

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
14 December 2011**

**TRANSPORT, ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Chairman's Statement

The Committee met on 23 November 2011 and the following items were considered:

1. East Coast Tourism and Harrogate Sustainable Transport Package Bids

We welcomed the report from Andrew Bainbridge that gave us the opportunity to comment on the two proposed bids for the Department of Transport (DfT) Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF).

He advised us that the Department for Transport have restricted each transport authority to leading on a maximum of two bids, one solo bid and one in partnership with another transport authority or a National Park Authority. The decision on which bids to submit was taken following engagement and consultation with the local planning authorities, National Park Authorities, stakeholders and the public.

The DfT are clear that the purpose of the bid has to be about boosting the economy and reducing carbon and this was strictly adhered to in the bids put forward.

The deadline for submission of Tranche 2 bids to the DfT is the 24 February 2012. Reports on the details of the packages will be presented to the Yorkshire Coast and Moors Area Committee (East Coast Tourism Package) and the Harrogate Area Committee (Harrogate Sustainable Transport Package). Approval to submit the bids along with details of the schemes and initiatives that will be included in the packages will be considered by the Executive at its meeting on 10 January 2012. The views of this committee and the area committees will be reported to the Executive at this meeting.

The Committee felt that both bids were well worth while and welcomed their submission.

2. Renewable Energy

The second part of the meeting was focussed on renewable energy with presentations from external experts.

- a) A presentation from Alex Richards of Scarborough Borough Council telling us about the opportunities for economic growth that would be provided by the development of the Dogger Bank wind farm.

The Dogger Bank development will consist of a number of offshore wind farms, each with an onshore grid connection and a capacity of up to 1.4GW. These wind farms will individually comprise between 100 and 333 wind turbines (depending on the size of turbines selected), up to three offshore substations, export cables, onshore converter stations and associated infrastructure.

Each project will require its own development consent order from the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) - soon to become Major Infrastructure Planning Unit (MIPU) - and will undergo an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) as well as specific stakeholder and community consultation activities

<http://www.forewind.co.uk/projects/projects-overview.html>

- b) Example of local community renewable energy project Settle Hydro. We really enjoyed the presentation from Ann Harding a Director of Settle Hydro. It was clear to see Ann's enthusiasm for the project.

Settle Hydro was established as an 'Industrial and Provident Society for the Benefit of the Community' with the specific purpose of owning the Settle Weir Hydro Electric Scheme. The Society will generate revenue by selling 'green' hydro-electricity.

Any surplus revenue will be used by the Society to benefit the local community through its twin aims of regenerating the local economy and promoting the environmental sustainability of Settle District. www.settlehydro.org.uk

- c) Carbon Capture & Storage

Richard Gwilliam of the National Grid gave us a very informative presentation on carbon capture and storage. The National Grid is investigating the possible future reuse of some of its high pressure natural gas transmission pipelines to transport carbon dioxide from power stations and heavy industry to storage offshore.

Scotland and the Humber region in England have been identified as offering some of the best opportunities for Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) in Europe, with power stations and other heavy industry close to the North Sea oil and gas fields which, when depleted, could provide storage for their carbon dioxide emissions.

CCS networks in Scotland and Humberside could together result in a reduction of up to 78 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (60 for Humberside and 18 for Scotland) going into the atmosphere every year. That's equivalent to taking nearly all of Britain's cars off the road, www.nationalgrid.com/corporate/About+Us/climate/CCS2/

- d) The Renewable Energy Policy: Interim Paper provoked some interest from members of the public. Two of our own Councillors; County Councillors Paul Richardson and Bernard Bateman along with members of the public asked the Committee to consider setting a minimum separation distance between wind turbines and residential properties of 2km.

The report gave us an opportunity for Members to consider interim findings that will contribute to a renewable energy policy position for North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC). The policy position is intended to aid NYCC in its role as statutory consultee on nationally significant infrastructure projects (energy) and more generally in taking a common approach to renewable energy schemes that are proposed across the county during a time of government encouragement regarding opportunities in this sector.

We felt the report did not consider the options for a minimum separation distance in enough detail and have requested a more detailed report come back to the Committee that takes into consideration the research put forward by the members of the public. We look forward to the report coming back to the Committee.

- e) NYCC what are we doing?

Kristina Peat the County Council's sustainability manager provided a whistle stop tour of areas where the County Council is pursuing renewable energy for its own use and where and why it is not. This will include information on pilots and lessons learnt and what the future may hold for renewable installations; Feed in Tariffs, Renewable Heat Incentive and 'Grow our own fuel'.