

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:**           **CABINET**

**DATE:**               **TUESDAY, 17 MARCH 2015**

**REPORT BY:**       **CHIEF OFFICER (PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT)**

**SUBJECT:**           **RENEWABLE ENERGY 10 YEAR ACTION PLAN**

**1.00**   **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.01    To update Members on the development of a 10 year Renewable Energy action plan, providing the background and reasoning for the plan and specific actions to commence the process of identifying and subsequently developing suitable sites, where approved by Cabinet.

**2.00**   **BACKGROUND**

- 2.01    A report was submitted to Cabinet on the 30<sup>th</sup> September that identified the benefits and opportunities surrounding the development of large scale renewable energy projects.

This report compliments the business planning proposals for Streetscene and Transportation. More details will follow in a future report.

- 2.02    The Government are consulting with the intention to reduce or possibly cease financial incentives of some renewable energy schemes such as Solar Photo Voltaics by 2017/18. It is important that if Flintshire County Council is to take advantage of the incentives currently available, that when potential schemes have passed an initial appraisal, that they are packaged together and tenders invited to obtain development costs and enable a financial appraisal to be completed i.e. determine the return on investment.

- 2.03    The Welsh Government are also investigating ways to promote and encourage large scale renewable development in Local Authorities, and potential funding has been suggested, (potentially several hundred £ million) on a commercial basis, though no details are presently available.

**3.00**   **CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.01    A major consideration behind the Renewable Energy Action Plan is to help mitigate the financial cuts being imposed on the County's budgets, the need for economic growth and local jobs, and to

generate income to help cut costs and keep services going.

- 3.02 The County owns a number of “brown field“ sites, and once identified, these will be among the first to be assessed for their suitability for renewable energy generation.
- 3.03 The benefits of developing large scale renewable projects in Flintshire are not limited to the Government’s financial incentives, through Feed In Tariff’s (FIT’s) or Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) etc, but in future could form valuable insurance against security of supply risks, as well as a reduced risk from future Utility cost inflation.
- 3.04 The Renewable Energy action plan identifies the potential renewable energy systems that might be suitable within Flintshire as a County. One of the most promising being the opportunity to identify suitable land holdings to plant trees. Although there is a lengthy lead in time before harvesting can commence (minimum of 8 to 10 years) such woodland, once established and suitably managed, will provide an ongoing supply of biomass (woodchip/logs etc) for as long as the woodland is maintained and looked after.
- 3.05 New or regenerated woodland will not only enhance the environment and improve the flora and fauna of the County but will improve the amenity value of the area, with a potential increase in the size and number of woodland areas available to the public.
- 3.06 Natural open spaces can provide Health and well-being benefits, associated to woodland walks (91% surveyed felt parks and public open space improved their quality of life. (MORI)).
- 3.07 They help protect and enhance biodiversity and natural habitat.
- 3.08 There are also large amounts of waste wood (circa 8000 to 10,000 tonnes per annum) collected at Flintshire County Council Civil Amenity (C.A.) sites. This wood has potential to be utilised to provide power generation, and be used to heat and light County Buildings. Investigations need to be undertaken to properly assess its’ potential, which if proven and with suitable infrastructure could provide savings of between £500,000 and £700,000 per annum.
- 3.09 As previously detailed in 2.02, timing is critical to maximise the financial benefits to Flintshire County Council of investment in large scale renewable schemes. The approval of the attached Renewable Energy action plan will be a good step in the right direction, and will enable suitable sites to be identified and submitted to future Cabinet meetings for approval or rejection.
- 3.10 The Renewable Energy Action Plan will develop and evolve over time as suitable sites are identified for a wide range of technologies or planted as sustainable woodland. In addition it is considered

important that the public are consulted to gain support of our aims and objectives and to integrate their ideas into the plan, wherever practical.

- 3.11 It is anticipated that proposals for some potential schemes may be sufficiently developed to be submitted to Cabinet in April 2015, for consideration.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.01 That Cabinet approves the attached “Large scale Renewable Energy action Plan”.
- 4.02 That Cabinet also approves the undertaking of a public consultation exercise, to gain public support/comment to our aims and objectives and to provide feedback that can help shape the Renewable Energy Action plan in future.
- 4.03 That Cabinet approve investigating ways of utilising the waste wood collected at Flintshire County Council C.A. sites, as a potential fuel.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.01 None as a direct result of this report.

#### **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

- 6.01 No direct impact.

#### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 7.01 None as a direct result of this report.

#### **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 8.01 None

#### **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.01 None

#### **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

- 10.01 None

#### **11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

- 11.01 APSE ,Walker Morris , Steven Cirell-Energy consultant, Welsh Government, Internal Planning advice, Coed Cymru, Corporate Communications.

## **12.00 APPENDICES**

### 12.01 Appendix 1 – Renewable Energy Action Plan

#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

As referred to in the report.

**Contact Officer:** Will Pierce, Planning & Environment  
**Telephone:** 01352 703137  
**Email:** [will.pierce@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:will.pierce@flintshire.gov.uk)