

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Development Management Sub-Committee	
DATE	18 April 2013	
LEAD HEAD OF SERVICE Margaret Bochel		DIRECTOR Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Planning Digest	
REPORT NUMBER	EPI/13/077	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise members of the decision of Scottish Ministers regarding the offshore wind development centre at Aberdeen Bay, and to highlight the Development Management Customer Charter.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The report is for information and does not have any implications for any legal, resource, personnel, property, equipment, sustainability and environmental, health and safety and/or policy implications and risks.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

CONSENT GRANTED BY THE SCOTTISH MINISTERS TO CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE THE EUROPEAN OFFSHORE WIND DEPLOYMENT CENTRE (EOWDC) ELECTRICITY GENERATING STATION, ABERDEEN BAY, APPROXIMATELY 2 km EAST OF BLACKDOG, ABERDEENSHIRE

Scottish Ministers have now granted consent for the offshore wind deployment centre. Many views for and against the development related to its economic impact, renewable energy and the offshore wind sector overall. Beyond these largely general views, the key

reasons for opposition related to visual impacts and associated impacts on tourism and recreation.

Although it is accepted that the development would have an effect on the landscape and seascape as viewed from Aberdeen, these impacts are not deemed by the Scottish Ministers to be unacceptable.

It is the Scottish Ministers' planning judgement that, whilst accepting that there would be some adverse visual impact resulting from the location of the development on the Menie Estate Golf and Resort Complex and golf courses at Murcar and Royal Aberdeen, and more generally on the seascape from the Aberdeenshire Coast, when weighing up that material consideration with the considerations numbers (1) to (8) mentioned in the section below in relation to the planning judgement on the proposed location of the development, it is in their view an appropriate judgement nevertheless to grant consent to the development in its proposed location.

1. The benefits that the development would be expected to bring in terms of contribution to the development of the renewable energy sector;
2. The need to achieve target for renewable energy;
3. The economic and social importance of Scotland's renewable energy sector;
4. The specific benefits of the development being the first demonstrator wind turbine to be used by several companies which would provide a facility for testing in real conditions and assist in driving down the costs of developing wind turbines.
5. The role that the development can play strategically in this context;
6. The clear advantages that the proposed location offers;
7. The potential to unlock a variety of economic benefits for Aberdeen and Scotland in the future;
8. The evidence that elsewhere in the UK golf courses co-exist with offshore wind farm development.

The decision letter can be viewed at

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marnie/Licensing/marine/scoping/EOWDC>

Development Management Customer Charter

This Charter has been developed as a result of our on-going focus on improving the quality of customer service within the Development Management and Masterplanning Team. Members may also be aware that we are working towards achieving the Customer Service Excellence Award and the Charter will be an important element on our path towards the award.

The Customer Charter focuses on the standards we aim to meet and will be available on the City Council website and in leaflet form. We will also be reporting on the performance targets contained within the Charter.

Members should note that a Development Management Charter was on the agenda for the Development Management Sub-Committee in August 2011. This document has a

wider purpose and contains more information on what happens at each stage of the planning process. We will be updating this document shortly and performance targets contained therein are superseded by those within the Customer Charter below.

The Enforcement Charter also contains a number of performance targets and these are similarly superseded by targets in the Customer Charter. The Enforcement Charter will be revised in the next few months.

Development Management Customer Charter

The aims of this Customer Charter are to:

1. Tell you what we do
2. Outline the level of service we will provide, including our **Performance Targets**
3. Let you know what to do if we fail to meet your expectations

1. What we do

We are part of **Planning and Sustainable Development**. Together with the other teams within our service, we are the planning authority for Aberdeen City. That means:

- We coordinate masterplans for large areas of new development with the aim of achieving high quality, sustainable mixed use communities. Masterplans are subject to public consultation and once agreed by the Council are used as a basis for decisions on planning applications. They are available on the [Supplementary Guidance page](#) of our website.
- We provide pre-application advice (verbally and in writing) on proposals for development.
- We make decisions on applications for planning permission and related applications (such as listed building consent).
- We have powers to enforce planning controls and we do so where we believe there is a public interest. For more information on Enforcement, please read the [Planning Enforcement Charter](#).
- We provide information and advice to neighbours and other interested parties affected by our decisions.
- We maintain information on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas and provide technical and policy advice on historic building conservation matters.

In making planning decisions we take many matters into account, primarily:

- Policies in the development plan, government policy and supplementary guidance. These cover many matters, including:

- Urban design and placemaking
 - Impact on the historic and natural environment
 - Traffic and transportation
 - Impact on residential properties
- We also take into account:
 - Interests of the community and effect on neighbours
 - The contribution to sustainable economic development
 - Needs of the applicant

Further information related to submitting a planning application and a glossary, defining terms used in this Charter and in the planning process, may be found within the Development Management User Guide ([hyperlink needed](#)).

Information about the masterplanning process may be found within [The Aberdeen Masterplanning Process](#)

Our performance over the last year is presented in the [Planning Performance Framework](#).

Detailed advice on the professional planning service is on the [planning pages of our website](#).

These are available on our website (see Useful Links section) and paper versions by post or at our Marischal College reception.

2. The Level of Service we will provide

We will

- **Treat you politely, fairly and not discriminate because of race, religion, age, gender, sexuality or disability**
- Provide you with a named Officer to ensure continuity of service and advice
- **Listen to your views and give feedback when you wish it**
- **Have dedicated teams dealing with general planning applications, householder applications, enforcement and masterplanning, design and conservation.**

Telephone calls:

Performance Indicator	Target
Telephone calls answered within 6 rings	85%
Telephone message returned by the end of the next working day	85%

We will also

- Provide you with a specific officer's name, direct telephone contact number and email address after initial contact is made
- Only transfer calls if we can find the correct person to answer your enquiry.

Letters, faxes and e-mails:

Performance Indicator	Target
Response to written correspondence received within 15 working days	85%
Response to emails within 10 working days	85%

We will also

- Advise you of any action to be taken following an investigation into a breach of planning control
- Ensure our responses are written following the principles of plain English and address all of the issues raised.

Visiting us at Marischal College:

Visitors to reception with an appointment seen by an officer within 5 minutes of their appointment time	85%
Visitors to reception without an appointment seen by an officer within 10 minutes	85%

- You will find the reception area is clean, tidy and accessible
- Our staff will wear identification badges at all times
- A member of staff will be available to answer planning queries during Marischal College opening times, although it is recommended that appointments are made with the relevant officer
- We will provide a private meeting room if possible, and in all cases if you arrange an appointment in advance

Submission of masterplans, planning applications & pre-application enquiries:

- We will provide advice as to whether planning permission or other related permissions are required and whether masterplans are required (for larger sites).
- We will provide up-to-date guidance on the planning process on our website including links to application forms, fees and the on-line application system (e-planning).

- For more complex applications and masterplans, if required, we will attend joint meetings with other interested bodies such as, our Transportation Team, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Environmental Health, Historic Scotland and others. This will enable discussions with relevant statutory bodies at the initial stages in the process.
- We will agree a timetable and process for your masterplans through to Committee, including receipt of our comments and deadlines
- For major applications, we encourage you to enter into a processing agreement with us, whereby you, the Council and other parties agree timescales for submission of information and stages of the application process.
- If we are unable to meet the target timescale for determination of your application or masterplan we will contact you to explain the reason and to let you know a revised timescale.
- You can check progress by telephone or in person, planning applications can also be tracked on our website.

How do we perform?

- We will [publicise our performance](#) in dealing with applications against our targets and explain how we hope to improve.
- We will regularly monitor our performance against the targets set out in this Charter, publicise the results and explain how we hope to improve.

How can we improve?

- To help us improve our services please complete our Development Management [customer satisfaction survey](#)
- See our planned improvements described within [The Planning Performance Framework](#)

3. If we fail to meet your expectations

People often have differing opinions about planning decisions. For planning applications the applicant has the right of appeal where permission is refused. How to appeal is described on the planning application acknowledgement letter and decision letter relating to your application. There is no right of appeal for non-applicants.

You may appeal against non-determination if your application is not determined within 2 months (smaller “local” applications) or 4 months (larger “major” developments) although it is always advisable to contact the case officer to discuss timescales for determination if you are considering this route.

If you would like to make a complaint about how we have followed our procedures and/or failed to comply with the levels of service set out in this Charter, the following course of action is recommended:

Please contact the officer dealing with the application, masterplan or enforcement to discuss your complaint in the first instance.

If you need to find out who to contact please telephone our general enquiries number below or email the address shown below and your complaint will be directed to the appropriate person.

If you are not satisfied with the response to the complaint please contact the officer's line manager.

If you are still not satisfied your complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the [Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure](#). This is also available on paper at Marischal College.

How to contact us

Our website:

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning_and_environment

Email: PI@aberdeencity.gov.uk

General enquiries telephone number: (01224) 523470

Our address:

Development Management,
Planning and Sustainable Development Service,
Business Hub 4,
Ground Floor North,
Marischal College,
Aberdeen AB10 1AB

Development Management Manager: **Daniel Lewis**

Head of Service: **Dr Margaret Bochel**

Opening Hours:

Monday – Friday 8.30 am – 5.00pm except for public holidays

USEFUL LINKS

Aberdeen City Council website – for information relating to planning
http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/planning_sustainable_development/pla_planning_home_page.asp

Aberdeen City Council Corporate Complaints procedure:

http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/council_government/feedback_complaints/crc_complaints.asp

E-planning for on-line applications:
<https://eplanning.scotland.gov.uk/WAM/>

Scottish Government Planning - for legislation:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning>

Historic Scotland – for advice on listed buildings and conservation areas:
<http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/historicandlistedbuildings>

6. IMPACT

The Scottish Government has stated that an effective planning service is fundamental to achieving its central purpose of sustainable economic growth. As such the information in this report relates to a number of Single Outcome Agreement Outcomes:

- 1 - We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe;
- 2 - We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people;
- 10 - We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need;
- 12 - We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations;
- 13 - We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity; and
- 15 - Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

Public – The report may be of interest to the development community and certain matters referred to in the report may be of interest to the wider community.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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