

REPORT TO: East Lothian Council

MEETING DATE: 25 August 2015

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Partnership and Services for Communities)

SUBJECT: Former Cockenzie Power Station Site

1 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is:

- a) to note formally both the withdrawal of Scottish Enterprise proposals and the confirmation of Scottish Power's stated intention to relinquish the existing S36 Planning consent for Thermal Power Generation on the site; and
- b) in the context of these significant changes re-affirm the mandate and direction given to officers to secure the future of the site.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Council:

- a) note the updated position in relation to the site;
- b) continue engagement with all parties and work in partnership, where applicable, to ensure that all potential opportunities and benefits are explored and maximised whilst all risks and drawbacks are identified and mitigated;
- c) commission independently, or jointly with others, a masterplan for the site;
- d) re-affirm its agreement that officers should explore all options, including joint venture and public ownership, to secure the future of the proposed site should this be required to optimise its potential;
- e) authorise the formation of a project team, utilising both internal and external resources, to inform and develop proposals;

- f) continue the cross party member and officer group to oversee option and engagement work undertaken.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Council is aware that Scottish Enterprise, the national economic development agency, announced their intention not to proceed with their energy park proposals on 30 March 2015.
- 3.2 On 18 August 2015, Scottish Power Generation announced that they would not be proceeding with their existing S36 planning consent for thermal power generation as granted by Scottish Ministers in October 2011.
- 3.3 Considerable uncertainty exists with respect to the on and off-shore energy markets in the short, medium and longer term.
- 3.4 The site is currently in an advanced stage of de-commissioning.
- 3.5 At its meeting of 18 August 2015, the cross party Member and Officer Working Group noted continuing engagement with stakeholders including Scottish Government officials. Importantly, the meeting noted the establishment of a Community Forum that had been formed in collaboration with local Community Councils and the Coastal Regeneration Alliance. This Forum will listen to, involve and take views from the community in respect of possible interventions that the Council, and indeed the local community, may seek to initiate in the context of continued uncertainty surrounding ownership.
- 3.6 The cross party Member and Officer group agreed that intervention options to masterplan and take the site into public ownership should continue to be explored and considered as fully as possible.
- 3.7 The Coastal Regeneration Alliance have initiated a “Community Right to Buy” submission to Scottish Ministers for 2 areas within the overall site which is / are, currently being considered.
- 3.8 Scottish Power Generation remain the main owners of the site.
- 3.9 The Scottish Government’s Third National Planning Framework – Ambition, Opportunity, Place, (NPF3), identifies Cockenzie as a national development for thermal energy generation as well as a location of significance in respect of renewable energy. Despite announcements by Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Power Generation, NPF3 remains relevant and applicable to the site and must be reflected in the Council’s Local Development Plan (LDP) proposals currently being worked up.

PROPOSALS

- 3.10 That Council officers consider all options, including joint venture and public ownership, as a means of securing the future of the site.
- 3.11 That officers continue engagement with all parties and work in partnership, where applicable, to ensure all potential opportunities and benefits are explored and maximised whilst all risks and drawbacks are identified and mitigated in any proposals developed;
- 3.12 A further report on the nature of any such proposals would be presented to Council for consideration.
- 3.13 That a specific project team be formed to take forward proposal development that would involve internal staffing resource and engagement of external expertise.
- 3.14 That officers continue engagement with Scottish Government to seek support around interventions both in terms of financial contribution and technical advice.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The East Lothian Plan – Single Outcome Agreement 2013, Outcome 1; East Lothian has a growing sustainable economy. East Lothian Economic Development Strategy 2012 – 2022.

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – It is proposed to fund the project team identified in Section 3.13, from general reserves, up to a maximum value of £150k. Any additional support or contribution that may be secured from other stakeholders can be used to complement any project team established.
- 6.2 Personnel – potential temporary deployment of existing staff to support the project team as set out in 3.13.
- 6.3 Other – ongoing engagement from Council officers at a senior level with current landowner, Scottish Government, the local community and other stakeholders.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Council report 26 August 2014; Cockenzie Energy Park / Former Power Station.
- 7.2 East Lothian Partnership, the East Lothian Plan, Single Outcome Agreement 2013 – 23; East Lothian Economic Development Strategy 2012 – 2022; Scottish Government Third National Planning Framework (NPF3).

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