

## **Economic Development Unit**

### **Response to Consultation under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 and Section 95 of the Energy Act 2004 (Safety Zone) for Tidal Array between Carmel Head and Skerries proposed by Marine Current Turbines Ltd**

In light of Anglesey's aspirations of becoming an Energy Island, the Economic Development Unit is supportive of this application in principle, provided that the issues identified within this response are identified. The proposed development by Marine Current Turbines (MCT) could potentially contribute towards the Energy Island vision of becoming a 'World renowned centre of excellence for research & development, producing and servicing low carbon energy'. The innovative approach to low carbon energy production is welcomed and the potential socio-economic gains for the Island could be significant.

However, in order for the IACC to fully capitalise on future opportunities a number of issues will need to be addressed in the proposal by MCT. Although the EDU welcome the present detail in the Socio-Economic chapter, the lack of identifiable and quantifiable economic opportunities means that the EDU cannot fully assess whether Anglesey can take advantage of these opportunities or not.

Although it is recognised that the proposed development is still in its infancy (in terms of precise construction details), the Environmental Statement could make greater reference to the socio-economic impacts on areas such as Holyhead. The proposal alludes to the potential of using Holyhead port as the main construction port, but no detail is given to the potential socio-economic impact of this eventuality. Furthermore, the proposal identifies the potential to create up to 50 FTE jobs during construction; it would be useful to understand what provisions are being taken to ensure that local people can secure these jobs (i.e. what type of jobs, training and upskilling opportunities etc).

In terms of Section 106 Agreements and Community Benefits, the Local Authority is eager to contribute in drafting of these conditions. The Economic Development Unit would particularly welcome conditions which address the following issues:

#### **Tourism**

- The inevitable interest in the tidal array could have a profound positive impact on the tourism sector. The EDU therefore request that investment in the shoreline and other tourist opportunities should be conditional to the consenting of this proposal. The potential tourism interest needs to be harnessed and encourage through such means as a visitor's centre, viewing platform/point, interpretations boards etc which will maximise the socio-economic benefits for the Island.

## **Education & Skills**

- Due to the uniqueness of the proposal, there is a tremendous opportunity to teach children/young people in schools the importance of renewable and low carbon energy. Raising children/young people's awareness of such technologies may inspire and initiate widespread cultural change amongst young people. A condition should be included which provides resources for the appointment of an IACC Renewable Energy Officer (or similar) which could assist schools/communities etc in changing children's/young people's attitudes and behaviours towards renewable and low carbon living.
- To ensure that local people take advantage of potential construction/operational job, provisions should be made for training and upskilling of the local labour market. It should be conditional that the proposal actively encourages the use of local skills and labour (where reasonably practical) so that Anglesey maximises socio-economic benefits.
- The use of electronic display boards should be encouraged showing the amount of electricity being produced (and what this equates to). This can be utilised for both educational and tourism purposes but it would visually demonstrate the amount of electricity being produced from an 'unconventional' energy source.

## **Infrastructure**

- Grid Infrastructure – Greater detail should be requested on where and how grid lines are to be connected to the land. The Energy Island team (through the Transmission Infrastructure Group) should be consulted to ensure synergy between this proposal and other potential major energy proposals on the Island.
- Additional transmission capacity should be encouraged so that research and development potential for new technology can be explored around the Anglesey coastline.

## **Conclusion**

The Economic Development Unit support the proposal in principle but are eager to see the socio-economic and education and skills opportunities maximised as far as possible. The proposal significantly contributes towards the vision of the Energy Island Programme and provided that the issues identified by the EDU are addressed, the socio-economic benefits for the Island could be profound.

## Recommendations

- To recommend that greater detail should be provided on the socio-economic impacts on Holyhead if the Port is to be utilised as a construction port.
- To suggest that as part of the planning gain, a visitor's centre together with interpretation boards, electronic display boards, viewing platform/point and shoreline access improvements would be desirable.
- To suggest that allocation of resources should be made available for the provision of education in schools/communities through a dedicated IACC Officer (or similar).
- To suggest that the use of, training and upskilling of the local workforce should be conditional to any approval.
- To request that further detail to be submitted on transmission infrastructure, in particular connection points and onshore transmission.
- To recommend that the developer consult with the Energy Island Transmission Infrastructure Group to ensure synergy with other potential major energy developments.
- To recommend that greater transmission capacity would be desirable so that research and development for new technology can be explored around the Anglesey coastline.