

**Draft Statement of Community Consultation
Proposed 100MWe Biomass Electricity Generating Plant, Southampton Port**

Introduction

Helius Energy plc ('Helius Energy') proposes to consent, build and operate a 100MWe biomass fuelled electricity generating station in the Port of Southampton. The project is classified as a 'National Significant Infrastructure Project' under the Planning Act 2008 and therefore an application for Development Consent will be made to the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC).

Helius Energy has prepared this Statement of Community Consultation or SoCC, pursuant to Section 47 (1) of the Planning Act 2008. The Act requires that a SoCC must set out how the applicant proposes to consult the people 'living in the vicinity of the land' proposed for the development. Helius Energy must carry out consultation on the proposed application in accordance with the proposals set out in this statement.

Consultation with the local community assists in providing the developer with vital local knowledge. This knowledge enables the developer to identify any likely environmental or social effects on the locality. Consultation enables the project design to evolve in response to those potential effects and incorporate appropriate mitigation measures.

For the local community, engagement exercises provide an opportunity to understand more about the proposed scheme, explore how the development can bring value to their community, and help shape solutions to issues that arise from the scheme.

Project Description

The proposed scheme will be located within the Port of Southampton's Western Docks adjacent to Millbrook Railfreight Terminal and Millbrook (Hants) railway station (grid reference SU 396 124). The scheme will comprise a biomass fuelled electricity generating plant capable of generating approximately 100 Megawatts (Declared Net Capacity) of electricity and associated biomass processing and fuel store, boiler house, turbine building, cooling assembly ancillary buildings, structures, plant and equipment together with other engineering and building works. The plant will generate renewable electricity that will be fed into the local electricity supply grid, equivalent to the consumption of approximately 200,000 homes. This is sufficient to provide the Southampton population (approximately 100,000 households) and local commercial development with renewable electricity. Potential opportunities to supply heat to existing and proposed development within the vicinity of the plant are also being investigated.

The development of biomass fuelled electricity generating plant is consistent with Central Government and local planning policies to encourage energy from renewable sources. Renewable energy results in reduced emissions of greenhouse gas emissions compared to fossil fuel alternatives like coal, oil and gas. Generating energy from sustainable biomass is considered to be a low carbon energy source.

The plant will require up to 800,000 tonnes of solid biomass per annum. The biomass feedstock will comprise sustainably sourced fuel in the form of virgin wood fibre; recycled wood chips; energy crops; solid recovered fuel; residues from processing cereals and oilseeds; and other solid biomass material as defined by the Renewables Obligations 2009. The plant **will not** use general domestic or industrial waste or liquid biomass feedstocks, e.g. vegetable oils. The majority of the fuel will be delivered to the plant through the Port of Southampton with some locally sourced fuel being delivered to the site by road or rail.

Construction of the project will take approximately 36 months. It is anticipated the plant will become operational in 2015. The plant will generate between 40-250 jobs during construction and approximately 40 permanent full time jobs during operation. In addition, the plant would also help safeguard existing jobs within the area and will result in indirect employment for off-site based logistics, engineering and services support and procurement.

Further information on the proposed scheme and some Frequently Asked Questions are available on the project website: www.southamptonbiomasspower.com The website will be updated as the project progresses and various non technical documents will be uploaded as they are published. The information available on the website will also be available in hard copy format in the Shirley Library and through the Marchwood Parish Council Clerk.

Statement of Community Consultation

As required by the Regulations, Helius Energy has formally consulted with Southampton City Council on the content of the SoCC.

A separate document, entitled 'Community Consultation Strategy', has been produced which provides further detail on the community consultation strategy for Southampton Biomass Power and provides details of the consultation undertaken with Southampton City Council. Information about how Statutory Consultees will be consulted is also included within the document. The Community Consultation Strategy document is available on the project website, in Shirley Library and from the Marchwood Parish Council Clerk.

The following groups have been identified, in consultation with Southampton City Council, as 'living in the vicinity of the land':

- Employees of the Port of Southampton and companies located within the Port;
- Residents of Millbrook and Freemantle wards of Southampton who reside south of the A3057 and east of the A35;
- Business premises located within Millbrook and Freemantle including the those within the Millbrook Industrial Estate, the Manor House Industrial Estate and British American Tobacco;
- Residents on Redbridge road, along the route from the M271 motorway junction to Dock Gate 20;
- Residents of the village of Marchwood; and
- Business premises located within the village of Marchwood;

In addition to the specific groups identified above, the dedicated project website will reach a wider audience to keep readers informed about the proposals.

A copy of the SoCC, and Community Consultation Strategy document, will be sent to locally elected community representatives who include the MP and MEPs for Southampton and the New Forest as well as Marchwood Parish Council and community groups/residential associations in the areas identified above. A full list of local community representatives is available in the Community Consultation Strategy document. Councillors for Southampton City Council and New Forest District Council elected in the wards above will also receive a copy of these documents.

The SoCC and the Community Consultation Strategy document will be available in the Shirley Library, 14 Redcar Street, Southampton, SO15 5LL.

The Infrastructure Planning Commission

The Infrastructure Planning Commission is an independent body set up by the Government in October 2009 to decide applications for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NISPs), giving consideration to both the local and national impacts of a proposed scheme.

The draft National Policy Statement for Energy sets out the Government's intended policy for the development of energy infrastructure. The National Policy Statement for Energy has not yet been formally designated by the Secretary of State and until that time, the IPC does not have the power to decide applications and will instead make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change. The Secretary of State will then decide whether to grant consent for the proposed scheme.

The IPC will only accept an application if the applicant can demonstrate that they have consulted fully with the local community. The IPC's website sets out the process for consultation during the examination process: <http://infrastructure.independent.gov.uk>.

On the 29th June 2010 the Government announced plans to abolish the IPC but retain the skills and expertise within a Major Infrastructure Planning Unit as part of the Planning Inspectorate within the Department for Communities and Local Government. New legislation will be required to bring about this change. Until that legislation is in place, the IPC will continue within its present role. Further details are available on the IPC's website: www.independent.gov.uk/infrastructure.

Environmental Impact Assessment

The proposed scheme may have environmental effects and therefore Helius Energy has determined that an environmental impact assessment (EIA), pursuant to 'The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009', will be undertaken. Various technical assessments will be carried out by a

team of independent specialist consultants. The findings of these assessments will be set out in an Environmental Statement which will be submitted as part of the application to the IPC.

Helius Energy will consult with various statutory bodies concerning the scope of the EIA prior to submitting a Scoping Statement to the IPC for a formal response. The principal potential significant impacts identified by Helius Energy, and to be addressed within the Environmental Statement, include:

- Effect on local air quality
- Visual impact
- Effect of transport movements
- Noise and vibration effects
- Effect on ecological interests
- Economic Regeneration and new job generation
- Carbon savings and sustainability

Detailed assessments will seek to assess the impact of the proposed scheme on the existing locality, taking other proposed schemes into account where applicable. The assessments will seek to maximise any beneficial impacts on the local community while identifying any viable mitigation measures where appropriate.

Consultation Strategy

Helius Energy is seeking the public and stakeholder's views on the proposed scheme and, where relevant, the proposed measures to mitigate any potentially significant local impacts identified by the environmental impact assessment. In addition to gaining the views of the local community, community engagement will provide the opportunity to inform the local community about the proposed scheme and for the local community to ask questions about the proposals.

Helius Energy informally consulted with Southampton City Council regarding the community consultation strategy to ensure the consultation reaches out to all members of the community who may be affected by the proposed development.

The application preparation process is interactive and therefore, in order to allow for third party responses or additional studies as required, specific dates for the consultation exercises proposed have not been specified however Helius Energy undertakes to advertise the various consultation activities in the local newspaper and on the project website, where appropriate, and has set out indicative timeframes within this document.

Community consultation will take place in two phases as set out below.

Phase I: Informal consultation

Phase I of the community consultation will involve informal consultation with the local community representatives including local residents associations & community groups and locally elected community representatives. Please see the Community Consultation Strategy document for the full list of these individuals and organisations. Local Councillors will also be kept informed about the proposals.

The aim of Phase I is to inform the local community about the project and identify the potential impacts of the scheme on that community. This phase will provide the opportunity for the local community, through their local community representatives, to learn more about the proposed scheme and identify any perceived or potential impacts of the scheme on the locality.

Phase I will be undertaken immediately following the publication of the SoCC and is expected to last around 2 months, followed by a period of 28 days minimum for consultees to submit written responses to the applicant. Phase I will be undertaken while the various environmental studies are being completed.

The local community representatives will be introduced to the proposed scheme in writing and will receive copies of a Project Summary which will outline the proposed scheme along with the SoCC and Community Consultation Strategy document and the Scoping Statement, which sets out the topics that the environmental impact assessment will examine. All local community representatives will be invited comment on the proposals. The opportunity will be given to attend a face to face meeting to discuss the project and provide any appropriate feedback.

The project website will be launched at the start of Phase I. The website will provide details of the project directly to the members of the public. All documents circulated to the local community representatives will also be made available on the project website. Members of the public will be able to contact Helius Energy through the project website during this phase to ask questions about the proposed scheme and can register to receive a notification when the website is updated with new information. A copy of all the information provided on the website will also be available in Shirley Library and from the Marchwood Parish Council Clerk.

Phase II: Formal consultation

Phase II will involve formal consultation with the local community and will be undertaken once the majority of the environmental assessments have been completed. It is anticipated Phase II will commence in December 2010. The aim of this phase of the consultation is to inform the local community on the outcomes of the environmental impact assessment, including any anticipated effects of the scheme on the locality. Views will be sought on the mitigation measures proposed within the scheme design.

A Non Technical Consultation Document will be published, providing a summary of the various environmental studies undertaken in non technical language. The publication of the Non Technical Consultation Document will be advertised in the Daily Echo and copies of the document will be available in

the Shirley Library and on the project website. A copy of the document will also be sent to the local community representatives and local Councillors.

Two public exhibitions will also be held at the start of this phase to provide the opportunity for the local community to meet with Helius Energy's project team.

Representatives from the specialist consultants responsible for assessing the areas of specific concern to the local community will also attend to answer more specific questions. It is anticipated these will include emissions to air, ecological, noise and vibration and transportation effects.

It is intended that the exhibitions will be held at two separate community centres or halls within the local area. The date and location of the exhibitions will be advertised in the local newspaper, on the project website and through a leaflet drop to residential properties and business premises in Freemantle, Millbrook, Marchwood and Redbridge in the areas identified above. The local community representatives, local Councillors and employers within the Port of Southampton will also receive an invitation to the exhibitions.

The exhibitions will take place on two separate days, during the week, and will run into the evening to ensure the widest possible access. Information about the project will be communicated through the use of posters and copies of the Non Technical Consultation Document will be available for review.

Members of the local community will have a minimum of 28 days following the public exhibitions to make comments on the content of the Non Technical Consultation Document. The deadline for responses will be specified in all advertisements, on the project website and on all copies of documents and leaflets published. The website will provide a facility for members of the public to submit their comments on the proposals. Members of the public will also be able to submit written comments at both public exhibitions.

Consultation feedback

Feedback on consultation is important to ensure the local community know their views have been heard. The main source of feedback from the community consultation will be in the form of the Consultation Report, which will be submitted with the application to the IPC.

The Consultation Report will include a summary of all community representations and Helius Energy's response. The Consultation Report will be circulated to the local community representatives and local Councillors as well as a copy being available in the Shirley Library and on the project website once the application has been accepted by the IPC. Helius Energy may also provide direct feedback to individuals where appropriate.

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