

ARGYLL ARRAY: UPDATE

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides a brief update on the Argyll Array project and will be accompanied by a presentation from Scottish Power Renewables.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That members note the update provided by way of this report and the Scottish Power Renewables presentation.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 In February 2009 The Crown Estate granted exclusivity rights to Scottish Power Renewables (SPR) to take forward the development of an offshore wind farm off Tiree (the Argyll Array, 300 turbines 1.8GW). SPR progressed to an Agreement for Lease in 2011 to allow progress on consenting the site.
- 3.2 Between 2009 and December 2013, SPR carried out various technical and environmental site studies, including the Tiree Onshore Scenario Mapping project. These studies have been thoroughly reviewed in order to evaluate the viability of the project and on the basis of these findings, a decision not to progress the project, has been taken by both SPR and The Crown Estate. This announcement was made in December 2013. The Agreement for Lease has been annulled and the site is now out of the Scottish Territorial Waters offshore wind programme.
- 3.3 The main issues affecting the progression of the project are the ground conditions in the site, particularly the presence of hard rock, coupled with challenging wave conditions which could impact construction. Beyond this, there is a significant presence of basking sharks, which environmental groups continue to study to get a greater understanding of their movements in the area.
- 3.4 The company's press release stated that the project may be viable to reconsider as offshore wind technology develops in the longer term, but estimates that this will not be within the next decade.
- 3.5 The Crown Estate manages the seabed around the UK, including leasing for offshore renewable energy projects. They have confirmed

that they will not be re-offering the Argyll Array site but that a site off Tiree, in accordance with areas of search, may be considered in future leasing rounds. The Crown Estate has no plans for a future leasing round at this point in time.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Argyll Array project will not be proceeding in the near future however the area remains identified as a good wind resource which may be developable within the next 10-15 years.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy – The development of an offshore windfarm off Tiree is in accordance with Marine Scotland’s Draft Sectorial Plan (although the location differs). The following Council documents also support renewable energy developments - the Single Outcome Agreement, Economic Development Action Plan and Renewable Energy Action Plan.
- 5.2 Financial – The project could have generated significant economic benefits for Tiree and the wider Argyll area both during construction and in the operation and maintenance stage if it had proceeded.
- 5.3 Legal – None.
- 5.4 HR – None.
- 5.5 Equalities – None.
- 5.6 Risk – The decision not to proceed at this time will a missed opportunity to capitalise on the employment and economic prospects which could have been associated with the development.
- 5.7 Customer Service – None.

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