

JOINT COMMUNITY SAFETY & HOUSING AND FINANCE & PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIOS DECISION RECORD 19 November 2009

The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond
Councillor Robbie Payne (Finance and Performance Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Dale Clark, Estates Manager
Philip Timmins, Estates and Valuation Officer
Helen Beaman, Environment Co-ordinator
Sarah Bird, Democratic Services Officer

1. Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order

Minute 2 – Partnership for Renewables - This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (Para 3)

2. Partnership for Renewables (*Assistant Director – Procurement and Asset Management*) (Para 3)

Type of Decision

Non key.

Purpose of Report

To inform the Portfolio Holders of the approach received from Partnership for Renewables to identify Council owned sites that may be taken forward for consideration for the potential construction of

wind turbines.

Issues for Consideration by Portfolio Holders

The Finance and Performance Portfolio Holder asked that as much information as practicable relating to this item be published in the public domain rather than be included in the exempt section of the minutes.

The Estates and Valuation Officer outlined how the Partnership for Renewables (PFR) had been set up by the Carbon Trust (funded by the Government) which aimed to increase the amount of public sector land which could potentially be put to use for renewable energy generation sites. In January 2009 PFR had approached the Council with an invitation to consider undertaking an initial assessment to establish whether there was potential for developing land assets as part of the programme. This 'without obligation' offer was followed up and 6 sites identified which may have potential for wind turbines and or methane gas capture. PFR had conducted a development process at its own cost and risk to assess and progress each project on its own technical and commercial merits. The initial lease option for the land on which any potential wind turbine was situated would run for 3 years to enable in depth investigations to take place. This could be extended once and only if a planning application had been made but not determined. The lead in time for the development of the turbines could therefore be relatively long depending on the circumstances. Furthermore the detailed investigation work may show that a site was not in fact a viable proposition for PFR.

Where PFR wished to proceed and the Council agreed, a 25 – 27 year lease would be offered in order to build and operate the turbines. The Turbines are usually 80m high to the central hub with 50m radius blades, therefore reaching a height of 130m in total. The minimum land lease would be the area of the turbine foundation pad area, crane pad, control building site and construction, maintenance and decommissioning compound. There would also need to be a road for access to the turbines. Agricultural operations could be carried out around the turbines and buildings but nothing built within 100 or 120 metres, and no other wind turbines could be built on the property by other operators.

Six sites had initially been identified and the proposals had been taken to the Council's Planning One Stop Shop. Following this, four sites were now being recommended for approval for investigation by PFR. PFR would carry out public consultation regarding the sites through usual methods i.e. on the website and public meetings. The sites under consideration were:-

Brenda Road – this was a large level grassed field adjoining the Corus site which had been designated for recreational use (including noisy)

in the local plan which would not conflict with wind turbine use. There were no significant planning issues highlighted at the One Stop Shop.

Hart Moor – this was presently used as grade 1 agricultural land although there is a tenant on this land. There are already wind turbines in the immediate vicinity. The One Stop Shop had highlighted the proximity of woodland which may cause an issue with bats and the presence of a nearby bridleway. Both Portfolio Holders agreed that sensitive dialogue should take place with the tenant.

Claxton – this was a landfill area but because of its proximity to the A689 was unsuitable for wind turbines. However, it had been highlighted as a site for methane gas capture.

Leathers Chemical Site – this area was a former industrial site which the Council leased and there was little or no prospect of any other use of the land.

The Mayor asked how many turbines were likely to be on each site and was informed that proposals were likely for 1 each at Brenda Road and 2 at Hart Moor. A wind turbine was likely to generate 2 megawatts of power, enough to supply 1,000 homes.

The Mayor said that it was important that proper consultation take place regarding these sites and suggested that the Authority be involved in this. The Environment Co-ordinator highlighted that a community fund would be set up and a percentage of rental can be used for community projects. The Mayor stated that this was good news for the area balancing out nuclear power with wind turbines and could bring employment to the area in the construction and fitting of the turbines. Hartlepool Borough Council would be the first Authority in the North East to take advantage of the proposals by PfR. There would be no cost to the Authority during the investigations of the sites as this would be borne by PfR.

The Environment Co-ordinator highlighted that the proposals would have a positive impact of the Comprehensive Area Assessment use of resources category.

Decision

The Portfolio Holders gave approval to progress negotiations on the proposed sites.

The meeting concluded at 10.40 am.

P J DEVLIN
CHIEF SOLICITOR
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