



Report No: CAI.17 11/12
Challenge and Improvement Committee
25 October 2011

Subject: Update from Renewable Energy Task and Finish Group

Report by:	Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
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Purpose / Summary:	To give the Committee an update on the work that the renewable energy Task and Finish Group has been doing.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1) That Members note the work that the Renewable Energy Task and Finish Group has been doing.**
- 2) That Members request the Renewable Energy Task and Finish Group report back to the Committee on 29 November 2011 with a proposed draft renewable energy statement for West Lindsey for Council consideration.**

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: None identified as a result of this report.

Financial : These would be identified once a renewable energy statement were produced and any plan of implementation agreed.

Staffing : The impact on staff would depend on the scope of the statement and the resources needed to deliver any actions.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights : An impact assessment would need to be carried out if at a later date revised policies were produced.

Risk Assessment : if policies are not reviewed then there is a risk that they may not be fit for purpose.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities : Reviewing the topic of renewable energy will identify the opportunities for reducing CO2 emissions.

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:
Report CAI.04 11/12 to 21 June 2011 meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

Yes No

Key Decision:

Yes No

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Challenge and Improvement Committee at its meeting on 21 June 2011 considered a brief report on renewable energy, the minute from that meeting is as follows :-

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Health presented Paper D on the Development of a Renewable Energy Policy and the need to review the adequacies of our policies to encourage what is right for the district in terms of renewable energy. Mr Nicholson spoke about the Council's aspiration to be the Greenest District and renewable energy would be a key cog in the process towards that goal.

Members wished for a singular document which would set out a design for the district in regard to renewable energy which would tie in with the Parish Planning, Carbon Management Plans and Strategic Housing policies.

The Committee discussed the need for a task and finish group on this matter and the involvement of officers and the CLJSP Committee.

RESOLVED that a Task and Finish Group be established composed of Councillors Patterson, Bierley, and Howitt-Cowan and that a clear remit would be established including an input from planning around policy.

2. The details of the work of the T&F group

The group has met on a number of occasions since it was first established in June 2011. The group is supported by officers and has been gathering information on renewable energy.

- 2.1 The group determined at an early stage that there were 2 aspects that they wanted to tackle:-
Firstly in the short term an agreed consultation protocol for wind farm proposals so local community/individual views taken into account, and
Secondly in the longer term an agreed approach covering the range of renewable technologies so that opportunities are created for businesses and land and property owners, to support income generation, local energy security and climate change/carbon management.
- 2.2 The group also agreed that they would wish to be involved in some of the thinking that is taking place on renewable and low carbon energy so as to be able to have the opportunity to feed into the Central Lincolnshire Core Strategy that is in the process of being developed.
- 2.3 The group considered a protocol for consultation with local communities and made a recommendation to the Development Management Committee which agreed to new arrangements for consultation on large scale wind farms.

- 2.4.1 In order to have an appreciation and an understanding around renewable energy the group agreed that some visits were necessary and two have taken place one to Hockerton near Newark to look at a sustainable community project and the second to look at wind turbines at Trusthorpe near Mablethorpe.
- 2.4.2 The group also wished to find out views from the community on renewable energy and this has been taking place through the West Lindsey Website, press releases and also information will be included in the West Lindsey News. The information that has been received will be used to help inform the work of the group. The group felt it would be useful to specifically seek some views from young people and it was agreed that this would be done as part of the 11 November “Young Persons Take Over day” event being held at the Guildhall. Key points that come from that event will be used to help the thinking of the group.
- 2.5 The group were very conscious that in order for the most to be made of renewable energy opportunities that the development management framework would need to be appropriate to support this. In order to do this the group asked for support from the West Lindsey development management team and also the Central Lincolnshire Joint Planning Unit that delivers that work that the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee requires to have done to produce a core strategy for central Lincolnshire. A workshop event took place on 7 October which considered the results of the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy study for Central Lincolnshire. Key drivers for carbon reduction are the national targets to have 15% of energy needs met from renewable energy sources by 2020. The study identified that there is significant potential for renewable energy to be generated in the District with major sources likely to be wind power, agricultural energy from waste, biomass and anaerobic digesters. It was identified that to turn the potential “theoretical“ renewable energy opportunities into reality clarity was needed over which organisations and groups could and would want to deliver projects. The workshop discussed how the best could be made of the opportunities created by Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and how delivery could be driven forward through a range of partners. The workshop identified that the Energy Developers were those with the greatest potential to deliver but that they would need to have support through the planning policies of Councils and also there would need to early engagement with local communities. Another priority was seen as the creation of Energy Services Companies, for example to deliver on district heating schemes.

3.0 Drivers and Opportunities from Renewable Energy

- 3.1 The group feel that the use of renewable energy sources/solutions such as ground source heat pumps, wind power, solar power, bio-fuel boilers, anaerobic digesters all have a place to play not only locally but also nationally in reducing carbon dioxide emissions and in increasing energy security.

- 3.2 Renewable energy developments in the district may create opportunities for businesses to develop. There are a range of businesses and enterprises that are associated with renewable energy.
- 3.3 In addition renewable energy presents opportunities for the Council to demonstrate community leadership, reduce its own carbon footprint, to address energy security concerns and could be part of an income, trading and investment strategy.
- 3.4 The group appreciate that the development of renewable energy solutions presents a range of challenges including those relating to preservation of the natural environment and planning policies.

4.0 Renewable Energy Statement

- 4.1 The group have felt that it would be appropriate for the Council to have a renewable energy statement and that the aim of the statement will be for West Lindsey to clearly state what it's position is on renewable energy. This would then allow the community to clearly understand what WLDC thinks about renewable energy. The statement will then allow consistent messages to be communicated.
- 4.2 The proposed statement that will be developed by the Task and Finish Group of elected Members from the Council's Challenge and Improvement Committee.
- 4.3 It is seen that it will build on the Council's previous commitment to managing climate change and carbon emissions which were articulated in the Council signing the Nottingham Declaration on climate change and agreeing to a carbon management (reduction) plan. The statement will need to be seen as a logical continuation of the work that has already taken places and link to the Green Council theme. It is expected that the statement will feed into the production and delivery of a Green Strategy and programme of work for the Council. The statement will also need to link to the issue of fuel poverty and be able to support the Council's work on this topic.
- 4.4 The statement will follow from the consideration of information on renewable energy that has been gathered from the community and from some research. It is expected that the statement will need to be kept under review as it may need to change to reflect more specific aspirations and plans that may emerge with further research and community feedback.

5.0 Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to note the work of the Task and Finish Group and to request a report on a proposed draft statement for the November meeting of the committee.