

Report of the Gower AONB Team Leader

Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 2 March 2015

GOWER AONB – ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SUB GROUP – PROGRESS UPDATE

The previous steering group meeting AGREED that a renewable energy subgroup be formed in order to formulate the draft policy of the Steering Group on renewable energy; and that the subgroup should report its findings to the Steering Group in due course.

The subgroup (G Howe (Chair), A Woodman, P Lanfear, Steve Heard and Councillor K E Marsh) met on 7 January 2015, with the AONB Team (Chris Lindley and Mike Scott) in attendance. The meeting reviewed the range of issues, technologies, policy and guidance/policy adopted in other AONBs.

The Subgroup asked the AONB Team to prepare a position statement for the approval of the Steering Group. The statement would inform the local planning authority, landowners, applicants and other interested parties regarding the development of new energy projects within – or likely to affect – the Gower AONB. The scope of the position statement would be broadened, to include other (non-renewable) energy technologies that could impact on the AONB. There was also some discussion on future energy provision and technologies.

The subgroup envisaged a position statement similar to that produced by North Wessex Downs AONB (attached). The outline contents for position statement are below.

The position statement will be prepared for review by the Subgroup and subsequent Steering Group approval in due course.

Outline Position Statement contents:

- Position Statement Status and scope
- Introduction:
 - Role of the AONB Partnership – advice body to CCS and S.85 duty to ‘conserve and enhance’ Gower AONB
 - Wider energy context – e.g. climate change, reducing energy demand
 - Energy conservation and efficiency
 - Developing technologies
 - Clear definition of and differentiation between:
 - § ‘Renewable Energy’ (solar, wind etc) and
 - § Other alternative energy proposals – ie unconventional hydrocarbons – currently hydraulic fracturing and Underground Coal Gasification
 - § Domestic and non-domestic/commercial installations
- UK, Welsh and local planning policy context, including:

- UK Energy/Major Infrastructure Policy
- Planning Policy Wales
- Unitary and Local Development Plans (UDP/LDP)
- AONB Management Plan (current and under review)
- Gower AONB Design Guide
- Gower AONB and its setting:
 - AONB special qualities
 - Landscape character
 - Seascape
 - AONB setting –outside/offshore of the AONB
- Information/advice regarding specific energy developments – potential issues/impacts on the AONB. Specific technologies to include:
 - Renewables:
 - Wind turbines:
 - § Domestic
 - § Commercial
 - § Offshore Wind
 - Solar:
 - § Domestic Photovoltaic (PV)/Heating
 - § Larger arrays on buildings
 - § Ground level installations
 - Ground/Air Source Heat Pumps (Domestic)
 - Wood fuel
 - Other biofuels
 - Anaerobic Digesters and Biomass
 - Hydro-electric
 - Waste to Energy
 - Marine Technologies – tidal stream/tidal flow/wave energy
 - Other alternative energy:
 - Shale Gas – Hydraulic Fracturing ('Fracking')
 - Underground Coal Gasification (UCG)

Gordon Howe/Chris Lindley
20 February 2015