

## **Eskdalemuir Working Group – 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023 Meeting Minutes**

### **Welcome/Review Actions**

A Scottish Government official opened the meeting and provided an update on the noted actions from the previous minutes, confirming that these had all been completed.

A representative from each of the following organisations/groups were in attendance:

- Scottish Government
- Ministry of Defence
- Heads of Planning Scotland
- Onshore Wind Strategic Leadership Group (SLG)
- Scottish Renewables
- RenewableUK

UK Government were unable to attend.

### **Strategic Leadership Group/Sector Deal Update**

The representative from the Onshore Wind SLG provided an update on the progress of the Onshore Wind Sector Deal, in particular highlighting the technical section which will include reference to Eskdalemuir. The key principle likely to be set out in sector deal relates to continued collaboration between governments and the sector to reach agreement on approaches for managing seismic budget and future policy.

It was noted that several sections of the draft were still being debated and that a final version of the draft should be ready around the end of July. The representative from Scottish Renewables confirmed that BVGA have received draft inputs from each of the sector deal theme leads and that the focus at this stage is on consistency of style and format to make a cohesive single document.

Scottish Renewables rep agreed to provide MOD with a cleansed version of the document following this. The Onshore Wind SLG rep also noted that a copy was likely to be shared with the Aviation Management Board also, which MOD participate in.

The Scottish Government rep noted that timescales on commitments in the document were still under discussion, particularly around the work to be delivered through EWG.

### **Draft Explainer and Management Approach**

In advance of the meeting, group members had received a copy of two documents drafted by Marcus Trinick KC, following the working group meeting in April 2023. Marcus provided a brief summary of the ask in relation to these documents and set out a number of questions that were outstanding, including:

- Have EWG agreed on what the correct Seismic Impact Limit (SIL) might be?
- Would there be value in an open access platform for industry and decision makers?
- Have the group considered specific process measures for repowering and/or variation applications (both section 42 and section 36C)
- Will there be an extension to the exclusion zone? Are there implications if this is or is not applied retrospectively?

The group discussed the question around an appropriate SIL. The Scottish Government representative confirmed that the work done on this to date (i.e. Phase 5) had not been site specific so as not to prejudice live applications. It is clear from Phase 5 however that the highest limit considered (2.5 GW) would result in a considerable amount of potential capacity but would necessarily limit the distance which sites would be considered acceptable to achieve this.

The group considered as part of the discussion whether the work done to date is sufficient to decide what SIL would be most appropriate, from a strategic perspective, and that would be deliverable. This discussion also touched on the current pipeline of projects with group members acknowledging that maximising to the highest limit considered would result in some of that pipeline being unachievable.

The Scottish Renewables representative agreed to consider if additional work is needed to understand the implications on actual build out potential.

### **Potential Management System**

An additional RUK representative joined the meeting and provided a presentation on their 'Energy Pulse' system, which could serve as a starting point for an open access system in this space.

The presentation explained that the data gathered in Energy Pules is usually based on planning alerts - including automatic alerts and manual searches. To incorporate turbine specific data, RUK would need approximately 6 months to collate and incorporate this. It was highlighted that there are similar conversations taking place in relation to aviation i.e. military radar. It was noted that ongoing resource implications have not yet been costed.

Energy Pulse does not currently have a feature for constraints mapping but the RUK representative was confident that the system could accommodate an upgrade of this nature. The SR representative noted that there is analysis work to be done for the sector deal which will specifically look at the current pipeline to identify 1) any legacy projects that are unlikely to come forward, 2) identify which projects continue to have potential and 3) what barriers are impacting those projects. There may be additional elements to this analysis but that was not captured as part of the working group discussion.

The HOPS representative added that, at least for the planning authority area they work in, they have been collating information on specific turbine locations within their authority area which could be shared with this group. It was agreed that exploring this route could have benefits and it would be helpful to understand if other planning

authorities that fall into the 50km zone have collated a similar level of detail in their data.

The discussion covered the potential for registration of seismic impacts for different turbine makes/models, noting that this could aid in accurate estimation of budget consumption for projects yet to be built. The group touched on supply chain, with the group in agreement that this data being provided by OEMs would be advantageous moving forward. It was noted that OEMs already do this for acoustic noise.

The group agreed that achieving this would require a process/system for registration and accreditation to provide MoD with sufficient assurances of accuracy, and that this would likely also be required for any mitigation options.

### **Agreed Actions**

The group discussed what work was priority and could be moved forward, agreeing the following as being required:

- MoD to consider Phases 4 and 5 and provide a response as soon as practicably possible
- Scottish Renewables to consider if further work is required to provide a view on which SIL would be preferable for industry
- Explore the potential to use Energy Pulse as a starting point for a system – identify the limitations and any upgrades that would be required. SG representative to arrange a meeting with RUK initially.
- Develop a flowchart for how a project should progress through the planning system, for both Section 36 and Town & Country Planning applications. SG Rep to lead on this.