

Subject:	Scout Moor Update	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Council	Date:	17 th July 2013
Report of:	Planning Manager	Portfolio Holder:	Environmental Services
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	Yes/No	Attached: Yes/No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Required:	Yes/No	Attached: Yes/No
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1.	RECOMMENDATION(S)
1.1	That the contents of the report are noted; that negotiations on a Planning Performance Agreement and liaison with developers regarding community consultation are delegated to the Director of Business in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To update Members on progress on the Scout Moor and Rooley Moor Wind Farm proposals.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:

- **Regenerating Rossendale:** This priority focuses on regeneration in its broadest sense, so it means supporting communities that get on well together, attracting sustainable investment, promoting Rossendale, as well as working as an enabler to promote the physical regeneration of Rossendale.
- **Responsive Value for Money Services:** This priority is about the Council working collaboratively, being a provider, procurer and a commissioner of services that are efficient and that meet the needs of local people.
- **Clean Green Rossendale:** This priority focuses on clean streets and town centres and well managed open spaces, whilst recognising that the Council has to work with communities and as a partner to deliver this ambition.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- Negotiation of a Planning Performance Agreement with Peel Energy
- Consideration of two proposals affecting part of the same area by different planning bodies could lead to duplicate workload and strain on staff resources

5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

5.1 Members were informed of progress on the proposed Wind Farms at Rooley Moor and Scout Moor at the Council meeting in March 2013. There have not been any further submissions for either scheme though it is understood that Peel Energy hope to be in a position this summer to discuss their proposals with the Council. This would include negotiation over the contents of a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) which would require the Council to respond to documentation by specified deadlines in return for agreed funding.

5.2 A meeting has been held between officers and Coronation Power, the promoters of Rooley Moor Wind Farm. Coronation Power still intends to promote their scheme independently and

have been undertaking further detailed survey work, particularly on ecological matters, to support the Environmental Statement. It is expected that a draft of this document will be submitted for Officer comment by the end of the summer. Coronation Power is also anticipating that initial community consultation on the scheme will start sometime after the summer holidays. This will include details of the scheme and possible options for a community benefits package. Members will be kept informed of the relevant arrangements for this work. A full planning application is unlikely to be received by the end of the year.

- 5.3 At national level the Government has recently announced a proposal that wind farm developers should increase the minimum amount that developers contribute in community benefits from £1000 per mw to £5000 per mw. This is expected to come into operation in December. Each turbine on Scout Moor/Rooley Moor will be either 2.5 or 3MW in output so this proposal will make a considerable difference in sums received. How the funding is managed is up to individual communities/developers. Both Peel Energy and Coronation Power have previously indicated their intention to pay community benefits of £2 000 per MW so this proposal will be of benefit locally. While Community Benefit payments cannot be formally considered as part of the planning process, Core Strategy Policy 20 on wind turbines does include reference to community benefits where the value of these would outweigh any residual harm caused by the scheme.
- 5.4 Another element of the Government's recent announcement on Wind Energy is that CLG will shortly publish new guidance on addressing issues such as need, cumulative impact and the effects on local topography. It is understood that this will be published before the summer recess of Parliament. Contrary to recent media reports it is understood from Government officials that the intention is not to give a "community right of veto" but to clarify the guidance on this topic within the National Planning Policy Framework. While the new guidance will definitely be relevant to the Scout Moor and Rooley Moor proposals it is unlikely that it will have a significant impact on the decision making process though it will make the process even more rigorous.
- 5.5 The final elements from the recent government announcement that members would want to note are that it is proposed that community consultation will be required for all larger applications (no minimum size threshold has yet been published) and that a DECC "Call for Evidence" is ongoing until 1st August looking at how community energy schemes can be promoted.
- 5.6 The South Pennine Authorities Memorandum of Understanding on Renewable Energy has now been signed by Rochdale MBC and Lancashire County Council as well as the neighbouring authorities of Calderdale, Burnley and Hyndburn with Bury actively considering it. This is intended to make cross-border working on planning applications and policy issues more effective.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

6. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 6.1 Members are reminded of item H1 and paragraph 16 of the minutes re Council 20th July 2011.

7. MONITORING OFFICER

- 7.1 Comments included within the body of the report.

8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 8.1 Planning Officers have consulted colleagues in Lancashire County Council and Rochdale MBC on this topic.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 There has been very little outward progress on developing these two proposals towards submission stage. Officers will continue liaising with all parties to make progress on this matter including on the matter of increased Community Benefits and will study the implications of the new Planning Guidance when it is received. Finalisation of a PPA would bring additional financial resources to ensure that all relevant technical issues on the Scout Moor scheme are fully assessed. The Scout Moor Member Steering Group will be reconvened at the time of the Community Consultation on Rooley Moor to feedback on the proposals.

Background Papers

Document	Place of Inspection
<p>https://www.gov.uk/government/news/onshore-wind-communities-to-have-a-greater-say-and-increased-benefits</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/local-planning-and-onshore-wind</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/community-energy-call-for-evidence</p>	CLG/DECC website