leading up to the submission of the application for consent for the wind park. The application to the IPC is not anticipated to be made until 2014. After that there is an examination and consideration period so the construction of the wind park if Eneco is successful is several years away.

The Navitus Bay project has now formally started the pre-application consultation process and asked for the Councils formal views. This is the first stage of the consultation process to consider the proposed methodologies for assessing the likely environmental impacts of the proposed development and they have asked that responses are received by the 30 July 2012.

Below is a link to the Preliminary Environmental Information 2 (PEI2) document and the non-technical summary. This sets out in detail the methodology the applicant intends to follow.

Summary

<http://files.opendebate.co.uk/files/eneco/enecowindpark/PEI2%20NTS%20Complete.pdf>

Main document

<http://files.opendebate.co.uk/files/eneco/enecowindpark/Full%20PEI2%20012.pdf>

4.0 Issues:

4.1 At this stage Navitus Bay are starting the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). They have produced a document to show how they intend to do it and we are now invited to comment on the methodology. The PEI2 document is comprehensive and considers a wide range of potential environmental impacts. They are listed in full below and Members will note that many are unlikely to have a significant effect on the Borough or the impacts will be considered by other specialist external organisations/bodies such as, for example, Natural England. However, visual impact will clearly have a specific and significant impact on Bournemouth. Other matters such as potential noise, effect on micro climate, beach replenishment and traffic as a result of visitors during various phases and during the construction process may have implications as well. It is important that these are investigated thoroughly even though they may appear of secondary importance. We will also need to consider the implications of the environmental consequences on the local economy and tourism.

4.2 The PEI2 report sets out the following topics for assessment.

4.3 Offshore Topics

- 1) Geology and Seabed Sediments
- 2) Physical Processes
- 3) Air Quality
- 4) Subsea Noise and Vibration
- 5) Benthic Ecology (relating to organisms in/on the sea bed)
- 6) Fish and Shellfish Ecology
- 7) Marine Mammals and Megafauna
- 8) Ornithology
- 9) Bats and Lepidoptera (including Moths and Butterflies)
- 10) Commercial Fisheries
- 11) Shipping and Navigation
- 12) Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
- 13) Unexploded Ordnance
- 14) Aviation and Military Activity
- 15) Telecommunications and Broadcasting
- 16) Seascape, Landscape and Visual
- 17) Other Users/Infrastructure (off shore oil/gas, marine aggregates. Cables and pipelines disposal sites)

4.4 Onshore Topics (none of the on shore works are within the Borough)

- 1) Ground Conditions and Soils
- 2) Land use
- 3) Water Environment
- 4) Air Quality
- 5) Terrestrial and Aquatic Ecology
- 6) Ornithology
- 7) Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
- 8) Landscape and Visual
- 9) Traffic and Transportation
- 10) Noise and Vibration
- 11) Health Impact Assessment

4.5 Topics that cover Onshore and Offshore aspects

- 1) Socio-economic, Tourism and Recreation
- 2) Nature Conservation Designations

4.6 Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA)

It is proposed to “*evaluate baseline conditions against predicted potential impacts from the proposed Project during construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the development. The assessment will also identify and assess the significance of these impacts based upon receptor sensitivity and magnitude of impacts*”.

The approach will be based on recognised guidance including

Guidance on the Assessment of Offshore Wind Farms: Seascape and Visual Impact report DTI (2005)

Specifically the methodology will include

- Site surveys and field studies
- Review of landscape planning policies and existing seascape and landscape character assessment in the area (none in Bournemouth as far as I am aware)
- Identification of sensitive seascapes/landscapes and visual receptors (for example, tourism and recreational centres, designated landscapes, historic parks, public footpaths, and ferry routes)
- Key view point locations
- Consultations and meetings with statutory and consultees including local authorities Natural England, and other stakeholders will be held to discuss and agree the extent of the study area, the assessment methodology, the scope of the cumulative assessment and to agree key viewpoint locations.

This will lead to the preparation of Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV's)

LDA Design has recently been appointed by Navitus Bay Development Limited to prepare a Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA) for the proposed Navitus Bay Wind Park. The site is within the 'West of Isle of Wight' Zone identified by the Crown Estate under their Round 3 leasing program, and lies off the Dorset coast approximately 16km south of Bournemouth, 13km south east of Peveril Point in Swanage and 13.5km south west of the Needles on the Isle of White.

They will be seeking agreement to a range of parameters that will inform the scope of the SLVIA. These include: the extent of the study area; the location and number of representative viewpoints from which to undertake the assessment of visual effects; the assessment methodology; the worst case scenario; and, the cumulative sites to be included within the cumulative assessment.

This appears to be a comprehensive assessment in line with the DTI guidance and importantly they will be consulting further with the Council.

4.7 Noise Assessment

The report does not appear to deal with the impact of potential noise disturbance from the off shore equipment. There is an assessment topic for Subsea noise and vibration but the "above sea" noise generation could be an issue. It is expected that base line noise surveys should be carried out at various points along the coastline. An assessment then needs to be carried out to ensure that any noise from the operation of the turbines is not discernable to any significant degree from the land. The assessment will need to take into account differing climatic conditions and times of the year. It may well affect adversely residential and hotel properties on the cliff top and those persons enjoying a quiet walk along the beach during the evening.

4.8 Climatic and micro climate assessment

Some reports have suggested that turbines have an impact on micro climate and temperature. Whilst it is accepted that this may not have any current scientific basis it is important that a satisfactory assessment is carried out. Bournemouth obviously relies on the weather and climate for its tourism economy.

4.9 Other Considerations

I am still awaiting a response to consultations that have been sent out within the Council and will provide any additional comment prior to the Planning Board. Tourism comments on the visual assessment and socio economic issues will need to be added.

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Item 7 report C

Amend recommendation

That Eneco is strongly requested to provide additional information in respect of the methodologies to assess:

1. The impact on Microclimate, Noise and Vibration as set out in the report.
2. The net economic impact on the visitor economy through trade and visitor research.

Also Eneco is asked to meet and consult with the Council at an early stage in the preparation of any visual material to ensure that the local perspective is fully and comprehensively considered and that the range of possible options are clearly presented to allow a properly informed response and assessment.

Although the Council is not being formally consulted on the merits of the proposal it wishes to highlight at this stage their strategic and in principle concerns about the potential visual impact of the Wind Park. The proposed Wind Park could be a noticeable feature in the Bay because of the number and scale of the turbines. It could have a marked impact on the horizon. The view from Bournemouth beach and cliff top is world-renowned. The distant horizon is framed between The Needles on the Isle of Wight and Old Harry Rocks on the Isle of Purbeck. It is open and unspoilt apart from the occasional boat travelling across the bay. Sea views are very important to the people of and visitors to Bournemouth. For several years now a significant amount of negative publicity has centred on the Waterfront Building culminating in the decision recently to demolish the building. This is an example of the strength of public opinion and how cherished the sea views are to the Town.

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4.9 Tourism

Information has been requested from Eneco regarding the research proposals for assessing the net impact on the visitor economy. Linked with this is the requirement for accurate visuals to illustrate the potential change. Although recent preliminary details of a trade survey have been provided, the comprehensive proposals for precise visitor research and the associated essential visual references are still outstanding.

Eneco has also failed to recognise the importance of gathering information across a complete season to encompass all markets. The failure to consult and plan this work for 2012 makes it impossible to have any meaningful consultation on the findings prior to the planned application submission date in 2013.

It is strongly recommended that the timetable is adjusted by a further year to allow this information to be obtained in 2013 and the subsequent consultation is to be conducted to enable a robust and professional assessment of the economic impact element of the EIA to be delivered.

Planning Board minute

That Eneco is strongly requested to provide additional information in respect of the methodologies to assess:

1. The impact on Microclimate, Noise and Vibration as set out in the report.
2. The net economic impact on the visitor economy through trade and visitor research. Eneco are asked to involve the Council in the appointment of any consultant to ensure that they are fully independent and the brief for the assessment deals with all matters that the Council consider relevant to the process.

Also Eneco is asked to meet and consult with the Council at an early stage in the preparation of any visual material to ensure that the local perspective is fully and comprehensively considered and that the range of possible options are clearly presented to allow a properly informed response and assessment. In particular the assessment should include 3D visualisations, the impact of the movement of the turbine blades, a comparison with existing topographical features including the IOW and the Purbecks in context, any lighting and a perception study to analyse the effect of a photo and a persons actual real life view.

Although the Council is not being formally consulted on the merits of the proposal it wishes to highlight at this stage their strategic and in principle concerns about the potential visual impact of the Wind Park. The proposed Wind Park could be a noticeable feature in the Bay because of the number and scale of the turbines. It could have a marked impact on the horizon. The view from Bournemouth beach and cliff top is world-renowned. The distant horizon is framed between The Needles on the Isle of Wight and Old Harry Rocks on the Isle of Purbeck. It is open and unspoilt apart from the occasional boat travelling across the bay. Sea views are very important to the people of and visitors to Bournemouth. For several years now a significant amount of negative publicity has centred on the Waterfront Building culminating in the decision recently to demolish the building. This is an example of the strength of public opinion and how cherished the sea views are to the Town.

The Council would also ask that the applicant address the long term sustainability of this form of renewable energy and the consequences for decommissioning the Wind Park.