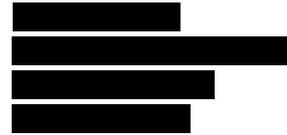




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20 August 2014

Planning Reform & Transfer to Local Government Consultation – Phase 1 Planning Policy Division  
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Dear PPD,

**Subject: Planning Reform and Transfer to Local Government: Proposals for Subordinate Legislation**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation on Proposals for Subordinate Legislation for Planning Reform and Transfer to Local Government under the Planning Act (NI) 2011.

First Flight Wind Limited, a consortium comprising B9 Energy Offshore Developments Ltd, Renewable Energy Systems Ltd (RES) and DONG Energy Power UK (Ltd), was awarded an Exclusivity Agreement to develop an offshore wind farm site off the south east coast of Northern Ireland by The Crown Estate in 2012.

We welcome the proposal for subordinate legislation as a way of supporting achievement of the Northern Ireland Executives' renewable energy targets as set out in the Strategic Energy Framework 2010. Our comments relate to Annex C (Schedule – Major Development Thresholds) of the consultation document.

We are concerned that an anomalous situation arises relating to onshore works associated to development that, other than for the fact it is offshore rather than onshore, would be deemed as a Major Development prescribed for the purpose of Section 26(1) of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 i.e. Regionally Significant Development. The development of the proposed offshore wind farm would be regionally significant entailing over £1 billion worth of investment with the target capacity of the project being capable of generating the equivalent of over 10% of the annual electricity requirements for Northern Ireland. In itself, the scale of the project will be significant to the whole of Northern Ireland. It will comprise both onshore and offshore elements and will therefore require applications under the Planning Act, the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992, all of which will be considered together under a memorandum of understanding between DoE and DETI for streamlining regionally significant applications. It will be

necessary to ensure that all elements of the development are considered together and that the thresholds in Annex C cater for such situations.

To ensure that all elements are considered together, we propose that Annex C (Schedule – Major Development Thresholds) is amended as follows:

1. Under 2, Energy Infrastructure, Generating Stations, a new additional threshold is included for Regionally Significant Developments as follows: *“All onshore associated development of the construction or extension of a generating station (when constructed or extended) where its capacity is or more than 30 megawatts(\*) and for which both an application to the Department of the Environment for a marine licence under Part 4 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and an application to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for a consent under Article 39 of the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 are necessary.”*

(\*) Please note that the threshold cited of “30MW” is intended to reflect whatever figure is finally established for onshore generating stations.

2. Under 2, Energy Infrastructure, Power Lines, the threshold is amended to read *“The installation of a power line above ground or a cable below ground is or more than 110 kilovolts and a length of more than 15 kilometres.”*

This amendment is intended to reflect the possibility that development of more than 15km of underground electricity cabling of greater than 110kV is of equal significance regionally as the same electrical infrastructure installed above ground.

I am happy to clarify the above amendments further if this would be of any assistance.

Regards

Yours sincerely,



Managing Director, B9 Energy Offshore Developments Ltd  
Director, First Flight Wind Ltd

