



### Offshore Wind Farm Development: Irish Sea Zone Sea Routes between Isle of Man and North West England

**Notes of Meeting held at 1500 on Thursday 9 August 2012  
at Department of Infrastructure Offices, Sea Terminal, Douglas, Isle of Man.**

#### **Present:**

Representing Celtic Array (CA):

- Louise Rich (LR) NE Area Development Manager (Centrica)
- Laura Jeffs (LJ) Head of Development (Centrica Renewables)
- Tom Suddaby (TS) Commercial Manager (Dong Energy)
- David Atkinson (DA) Public Affairs Manager (Centrica)

Representing TravelWatch Isle of Man (TWIOM):

- Brendan O’Friel (BOF) Chairman
- Bernard Arrowsmith (BA) Vice-Chairman
- Steven Hamer (SH) Committee Member
- Terry Liddiard (TL) Committee Member
- John Pennington (JP) Committee Member

#### **1. Introduction.**

(a). BOF provided details of TWIOM representatives and summarised the role of TWIOM. A voluntary organisation, it was concerned with representing and promoting passenger interests on land, sea and air. It had around 70 members and a much wider support base, with communication via website, mailings and meetings. Two public meetings were held a year, to brief and educate the public about issues, and to expose operators (for example Flybe) to scrutiny and questions. It was part of a network of passenger organisations including Passenger Focus (Rail Passengers Council – the lead organisation on Sail and Rail issues) in Great Britain and TravelWatch North West.

(b). CA representatives explained their roles. LR works for Centrica and manages development in the NE area of the Zone through the consenting process. LJ heads up the development team at Centrica for all wind farm proposals. TS works for Dong and is commercial manager for the Irish Sea Zone. DA works for Centrica and manages public affairs across the renewables team.

(c). We agreed that the matters discussed could be regarded as public, unless otherwise stated. (TWIOM used to confidentiality when discussing with other parties.) LR was aware of TWIOM liaison with the IoM Steam Packet Company. Agreed that TWIOM JP would prepare a Note of the Meeting, and issue to CA via LR.

#### **2. Overview Presentation by Celtic Array**

(a). LR handed over copies of 13 page presentation titled 'Travelwatch (Isle of Man) Update on Offshore Wind Proposals in Irish Sea 9 August 2012,' (Celtic Array Reference: NE-D-EN-084-0029-000000-001) and provided further explanation: -

**(b). Pages 1 to 4:** Centrica won exclusive development rights from the Crown Estate as part of their third round of offshore wind farm leasing in January 2010. In March 2012 Centrica entered into a 50:50 joint venture with Dong. In January 2010 insufficient information was available about both sea bed and environment at the tender stage, (which TWIOM queried,) and thus needed to gather data on environmental, technical and stakeholder considerations to develop a strategic plan as to where in the Zone offshore wind could potentially be developed. Zonal Appraisal (ZAP) for all Irish Sea Zone prepared to March 2012 and available on website: [www.celticarray.com](http://www.celticarray.com)

Under the JV, Centrica will continue to lead on development and consenting process. Celtic Array estimate that there is potential for a capacity of up to 4.2GW from offshore development within the Zone. To date Celtic Array have agreed connection offshore with the National Grid for up to 3GW, 2GW of that is anticipated to connect to Anglesey and 1GW at a location to be determined.

TWIOM asked if 'consultation', for example with IoM Government and Steam Packet, was merely information gathering. LR explained that this had been a two-way process throughout the ZAP period and this did include information gathering which was a necessary part of the ZAP process. The outcomes of the ZAP process and identification of Potential Development Areas within the Zones were based on recognising certain 'hard' constraints:- navigation and safety and technical feasibility.

**(c) Page 5:** Plan shows 'traffic signal' categorising of area in terms of technical feasibility. This included consideration of depth (varies 40 to 80m) and sea bed conditions (e.g. unevenness). Green area preferred; red least preferred.

**(d). Page 6:** Plan shows shipping direct and adverse weather routes, from ZAP report, based on information and feedback provided by shipping stakeholders (incl Steam Packet?) and AIS monitoring by Centrica. TWIOM understood that the Steam Packet had done extensive plots recently, and LR confirmed that they had received much more detailed shipping information at their latest meeting with the Steam Packet.

**(e). Page 7:** Plan shows the three Potential; Development Areas which CA intend to progress through the consenting process in the following order: SE (Rhiannon), which is starting the pre-application consenting process, followed by NE which is at early stages, with Pre-Application process anticipated to start sometime in 2013, and then later SW which LJ described as 'more challenging' re technology and cost. The plan of the Rhiannon Area showed "Traffic Separation Scheme (Sea Zone)" which reduces the southern extent of the Area to be developed. LJ and LR were aware that the Steam Packet has adverse weather routing concerns relating to Rhiannon area.

**(f). Pages 8 to 12:** Aim of Planning Act 2008 is to place emphasis on the period prior to submitting any application for Development Consent. Consultation is a key element of the pre-Application period. Celtic Array intends to conduct two formal stages of public consultation for Rhiannon before any application is submitted. This is also the intention for the NE Area. The first formal stage of consultation for Rhiannon is due to commence at the end of October 2012. The pre-application period will also include the carrying out of an Environmental Impact Assessment. The aim of the pre-Application period is so that CA can drill into further detail in relation to the area in question (starting with Rhiannon) and identify and consider issues arising, and consider appropriate mitigation. See [www.celticarray.com](http://www.celticarray.com) and Planning Inspectorate website. After submission, the Planning Inspectorate has 15 months to make decision. Thus the earliest offshore construction could start on Rhiannon is 2017. Final decision is taken by the UK Secretary of State for Energy. For Rhiannon, onshore works in Wales will be consented by Anglesey County Council. BOF noted that the IoM Government is not covered by UK legislation, and its relationship is via the UK Department of Justice, and asked that CA be mindful of IoM sensitivities to ensure the Island is adequately consulted. LR noted that IoM is also outside the EU, but CA intends to continue engagement with the IoM Government and stakeholders there, and will include IoM in consultation. There will be a public exhibition on Isle of Man to support the Stage 1 Rhiannon consultation in November 2012. LJ added that CA will treat IoM Government in a similar manner as if they were a Statutory Consultee.

(g). JP asked if the process made provision for Public Inquiry, and for Statutory Consultees to have the right to present their case. LR noted that the new UK Planning Act aimed to avoid confrontational public inquiries, replacing them with an examination period that could be made up of informal hearings, on open floor hearing or consideration of issues in writing. Once accepted by the Planning Inspectorate, the application will be advertised and those who wish to make representations will have the opportunity to do so and, if they wish, take part in the examination process. More information on the process is on the Planning Inspectorate website. JP asked if the Planning Inspectorate had undertaken to treat IoM organisations as Statutory Consultees. LR understood that the IoM Government had been in touch with the Planning Inspectorate on this.

### **3. Overview Discussion.**

(a). BOF showed copies of public documents issued by Dong re the Walney Extension, and requested similar for Irish Sea Zone. DA handed over 2 copies of 'Irish Sea Zone: Zonal Appraisal and Planning (ZAP) Report – Executive Summary'. He undertook to supply 6 hard copies plus electronic copies of brochures which are due to be issued within days.

(b). BOF noted that sea passenger issues appeared not to have been canvassed, but LR assured that this was only because it had been an early stage in the process. Anyone who wishes to comment on the proposals will be able to do so during the first stage of consultation, which for Rhiannon is at end of October 2012. Now is a good time to be meeting with and identifying groups who have concerns.

(c) LJ explained that CA will have an agreement for lease from the Crown Estate for development areas within the Zone. This Agreement for Lease will be for a term of 50 years. The lifetime of existing offshore wind turbines is 25 years, with the possibility of repowering after 25 years. On other of Centrica's offshore wind farm proposals, the consent has required that at least 6 months prior to commencing construction, a Decommissioning Plan must have been approved with the Department of Energy and Climate Change. Current decommissioning plans do not specify the removal cables, unexposed cables are left insitu and foundations are cut off below the sea bed. There is a requirement for the creation of financial fund midway prior to decommissioning.

JP handed over a copy of 'The Southern Chronicle' published on Island in summer 2012, which contained an article apparently about the SE zone, and quoted Dong's Communication Manager Peter Sills saying that 'around 60% of people who were consulted at the first stage were in favour of the wind farm.' TWIOM cast doubts on the figure by asking who had been consulted, where and when and how many of those consulted were aware of the issue of adverse impact on Manx shipping routes.

(d). CA were not aware of the article and had not undertaken any formal consultation or produced any figures or percentages on public opinion. They had carried out "information days" in February 2012 but had not released any feedback from that. It was not always possible to mention all issues at public exhibitions and meetings, but TWIOM responded that they would expect CA to mention shipping issues at all such events on the Island. It appeared to CA that the 'Southern Chronicle' had mangled a press release, and the 'Southern Chronicle' had used information released from the Walney Extension consultation events which did not relate to Celtic Array. TWIOM handed over to DA contact details of the publishers. SH referred to the mention of 60 jobs in the article, and DA stated that CA had not published any figures relating to jobs. It is very early days to say precisely; how much employment might be generated as CA were still defining projects, however some jobs will be generated and there was a possibility for the Island. LJ referred to a possible base for servicing, but could make no promises at this stage.

(e). Regarding the criteria for placing wind-turbines and the selection of three triangular zones, LJ explained that these had been predominantly based on identifying hard constraints such as technical feasibility, which included consideration of water depth and geology, and navigation and safety, leaving shipping corridors within and around the Irish Sea Wind Farm.

4. **TWIOM Letter of 21 June to Celtic Array.**

(a). TWIOM took the opportunity to highlight and amplify their concerns expressed in the above letter, and repeated that they are neither for nor against the wind farm.

(b). BOF explained how with the introduction of fast craft, and latterly with the 'Manannan', the Steam Packet had developed skills in bad weather routing, in order to maintain services in marginal conditions to avoid cancellations. Steam Packet issues rapidly become matters of public concern, as demonstrated by attendance of 130 at a TWIOM meeting re a rival freight service. While the Steam Packet is 'not loved', the public are quickly concerned at sea travel issues.

(c). Reliability, costs and journey times are key issues. The two return journeys in 24 hours to Heysham is also of critical importance for freight.

TL commented that while TWIOM is concerned with passengers, the Steam Packet's freight carryings are important, as these costs influence the costs of everything on the island, and if bad weather disrupts sailings for say three days, then supermarket shelves become empty. JP added that bad weather in the Irish Sea might not get much publicity in the UK but was a hot topic with Steam Packet passengers, freight hauliers, businesses and politicians on the Island. The Irish Sea is not sheltered inland water: adverse weather can be severe, as demonstrated by the sinking of the passenger ferry 'Princess Victoria' and the recent stranding and loss of the freighter 'Riverdance.'

(d). LJ asked how CA might engage with the passenger community, and BOF suggested TWIOM, Passenger Focus (for Sail and Rail) and TW in NW England, who are linked with around 60 rail and bus supporting groups.

(e). DA and LJ referred to proposed events around the Island, and BOF commented that whilst green issues and non-visibility might be regarded favourably, shipping routes affecting the Steam Packet is a key all-island issue: CA should understand the extent of potential concern if they wish to de-risk the project. TWIOM is seeking a solution to the shipping issue. It is vital that the issue is handled well. Several years ago, the IoM Government had miss-handled the renegotiation of the Reciprocal Health Agreement (RHA) with the UK Government, which had resulted in a major public outcry – both on and off Island - and policy reversal.

(f). DA noted that it was in their interest to present the full picture, and had always intended wider consultation. LJ noted that CA needed to consider the concerns that had been raised and how they can be dealt with.

5. **Conclusion**

BOF expressed appreciation for the meeting including the information and documents provided and looked forward to further discussions and contact with CA.