

Consultation on Morcambe Offshore Windfarm (Mona)

Closing Date: 30th April 2023

Douglas City Council Response

Positives:-

- The offshore wind sector is a key part of our energy infrastructure and, in many instances, has created jobs for coastal communities across the UK. Whether this will lead to increased employment in the Isle of Man remains to be seen;
- The fuel is free as the turbines run on the power of the wind generated. This reduces the overall cost in comparison to other forms of renewable energy, which may require some energy investment;
- Offshore wind speeds tend to be faster than on land and more reliable, so more energy can be generated;
- Offshore, rather than onshore, means less visible detriment (unless of course you can see them from shore);
- Clarity required if there will be a reduction in electricity costs which would be beneficial to the Council, and to many of our suppliers thereby reducing their need for price increases;
- Once the pipeline is connected to the grid the interconnector will supply green energy and improve the carbon footprint.

Negatives:-

- There is a recognition that windfarm projects can significantly impact navigation safety, ship traffic routes, and possibly the ability to respond to at-sea emergencies;
- Any lengthening of the Steam Packet's voyage from England to Douglas is bound to result in a fare increase for hauliers which would be passed on to the Council by suppliers effected. The exact lengthening of the voyage time needs to be further clarified. If there are sufficiently wide paths through the proposed windfarm then maybe there won't be any increase in Steam Packet fares required. The impact to the Steam Packet and island residents (and visitors), if this can be worked around, then it should be encourage;

- There can be sea-bed changes as windfarms can, over time, affect the depth of water, and can obstruct tidal streams (whether this affects marine life or not? and that offshore windfarms (the noise from the turbines) can impact fauna and other marine life; and
- There may be interfere with communications.

Whilst the Council acknowledges the pressing need for new and sustainable sources of energy, it is crucial that the objective is carefully balanced with the preservation of vital shipping lanes that are of utmost importance to the Isle of Man. Constructing wind farms in close proximity to established shipping lanes will lead to significant disruption to the Council and all residents and may adversely affect the economic stability of the Island. There does not appear to be any benefits at this stage for Douglas City Council, our residents or the Island.

The Council can therefore not support the developments unless the current shipping routes can be maintained regardless of weather conditions.

The Consultation refers to Douglas City Council as the Local Planning Authority which we would like to point out is an error, as the Isle of Man Government is the Local Planning Authority.