

Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) Atlantic Array Offshore Wind Farm

This Statement of Community Consultation explains how you can comment on proposals for an application for a development consent order to be submitted by Channel Energy Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of RWE Npower Renewables Ltd (RWE NRL), to develop and operate an offshore wind farm in the Bristol Channel.

Your comments on the proposals are important. They will be considered as the application for Atlantic Array is prepared and refined, before submission to the Infrastructure Planning Commission in 2012. There will be a phase of consultation and a formal consultation period. The start and end dates, as well as the locations of events and details of where you can access further information will be advertised before the consultation starts.

1. Project Summary

RWE NRL intends to submit an application in 2012 to the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC), or successor body, to develop a new wind farm in the Bristol Channel to be known as Atlantic Array Offshore Wind Farm. The scoping report for the proposed EIA of the project has already been published and contains plans of the offshore and onshore components of the project. This can be found on the Atlantic Array website; www.npower-renewables.com/atlanticarray

Offshore

The proposed Atlantic Array Offshore Wind Farm project site area is located within the Bristol Channel. The export cable route extends from the edge of the wind farm to the landfall in north Devon bringing the power generated from the wind farm ashore. The offshore site, excluding the export corridor, extends over approximately 500 km² in an average water depth of 45 m. At the closest point to shore it would be approximately 14 km from the north Devon coast, approximately 16 km from the south Wales coast and approximately 13 km north of Lundy. As it is early in the development process the megawatt size of the turbines to be used is undecided, however it is expected that the proposed Atlantic Array project would consist of between 188 (8 MW) and 416 (3.6 MW) turbines with a total capacity of approximately 1,500 megawatts.

Onshore

In addition to the offshore elements of the scheme, Atlantic Array will also require associated development onshore, comprising electrical infrastructure to enable the electricity generated by the offshore wind turbines to be transferred into the National Grid transmission system. The onshore development includes the landfall site and the onward terrestrial cable route from the landfall location to the agreed grid connection point at Alverdiscott. This is currently a 400kV substation, approximately 5 km to the south of Bideford, north Devon. The substation will be expanded and re-developed to house the equipment needed to transform the voltage coming in from the wind farm to the voltage being distributed via National Grid.

2. Summary of the role of the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC)

This application will be submitted to the IPC (or successor); an independent body that now decides applications for nationally significant infrastructure projects. Full details about the IPC can be found on their website:- <http://infrastructure.independent.gov.uk/>. The IPC is required by law to make its recommendations in accordance with National Policy Statements (NPSs) published by the government unless there are particular reasons for not doing so. For this project, the relevant NPSs are the overarching energy NPS (EN-1) and the renewables NPS (EN-3). Once the IPC (or successor) complete their examination, then they will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State who will then determine the application.

The IPC strongly emphasises the need to engage early with local communities so that they can have their say and help to shape proposals which will affect their area.

This Statement of Community Consultation explains how the local community will be consulted. A report on the consultation exercise will be submitted to the IPC as part of the application which will detail the results and explain how the final proposals have taken comments into account.

3. Environmental Impact Assessment

The application will also fall within the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, meaning that an 'Environmental Statement' (ES) will be produced to support the application. An ES sets out an assessment of a project's likely significant environmental effects, along with any proposed mitigation.

The ES will be consulted upon during the formal consultation period and statutory authorities such as County Councils, Natural England and the Countryside Council for Wales will have the opportunity to formally respond to our application at this stage. Copies of the Environmental Statement will be made available at a range of locations and a non-technical summary will be produced and will be freely available.

4. Objectives

The objectives of the Atlantic Array community consultation are:

- To provide an opportunity for local people to put forward ideas and have a role in developing proposals across areas they are able to influence;
- To provide information to all sections of the relevant communities on all aspects of the project;
- To create a process through which local people can comment on formal proposals;
- To provide an opportunity for local people to meet face-to-face with RWE NRL staff who are involved in the development;
- To respond to local people.

5. Consultation approach

It is proposed that the consultation and community engagement for the Atlantic Array project will be carried out in a single phase. The consultation will concentrate on both the onshore elements of the project including the landfall, cable route and substation and the

offshore elements, including the cable routes, turbine array and all associated impacts.

• Consultation – onshore cable route

Following the environmental and engineering review of three possible onshore routing options RWE NRL will consult on a preferred routing option with the public. The local community will be sent detailed information on the preferred option including substation extension proposals together with their potential impacts, both positive and negative, and asked to comment on the proposals.

• Consultation – offshore

The offshore elements of the project will be set out using the information gathered for the EIA including any mitigation options, as will the onshore. The consultation will coincide with the completion of the work being undertaken for the EIA and this will be used to provide information to the public via various communication methods on the different aspects of the project.

6. Consultation methods

A range of communication tools will be used throughout the pre-application process to engage with communities. These are listed below and are proposed as a minimum level of engagement. RWE NRL will remain open to suggestions as to how best to communicate with the local community throughout the pre-application process.

• Questionnaire for onshore consultation

– to be sent to businesses and residential properties within the defined consultation boundary.

• **Website** – the Atlantic Array website will contain current information on the project and consultation process. There will also be pages set up for people to submit comments, ideas and feedback.

• **Newsletters/Project Leaflets** – to be sent to those most likely to be affected by the development. These will also be posted on the project's website and made available to the wider community through a range of community outlets.

• **Points of contact** – the postal address and email address;

Atlantic Array, RWE npower renewables, Auckland House, Lydiard Fields, Great Western Way, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN5 8ZT

Email – atlanticarray@npower-renewables.com

• **Media** – press releases/advertisements will be issued during the pre-application process to include details of the consultation process (via publication of the SoCC) and the public exhibitions.

• **Public exhibitions** – these will be held at various locations in North Devon and Wales (to be advised and agreed with the relevant local authorities). They will be open exhibitions where people will be able to view details of the wind farm proposal (onshore and offshore), talk to the project team and record their comments. The venues and dates will be advertised through local media and the Atlantic Array website.

• **Comments forms** – these will be available at the public exhibitions but also on the website for people to record their views at any time.

• **Political engagement** – RWE NRL will undertake updates and briefings for local politicians about the offshore and onshore elements of the projects.

• **Town, Community and Parish Council briefings** – RWE NRL will invite the relevant local town and parish councils to meetings to brief them on the project and receive any feedback they have on issues affecting their areas of responsibility.

• **Ongoing liaison with marine users** – organisations and individuals to be identified and advised by coastal authorities and MMO. This group will be issued newsletters and invited to issue-specific meetings.

• **Lodging of documents in public** – the following documents will be lodged at local libraries, council offices and made available on the project website:

- The Statement of Community Consultation
- Questionnaires and newsletters
- Any other relevant advertisements regarding the wind farm proposal

7. Who will we consult?

Onshore consultation

- Local residents and businesses with postcodes within the 2 km substation consultation boundary and/or within the 1 km cable corridor
- Members of British and European Parliaments with local constituencies wholly or partly within any of the consultation boundaries
- District and County Councilors with wards/divisions wholly or partly within any of the consultation boundaries or within the substation 10 km Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV). A ZTV is a computer-generated tool to identify the likely (or theoretical) extent of visibility of a development.
- Town, Community and Parish Councils wholly or partly within any of the consultation boundaries or within the 10km ZTV

RWE NRL will also liaise with the local authorities in north Devon and Wales to establish whether there are any hard-to-reach groups that fall within these consultation boundaries who may need to be consulted or engaged with differently.

Offshore consultation

- All of the groups identified under onshore consultation as appropriate plus;
- Recreational and commercial users of the sea and coastline in and around the proposed wind farm area
- Communities whose local authority boundary falls within the offshore ZTV.

All consultation responses will be taken into account, whether from people living in the immediate vicinity of the site, or from those living outside of this area.

8. Further information

Further background information about RWE NRL's consultation proposals is included in the 'Information for the Atlantic Array Offshore Wind Farm pre SoCC' document which is available on our website – www.npower-renewables.com/atlanticarray