



Providers of environmental impact & flood risk assessment services

Telephone 01631 720699
www.transtechlimited.com (or click on this ad)

Jump to:

[FLOOD RISK, WATER SUPPLY, SURFACE & FOUL WATER DRAINAGE](#)

[POWER PLANTS & CLEAN ENERGY](#)

[PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT CONTROL](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Cutting waste to landfill will mean incinerators and slop buckets

30 Jul 2010

Households that agree to have incinerators built in their backyard could be given discounts on their fuel bills under plans to tackle 'Nimbyism' and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.

Separate food waste collections are likely to be introduced and more incinerators and anaerobic digesters will be needed to process biodegradable waste. Photo: GETTY

The Government's plans for zero waste means that 'useful' rubbish, like food, will no longer be dumped in landfill.

It could mean separate collections for food scraps with hundreds of incinerators or anaerobic digesters being built to process the biodegradable waste.

But the controversial 'energy from waste plants' struggle to get planning permission as local people fear the factories will look ugly and pump out dangerous pollutants.

Under plans in a new waste review, the Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) recommends community ownership of the plants. This could mean that local households get a discount on their fuel bills for allowing a plant to be built in their area.

The idea of paying communities to welcome controversial projects like wind farms and incinerators is already common on the Continent.

However environmentalists said cash rewards will not persuade communities to allow damaging factories in their backyards.

The UK has to reduce landfill by 75 per cent on 1995 levels by 2013 or face billions of pounds worth of fines from Europe.

The waste review suggests a ban on dumping biodegradable waste like food in landfill. This will mean slop buckets in most people's homes as food waste will have to be collected separately. Already one in four councils collect food waste separately and more are expected to follow.

It also means the Government will have to build 500 new energy from waste plants to deal with the biodegradable waste.

Alan Whitehead, the Labour MP and chairman of the Associate Parliamentary Sustainable Resource Group, said communities will have to accept more waste plants if the UK is to meet targets on cutting landfill.

"Something is going to have to change in terms of how we manage our waste," he said. "You can do that by telling people they are going to have a great big waste plant next door or you can do it by discussing it with the local people and encouraging community ownership."

But Julian Kirby, Friends of the Earth's resource use campaigner, said communities would not accept incinerators.

"Suggesting people will accept incinerators if they come in pretty buildings with a cash reward belittles the valid arguments that communities have against them," he said.

"Incinerators trap councils in decades-long costly contracts and belch out climate changing gases."

In a move to away from more draconian rules on waste, the review also suggest cutting the number of wheelie bins outside people's homes and bringing back weekly bin collections.

It talks about a new deal to get supermarkets to cut packaging on toys and household appliances, as well as groceries.

Recycling will be encouraged by offering awards rather than fining people.

Businesses will be asked to take more responsibility for recycling and use more recycled materials in construction and manufacturing.

Caroline Spelman, the Environment Secretary, said the UK should not be sending any waste to landfill that can be used to generate energy.

"We are committed to working towards a zero waste economy because it makes environmental and economic sense.

"Reducing waste needs to be made as easy as possible for people, it should be driven by incentives not penalties and common sense rather than coercion," she said.

"We want everyone to have their say on what waste policies should look like and how existing policies affect them."

Source: Telegraph

Marine cable harm feared

23 Jul 2010

Fishing groups are calling for a suspension of offshore energy development pending an investigation into the technology's effect on salmon stocks.

In a submission to the UK government, the Atlantic Salmon Trust, the Association of Salmon Fishery Boards and the Salmon and Trout Association claim electro-magnetic emissions from cables connected to wind turbines and wave generators could interfere with fishes' navigational instincts.

"It could have a catastrophic effect on salmon returning to rivers," said Atlantic Salmon Trust chief executive Tony Andrews. He urged the Scottish Government to withhold backing for five new projects until an investigation by Marine Scotland Science is completed.

Source: Planning Environment

Group raises carbon doubt

9 Jul 2010

The Planning and Climate Change Coalition has written to three government departments over fears that the planning system may not meet climate objectives.

The group, led by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) and Friends of the Earth, has contacted teams at the DCLG, DECC and DEFRA.

The letter states: "We are acutely aware of the uncertain future of many of the critical studies carried out on energy capacity and adaptation by the English regions."

It goes on: "We acknowledge the government's policy drive to streamline planning and make it sensitive to community needs and aspirations. However, the climate challenge does require a cross-boundary response if communities are to act most effectively."

TCPA chief executive Kate Henderson said: "We urge that the parts of the draft Planning for a Low Carbon Future planning policy statement relating to local action be published now to ensure transformational change is enabled quickly."

Source: Planning Environment

Bournemouth Borough Council approve plan to protect coastline

2 Jul 2010

Bournemouth Borough Council has approved a plan to protect the area's coastline for the next 100 years.

The shoreline management plan sets out coastal protection policies for the area between Hurst Spit and Durlston Head, including Christchurch and Poole Harbours. The plan breaks the coastline into different policy units and recommends a policy for each area.

It was produced by Bournemouth working with neighbouring authorities New Forest and Purbeck District Councils and Christchurch and Poole Borough Councils. Cabinet member for environment and transport Robert Lawton said: "We are proposing to do all we can to protect our coastline for future generations and leave a lasting legacy."

Source: Planning Environment

FLOOD RISK, WATER SUPPLY, SURFACE & FOUL WATER DRAINAGE

Environment Agency says flood defence onus to be laid on local bodies

2 Jul 2010

Future investment in flood defences will rely more on contributions from communities and businesses, the Environment Agency's chief executive has revealed.

Speaking at a DEFRA and Environment Agency flood and coastal risk management conference in Telford on Tuesday, Paul Leinster said that local contributions to defence funding will have to play a greater role in reducing the risk of flood and coastal erosion.

Environment Agency spending on flood and coastal risk management is currently at record levels, with £629 million budgeted for 2010-11. However, other sources of funding will need to be found to protect communities from the increasing risk of flooding and coastal erosion, including climate change.

Leinster said: "We are on track to reduce the number of properties in England at risk of flooding to 160,000 between April 2008 and March 2011, exceeding the government target for the period by 15,000.

"While continued government investment in managing flood risk is important, we must also look at alternative funding streams, including increased contributions from those who will benefit from future defences."

Some communities have already adopted this approach. In Hereford, Asda contributed £2 million as part of the planning conditions for a supermarket in the town as well as constructing 440m of flood defences.

The cost of the project was £7.5 million, providing protection for 196 properties including 25 listed buildings.

Source: Planning Environment

POWER PLANTS & CLEAN ENERGY

Former Vestas staff open wind turbine manufacturer on Isle of Wight

27 Jul 2010

Sureblades will produce a new type of recyclable blade in a factory metres from the Vestas plant one year after its closure.

Nearly one year after Danish wind giant Vestas closed the UK's only major turbine plant, a new British blade manufacturer is opening just metres from the old factory.

Sureblades, run by a team including three former Vestas staff on the Isle of Wight, is pinning its hopes on a new type of blade that will be 100% recyclable.

Working with Southampton University for the certification of its blades, the new company already has an order placed with Irish renewable energy company C&F Green Energy for 1,000 of its blades. The 4.6m-long structures will be used in 15kW micro turbines.

Sean McDonagh, who is heading up operations at Sureblades, said the project had been a "beacon of light" for those involved in the Vestas plant closure last August, which led to 425 employees being made redundant. "It's been tough as no money was coming in for our families, but we knew it would work in the end, because this is a product the country needs for where it's going," McDonagh said.

Based on the same industrial estate as the former Vestas factory, which workers occupied during a 11-day roof-top protest against its closure last year, the company forecasts it will take on 40 staff within the next two years. "There are two big industries down here and people [former Vestas workers] have been on one-month contracts and not able to live their lives. When people heard about us, it's like they could get on with their lives, so they've been getting in touch," said McDonagh.

Working alongside McDonagh are the former Vestas employees Keith Hunsell and Glynn Milton, and Penny Smout a former special adviser to Ed Miliband. Unlike conventional turbine blades which use an epoxy resin that cannot be broken down, the company's blades will use a material that can be melted down and made into new blades after old ones are worn out. Sureblades said it also has another two potential orders in addition to the C&F deal, and it hopes to be fully operational by September.

Last year Vestas said the closure of the Isle of Wight plant was a result of a lack of demand and planning problems in the UK. Ditlev Engel, the CEO of Vestas, said at the time: "In the UK, there is a clear division between what the government would like to see happening and what certain local politicians want to see happening, or rather not want to see happening ... there is not necessarily the same ambition levels."

The Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers union (RMT), which represented and supported the Vestas workers last year, welcomed the new company. The general secretary, Bob Crow, said: "The

former Vestas workers behind this imaginative new project have completely destroyed the argument put forward by the company at the time of closure that there was no market for UK manufactured turbine blades. Through their efforts to create jobs they have blown apart the bogus grounds put forward at the time for closure and redundancy of the workforce."

He continued: "RMT is very proud of what our former Vestas members have achieved so far and we are right behind them. They have also shown that it is far too easy for companies in the UK to soak up government grants and then just cut and run when it suits them without any meaningful consultation, never mind a ballot of the workforce."

Source: Guardian

£60m turbine boost for Isles

26 Jul 2010

Six community-owned energy companies based in a remote part of Scotland have been given permission to connect 11 wind turbines to the National Grid.

It is hoped the turbines will generate profits of £2.5 million a year for the economy in the Western Isles.

The turbines - to be sited in communities from Galson in the north of Lewis to Barra and Vatersay in the south of the island chain - will supply the energy needs of the equivalent of 15,000 households and reduce CO2 emissions from oil by more than 60,000 tonnes.

The developments are estimated to boost the economy of the islands by £60m over the 25-year life span of the turbines.

Profits will be spent on environmental, social and cultural schemes across the Western Isles that are expected to create 100 sustainable jobs. EcoHeb, the registered co-operative that represents all the islands' energy companies, has been told their campaign for an early connection to the National Grid has been successful and that Ofgem has approved the link.

Scottish and Southern Electricity (SSE) is expected to write to the successful companies within the next few weeks to give them their grid connection dates.

Source: The Scotsman

Welsh frame energy guide

23 Jul 2010

Welsh environment minister Jane Davidson has announced plans to revise planning policy to meet the assembly government's goals for renewable energy.

The changes will ensure that a greener approach to energy production becomes a key consideration for local authorities when deciding on individual applications.

"The planning system has an important role to play in this transition," Davidson said. "It must provide an enabling framework for renewable energy projects and ensure they are placed in the most suitable locations, while at the same time balancing the local environmental consequences of proposed development."

The proposals include identifying different scales of renewable energy development for planning policy purposes, as well as new criteria for local authorities to take into account when making decisions. The consultation will run until 8 October.

Davidson also announced that she is seeking a meeting with decentralisation minister Greg Clark following the announcement of the merger of the Infrastructure Planning Commission into the Planning Inspectorate.

She said the proposed decentralisation and localism bill presents an opportunity for Wales to seek major energy consenting powers. There is unanimous cross-party support for this approach, she pointed out.

"There is an opportunity to work together to achieve a more democratic and accountable approach to decision-making on nationally significant projects in Wales," she added.

Source: Planning Resource

Scottish fund for green renewables near to exhaustion

16 Jul 2010

Scottish ministers are to consider providing further support for domestic renewables to cope with "unprecedented" demand.

Energy minister Jim Mather made the announcement as it emerged that the home renewables grant scheme, which covers 30 per cent of the cost of technologies such as solar panels and micro wind turbines, is expected to close by the end of this month when all the cash will have been allocated.

Around 3,000 applications have been approved and £7.5 million paid out since the scheme was launched in 2007. "The uptake of renewables among householders is now unprecedented and the home renewables grants funding is facing pressure," Mather said.

"The Energy Saving Scotland home renewables grant scheme has been extremely successful in helping householders generate their own green energy, cut carbon and stimulate the market for

small-scale technologies. We will now look to see what further support we can give to small-scale renewables."

Meanwhile, proposals to extend permitted development rights for micro wind and air source heat pumps look set to be delayed after the Scottish Government acknowledged that the policy changes would be likely to have "significant environmental effects".

A strategic environmental assessment of the proposals will now be carried out. If implemented, they would remove turbines from the planning system if they are less than 11.1m in height or, if mounted on a building, do not extend more than 3m above the roof ridge.

Source: Planning Environment

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Falkirk homes plan lifts canal renewal

23 Jul 2010

The public have come out strongly in support of a mixed-use development alongside the Forth & Clyde Canal east of Falkirk.

British Waterways Scotland and Falkirk Council last week submitted plans for a 23ha site at Tamfourhill, close to the Falkirk Wheel, after the scheme earned the support of 93 per cent of respondents during a public consultation exercise.

The project, first unveiled in 2008, will include 525 homes, a 50-bedroom hotel, leisure, retail and commercial space, a public square and a 50-berth marina.

The two organisations are working to regenerate the canal as part of the wider My Future's in Falkirk economic initiative. Last week the town was named Scotland's most enterprising place as part of the Enterprising Britain competition.

British Waterways Scotland director Steve Dunlop said: "The application is a great milestone in unlocking the potential of the canal, which occupies such a strategic location across the central belt.

"The plan received a positive response from the local communities of Tamfourhill and Camelon, proving a real need for accommodation, new amenity and a greater connection to the waterway.

"Altogether, the proposed site with its water space, parkland, iconic landmark and rich heritage represents an unparalleled opportunity for a development partner."

Work will be phased over seven years, with the first homes expected to complete in 2014. The masterplan by Michael Laird Architects allows for extra amenities to be added.

Source: Planning Resource

Permission granted for Trump's golf course

9 Jul 2010

US tycoon Donald Trump's championship golf course at Balmedie has been granted full planning permission.

However, only the construction of the golf course, driving range, short game area and putting green are permitted to go ahead now.

Further applications will be required before work starts on elements of the wider development, including a hotel, holiday apartments and homes.

Aberdeenshire Council's Formatine area committee chairman John Loveday explained: "The golf course is going to take two or three years before it is really playable and has to be built before the houses and the rest of the development."

Outline permission for a golf course and resort development at the Menie estate was granted by Scottish ministers in December 2008.

Source: Planning Resource

Eco-town funding slashed

9 Jul 2010

Housing minister Grant Shapps has cut government funding for the eco-towns programme by 50%.

In February the previous government announced funding of £60 million to build 10,000 green homes by 2016 in four already approved eco-towns.

Then in March a further £10million was pledged for the second wave of homes. This was to help fund further studies, to test the feasibility to develop proposals to the PPS standards and progress them through planning.

But Shapps has now written to local councils to inform them that he is to reduce these payments by 50%.

Shapps told the councils that his priority is to see that plans are well supported locally and will achieve genuine improvements in sustainability.

A CLG spokesperson said: "Housing minister Grant Shapps wrote to council Leaders engaged in the eco-towns programme on 2 July.

"Eco-town funding awards for 2010/11 will be reduced by 50% and before releasing funding the minister has asked councils to provide details about their programmes – an update on their plans and how they will engage the community on the development.

Source: Planning Environment