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Dear Andrew

**ABERDEEN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW:
CONSULTATION PRIOR TO MAIN ISSUES REPORT**

Thank you for your letter of 11 April 2013 in which you seek AREG's views on the issues which should feature in the Main Issues report. You point out that as the Strategic Development Plan does not require the allocation of additional Greenfield land to housing or employment, then the focus of the local development Plan is likely to be on other issues.

We are certain that colleagues in the council will wish to ensure that the Local Development Plan (LDP) should support and reinforce Aberdeen's role as a global Energy City.

Within that objective, AREG would wish to see appropriate focus on the growth of renewable energy deployment in the city. AREG has the long-stated ambition for Aberdeen to be as well-known for renewable energy as it is for oil and gas.

We therefore propose that the growth of renewable energy projects be identified as one of the energy issues to determine our future planning decisions.

The role of demonstration sites in city infrastructure

One of the particular ways in which AREG works is to encourage Aberdeen to be a demonstration site for cutting-edge projects which illustrate our leading role on energy issues. This approach brings multiple benefits:

- (a) the city's infrastructure benefits from significant investment, often from EU or national public funds;
- (b) there are environmental benefits – carbon emissions are reduced, air quality is improved;

- (c) there are economic benefits – these projects bring jobs and opportunities for supply chain growth locally. They can also offer strategic support to national economic growth;
- (d) there are enhancements to the reputation and profile of the city – in terms of sustainability – and this can generate spin-off benefits in terms of quality of life and tourism.

We would therefore expect a number of such projects to arise within the period of the Local Development Plan.

European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre (EOWDC)

A prime example of the above approach has been the creation of the EOWDC to the north of the city. This project – under development since 2003 – was granted Consent by the Scottish Government in March 2013. The consortium – of Vattenfall and AREG - plans that the project will be operational by the end of 2015. This will not only supply over half of the domestic electricity of the city, but will also demonstrate a number of the latest offshore turbines in the 5-7 MW range, as well as a number of innovative offshore foundation designs.

While an offshore project, it is expected that there will be spin-off planning requirements onshore within the city area. These could cover businesses opportunities created by the presence of the wind farm, training facilities, educational and visitor attractions.

We would hope for a supportive approach within the plan in these areas.

Aberdeen Hydrogen Project

AREG is supporting the council in its plans to create a Hydrogen Economy in Aberdeen – placing the city once again at the forefront of world energy issues.

The first phase of this development will see the arrival of Europe's largest fleet of hydrogen buses (10) and the construction of associated refueling and maintenance facilities. This should be operational by mid-2014.

The introduction of hydrogen to the city's energy mix allows consideration of a wide number of uses of this new fuel:

- (a) injection into the gas grid, so greening a proportion of all heating in the city;
- (b) further vehicle fleets;

(c) building heating;

(d) CHP plants running on hydrogen.

These activities will therefore give rise to a number of construction projects. Again we would hope for a supportive approach to these issues in the LDP.

Other sources of renewable hydrogen – Nigg Bay

Some preliminary work has been carried out to identify other sources of renewable power in the city that could be developed to produce green electricity and so green hydrogen. These include wind power, solar power and gas produced from waste. A specific opportunity has been identified at Nigg Bay landfill site, which could prove suitable for all three sources of energy.

The planning designation of this site would however have to be reconsidered to allow this to happen.

Specific arguments in favour of installing renewable facilities at Nigg Bay would include:

- (a) this would become a high-profile “portal” development for those arriving into the city from the south;
- (b) the renewable equipment is time-limited, and could be removed (or replaced) at the end its useful life.

Other possible portal renewable sites

The city may also bring forward other proposals for wind turbine installations within the city boundary.

Consideration could be given to possible further “portal” developments to the north of the city (Bridge of Don) and to the west (Tyrebagger).

A key issue in these developments will be their acceptability to Aberdeen airport.

District heating

The future of the city district heating scheme will be developed further by Aberdeen Heat and Power during the period of the plan. AREG is in discussion with AHP to ensure that consideration is given to the part that renewables may play in this. These expansions will make further demands on the planning system within the period of the LDP.

Planning decisions

We would further request that for all planning decisions taken by the City Council, there should be a presumption in favour of the deployment of renewable energy sources in those projects. We would request that innovative approaches be taken to ensure that this happens, rather than reliance upon the use of encouraging guidance documentation.

In particular - for the Council's own building proposals - there should be a requirement that renewable energy is used to meet the energy needs of all developments.

Yours sincerely,

Iain Todd
Renewables Champion, AREG