

Environment and Sustainability Committee

E&S(4)-13-12 paper 1

Inquiry into energy policy and planning in Wales – Evidence from Horizon Nuclear Power

General / Role for Nuclear

- The need for secure supplies of reliable and sustainable low-carbon energy remains pressing. New nuclear can play a vital role in delivering a clean and secure energy future for the UK. Nuclear power is the only proven technology capable of delivering large capacities of low carbon energy with very high levels of availability. It has full lifecycle CO₂ emissions comparable to wind power (source: Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology).
- Nuclear power is the lowest cost, large scale method of generating very low carbon electricity [based on the cost per unit of power generated over the lifetime of the plant (the levelised cost). A number of recent studies support this analysis including a study commissioned in 2010 by the Department for Energy and Climate Change and carried out by Mott MacDonald. Nuclear power is one of the most stably priced generating methods – giving price certainty to customers.
- The UK (and Wales) needs a balanced energy mix in order to deliver secure, affordable and sustainable energy, this means nuclear working in partnership with all other low-carbon options.

Project / Impact on local economy

- Our project could provide a peak at least 5,000 jobs during construction with 800 permanent operational jobs, rising to around 1,800 during periods of maintenance.
- Our projects at Wylfa and Oldbury could represent a combined investment of around £15bn.
- We believe that our project can be extremely beneficial for the local economy, with significant opportunities for the local supply chain and workforce. We are working closely with local bodies – such as the Energy Island Programme, Coleg Menai and the North Wales Apprentice Agency – to help ensure that Welsh workers, and Welsh firms are well positioned to take advantage of the opportunities that arise.

- We look forward to providing more information about our supply chain engagement activities, once we have embedded our chosen delivery team following our vendor-selection announcement.

Waste

- We are fully committed to the safe and responsible management of our waste. The UK government has been clear that they will develop a repository (Geological Disposal Facility, or GDF) for the disposal of intermediate level waste (ILW) and spent fuel, and that new build developers will pay their full share of the costs of disposing of new-build waste in the GDF. We would welcome further progress on the development of this repository.
- There are a number of options for the interim storage of nuclear waste. We are currently assessing these options and will continue to update the community around our site. What is clear, is that all waste products will always be managed safely, and this is overseen by the tightest of regulatory regimes.

Planning / Permissions

- The planning system for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) is relatively new and in Wales is more complex due to the need to seek other planning permissions for infrastructure related to the project but not part of the NSIP. We would welcome ongoing discussions with relevant parties including the WG and local authorities on practical approaches to these issues, in order to ensure we can continue to reduce uncertainty and potential for delays on major infrastructure projects.

Single Environment Body for Wales

- We have noted with interest the recent consultations on the creation of a single Environment Body for Wales, and look forward to responding in due course. Without wishing to pre-empt our submission, we believe that there could be significant merit in the proposals, but would seek reassurance that transitional arrangements will be put in place, including appropriate levels of relevant resource, to ensure that major infrastructure projects are not delayed whilst changes are implemented.