

Ref: SL/AI

Date: 27 August 2010

I refer to the agenda for the meeting of the Safe, Sustainable Communities Committee to be held on Tuesday 31 August 2010 at 3 pm and attach report as undernoted which was not available on the day of issue.

ELAINE PATERSON Head of Legal and Democratic Services

22. Multi Fuel Power Station - Hunterston, North Ayrshire Report by Corporate Director Regeneration & Environment

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AGENDA ITEM NO. 22

Report To: Safe, Sustainable Communities Committee **Date**: 31 August 2010

Report By: Corporate Director, Report No: SSC/10/08/01/

SJ/FJM

Contact Officer: Fergus J Macleod Contact No: 01475 712404

Subject: Multi-Fuel Power Station, Hunterston, North Ayrshire

Regeneration and Environment

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 To inform Committee of the proposal to build a multi-fuel power station at Hunterston, a proposal which would have strategic implications for neighbouring authorities, and of the request from North Ayrshire Council for Invercive Council's comments on the proposal.

2.0 BACKGROUND to PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The Scottish Government, working with the UK Government, has identified Hunterston as a potential location for a carbon capture and storage project and considers that, as a general principle, new generating plants should be sited adjacent to existing thermal power stations to make use of supporting infrastructure.
- 2.2 The proposed power station would be located within the designated area allocated for industrial purposes at Hunterston and in that respect the proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan of North Ayrshire. This planning policy position fulfils the existing National Planning Framework, which recognises that Hunterston's deep water assets should be realised. Notwithstanding, development proposals are subject to an integrated transport study and require to be subject to an environmental impact assessment.
- 2.3 The proposal is 'national' in scale and the decision on the application will be made by Scottish Ministers under Section 36 of the Electricity Act. North Ayrshire Council's role is to deal with the details of the application in relation to policies in their Development Plan and make representations to the Scottish Ministers.
- 2.4 The power station, while multi-fuelled, would use predominantly coal and potentially up to 15% biomass. On coal alone, it is claimed current technology would reduce carbon emissions by up to 25% compared to conventional power stations, although the proposal is based on the development of carbon capture technology to further minimise environmental impact. According to the applicants, this technology will be installed once 'technically and commercially viable'.
- 2.5 North Ayrshire *Planning Service* has informed us of the timetable for consideration of this major development proposal and has requested a response be submitted later this year. This allows time for the fullest consideration of the potential impacts of this proposal by relevant officers of the Council. These potential impacts would include:
 - (i) traffic, particularly increased usage on the A78 trunk road north into Inverclyde:
 - (ii) environmental, particularly a development of this type and scale;
 - (iii) short and long term employment benefits/disbenefits and possibly
 - (iv) visual, along the coast and from viewpoints within the Regional Park.

2.6 It is also worth noting that Hunterston is jointly recognised along with Inverclyde (waterfront) in the 'National Renewables Infrastructure Plan 2010', as having the potential to provide land for the integrated manufacture and support of off-shore wind energy development. This position has recently been promoted through the 'Inverclyde Renewable Energy Hub 2010' document prepared by the Council in partnership with Clydeport and Riverside Inverclyde.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 That Committee note the current position with respect to the major development proposal for a multi-fuel power station at Hunterston, and given the timetable for its consideration, first by North Ayrshire Council, agree that it would be beneficial for relevant officers to consider the potential implications of this proposal for Inverclyde and report back to the next meeting of this Committee.

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