

INTRODUCTION

On 15th July 2009 the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) published a wide array of consultation and strategy documents on decarbonising Britain.

Cool Planet Technologies have already produced notes on Renewable Energy in relation to Micro-generation and the proposals for the **feed in tariff (FIT)** concept.

This document is also produced by Cool Planet Technologies and comments on the government proposals to create an effective planning structure for delivery of **larger scale** (non domestic) RE with improved grid connections and the stronger promotion of the use of bioenergy. These comments are confined to the relationship with mainland based development i.e. excludes offshore wind; tidal and wave sources.

The planning related aspects of these proposals by government are valid for England due to devolution issues. The purpose is to ensure that planning decisions are based upon sound established country wide technological evidence directly related to a predetermined local energy strategy by upholding a shared contribution to UK renewable commitments. The underlying intent is to remove artificial and barriers to planning approval that are delaying the delivery of RE.

Cool Planet Technologies are able to advise analyse and design with regard to the application of the qualifying technologies, the commercial issues and the approach to planning issues.

PLANNING REFORM

The Government has listened to the requests to reduce planning barriers for the non-domestic sector, and for larger installations. The RES document states the Government's intention to consult on these issues soon, and to have the new regulations in place by April 2010. It has also set up a new centre for coordinating delivery – Office for Renewable Energy Delivery (ORED).

Planning at regional and local levels is to be required to strategically relate energy (including RE) with economic and spatial issues. An underlying objective is for each authority to be able to own its part in achieving UK target commitments and to have a coherent and deliverable outline to enable swift consistent decisions that are transparently in line.

Power generation projects above 50MWe are set to be removed to an independent planning commission.

Below this level planning authorities will be required to make decisions with regard to "National Policy Statements" (NPSs). These will effectively remove the need for planning authorities to investigate such established matters as for example "features of technology".

Planning Policy Statements

PPS1 and PPS 2 will be upgraded and will become compulsory references for preparing local strategies and taking planning decisions. Strategies will be obliged to include provision of renewable energy at levels at least in line with national targets.

GRID REINFORCEMENT

Government has made clear in the **UK Low Carbon Transition Plan** that reforms of the grid access regime are vital in order to speed up the connection of new generation, ensure security of energy supply and meet carbon reduction targets. Government will be using the energy act 2008 powers to implement new grid access rules and has already taken steps to ensure that ready to go projects can connect on an accelerated timescale.

The Government has also expressed an intention to commence the decarbonisation of the gas network through biomethane injection in the medium term.

INDUSTRIAL AND SKILLS POLICY

It is clear from the published **UK Low Carbon Industrial Strategy** that Industrial policy is focused on developing British capabilities in offshore wind, wave and tidal power, ultra-low carbon vehicles, renewable construction materials and renewable chemicals. The UK distributed energy and renewable heat sectors are identified as rapid growth areas. Wind and Biomass are recognised as the major area of early application for renewable energy generation.

The strategy recognises that thousands of jobs will be dependent on the programme of transforming our energy infrastructure and meeting 2020 renewable energy and carbon emission commitments. Thousands more jobs will also need to be adapted to accommodate the move to decarbonise our industries and transport system. Unfortunately the current Skills Council structure means responsibility for moving to a low carbon economy is split between a variety of organisations. The Government therefore proposes to publish a National Skills Strategy by the end of the year with the intent that this will support Britain in an upturn in the economy by focusing on low carbon skills. Implementation of the strategy will be aided by the inception in 2010 of the Skills Funding Agency. ORED is to have a coordinating and organising role.

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE BIOENERGY

Non food energy crops, wood and anaerobic digestion (AD) are encouraged with useful employment of heat through the renewable heat incentive (RHI). In the case of AD the support for the production of Biogas is to be further encouraged to facilitate more effective CHP and in particular the introduction of Biomethane into the gas grid. There is recognition of the need to resolve the conflicts with food production, air quality and the import of biomass fuel.

NOTE

Cool Planet Technologies Ltd have prepared this note as a commentary on the matters referred to. The information offered is in brief form, is non exhaustive and may be incomplete in many aspects. No reliance should be placed upon any of the information or its application without formal appointment of and verification by Cool Planet Technologies Ltd.