

**MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL ENERGY FORUM
THURSDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2007 @ YHA, 18 KING STREET, WAKEFIELD**

Present:

Ian McCubbin	AEA Energy & Environment
Gerard Morris	Environment Agency
Mike Salamon	Federation of Small Businesses
Richard Lee	Future Energy Yorkshire
Tim Godson	GOYH
Andrew Ellis	Harrogate BC
Alan Jones	Leeds City Council
Barnaby Fryer	Microgeneration Yorkshire
Nigel Yaxley	Nigel Yaxley Ltd
Lance Saxby	Ryedale Energy Conservation Group
Malcolm Joslin	UK BP
David Bowe (Chair)	UK Coal Task Force
John Slater (for Keith Pitcher)	University of Leeds
Jim Swithenbank	University of Sheffield
Helen Todd	Yorkshire & Humber Assembly
Martyn Roberts	Yorkshire & Humber Assembly

Apologies:

Dick Bradford	Barnsley MBC
Cllr Newman	Barnsley MBC
Andrew Waller	City of York CC
John Harris	Coal Authority
Gideon Richards	Consulting with a Purpose
Mike Farley	Doosan Babcock Energy Limited
Melanie Wedgbury	Drax Power Ltd
Jon Barnes	E.on UK Renewables
Chantal Thomas	Energy Wholesale, E.O.N.
Robert Clark	ESD
Susannah Brown	Future Energy Yorkshire
Les Saunders	GOYH
John Bell	Hull CC
Kay Beagley	Kirklees MC
Tanya Christensen	Microgeneration Yorkshire
Cllr John Briggs	North Lincs CC
Robert Warren	Npower-renewables
Laura Collins	Ryedale Energy Conservation Group
Bill Adams	TUC
Keith Pitcher	University of Leeds
Adrian McDonald	University of Leeds
Cllr Denise Jeffery	Wakefield MDC
Andy Horrocks	Yorkshire & Humber Assembly
Will Kemp	Yorkshire & Humber Assembly
Stephen Brown	Yorkshire Forward
Debbie Rosen	Yorkshire Forward
Richard Hall	Yorkshire Water

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and announced apologies from Andy Horrocks.

It was decided to hold item 7 on the Agenda before item 4.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Attention was drawn to the meeting held with John Healey MP in June. The Chair stated that Malcolm Wicks MP is now the new Minister for Energy therefore a meeting should be sought with him and possibly also Phil Woolas MP, Climate Change Minister.

DB advised that the meeting with John Healey was very interesting, looking at getting projects off the ground, particularly carbon capture storage and others. However, desperate for the finance mechanism. DB pointed out the headlines in the Yorkshire Post that day – “Yorkshire may lead world in green power production”.

3. Carbon Reduction Commitment Consultation

Martyn Roberts gave an overview of this paper on behalf of Andy Horrocks and stated that the consultation concludes on 9th October 2007. Points raised during the resulting discussions included:-

- Electricity usage by manufacturers was going down – will it drive manufacturers overseas and thereby make life more difficult and counterproductive? (Action - incorporate in the response)
- Immensely complicated mechanism for businesses to understand – money spent on permits gets paid back, aim to focus people on what energy they are using.
- Aimed at reducing carbon consumption not energy
- Seen as laying ground work for carbon trading
- It was mentioned that the DBERR Energy Efficiency Measures Report is available. Copy to be circulated.
- Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act – There is the potential to see an organisation or an individual taking the Local Authority to court.
- Good practice needs to be promoted – more contact with Local Authorities.
- Concern over Local Authorities reporting on their own CO₂ emissions.

Any comments or suggestions please feed these back to Martyn.

4. The Status of Biofuels Report

Ian McCubbin provided an overall view and context for the work using a presentation to present his findings, notably that it is an EU priority to expand use of liquid biofuels for transport. He considered the region was well placed to supply liquid biofuels, however there were

ACTION

DB/AH

MR/HT

All

constraints for amount of land available for crop production. Biodiesel is already in production, and 2 large bioethanol plants could be developed. The Humber would be a good location for development of a second-generation biofuels plant and there could be benefits for other industries if biofuels were developed further. However, there are future threats to be considered. Ian suggested some specific actions that could be taken. The conclusions from the study were that liquid biofuels can contribute to regional policy objectives and though this produces potential opportunities and benefits there are also risks and drawbacks.

In response to earlier Forum comments, Ian mentioned that there is substantial interest in the UK and also since the draft version in June there are concerns about global sustainability.

The Chair invited comments around the table to discuss relevant issues. Key points included:-

- BP at Saltend have recently announced plans with DuPont and British Foods to build a 300,000 tonne plant in December. Proposals also to build a demo plant looking at developing a commercial method to produce biobutanol, also looking at using non-food elements of wheat, for instance, for second generation fuels.
- Concern raised over environmental issues, irrigation systems, etc. Also some issues with Table 5, page 15 in the report.
- Mention should be made of farm waste, particularly methane.
- Future Energy Yorkshire have applied for funding to look at developing grid connected renewables and anaerobic digestion will form part of this.
- Conversion implications particularly when fertilizer is used often from fossil fuel source to increase feedstocks.
- Sustainability criteria
- Distinguish more positively different sorts of biofuels
- Changes in economics and land use - fluctuate quite rapidly. Also concern about food production, crop failures and flooding which will have an impact.
- Mention was made that nitrous oxides are higher in biofuels and may be classed as higher than CO₂ emissions.
- Energy from waste – bus fleet relevant to biogas. This has not had a focus in this study.

Look at launching report before Christmas.

5. Vision for Biomass

Ian McCubbin gave an update on the vision for biomass for Yorkshire and the Humber and stated that a high regional priority has been attached to this within the Regional Energy Infrastructure Strategy. The vision has been amended to the following "To enable the region to realise the benefits of reduced greenhouse gas emissions, increased security of energy supplies for heat, power and transport, and regional environmental improvements through the development of a strong and sustainable biomass industry." Following the last meeting the objectives have also been updated to reflect the vision.

DB/AH

Ian mentioned the action plan highlights which included; raising awareness, develop markets, develop fuel supply chains, biomass in regeneration, regulations and planning, and funding support. Ongoing discussions were being held with Yorkshire Forward regarding the business plan for this area. A response was made to earlier Forum comments.

The Chair again invited questions for Ian. Key points raised were as follows:-

- A substantive action plan for schools. In the report 5.2 Development of markets, objective 4.3 (page 43), school refurbishment programme – there is a business case for this.
- In the report 5.6 Funding support (page 50) remove reference to the Low Carbon Buildings Programme.
- There are some spelling mistakes and incorrect place names – proof reading required.
- It was mentioned that biomass differs from coal in that it contains a lot of hydrogen. Combustion is involved in drying. Use condensing boilers to access the higher calorific value, thermal transformers to convert low grade to high grade heat.
- Look at supply chains for process – agricultural side. Contact National Non-Food Crops Centre in York and the Central Science Laboratory.
- There is to be an Envirenergy Event at the Royal Armouries in Leeds on 18th October. Stephen Brown of Yorkshire Forward has suggested that we launch the “Vision for Biomass” at this event. Richard Lee announced that Biomass Energy Yorkshire website is also planned to be launched at the event.
- Further clarification should be made on the differences between biomass and waste.
- The Regional Waste Strategy is currently not being driven forward – lack of clarity.
- Debate about energy from waste – consider inviting Recycling In Action Yorkshire to attend a future meeting to discuss further.
- There is no mention of ash in the report. It was mentioned that Drax and Ferrybridge can still sell ash derived from biomass.

Action: Look at launching report with Yorkshire Forward.

6. Carbon Capture and Storage

Martyn Roberts gave a brief overview on this item.

It was mentioned that Yorkshire Forward have a meeting this week to undertake a serious study on economic realities.

Key points raised included:-

- How to roll out and develop cost per tonne per carbon saving. Very expensive area.
- Scale you can do this at is potentially a cheap way if the value can be captured. Does have potential, cheaper than other forms of zero carbon energy.
- Find out what projects are happening and promote these to Ministers. Action: research for next meeting.

DB/AH

DB

Dates for launch of Carbon Capture and Storage Competition may change if there is a general election before the end of the year.

7. Coal in the Region

Nigel Yaxley gave an update on coal in the region using a Powerpoint presentation. He announced that the background to this was the 'Vision for Coal', which was launched in November 2005, and an update was prepared for the previous meeting, at which various points were raised. He hoped that today's update would clarify some of these points.
Action - A copy of the presentation to be circulated to the group.

NY/HT

NY took questions from the Forum. A question was raised about whether biomass was included in the Drax burn statistics as unclear. Further consideration to be given to what kind of biomass can be put into power stations and their energy efficiency.

8. Low Carbon Buildings Programme

Barnaby Fryer provided an update on the Low Carbon Buildings Programme. He advised that problems with the programme were well publicised, with householder grants running out within an hour of becoming available each month. The scheme was suspended for restructuring, and then re-launched in June, but is now underspent.

Householder grants will remain available until March 09 or until the money runs out. No figures available yet on take up in the region. There have been staff changes within the scheme at Energy Saving Trust, which have added to the difficulties. In terms of business grants, the final deadlines for funding applications have already passed.

Community and public sector grants were put into a dedicated, non-competitive stream some time ago. This dedicated £50m pot has suffered from high inertia - initial slow uptake but application numbers are now picking up. Local installer base has been heavily suppressed by the structure of the scheme. A lottery funded grant pot for community renewables should go live early next year.

In summary, grants are still available for both householders and communities. Businesses are now the only sector that has no grant support scheme for renewable energy installations. The Government's stated position is that there will be no grant support scheme post LCBP.

BF/DB

Action: Barnaby to provide a short note outlining problems. DB to write to a Minister explaining concerns.

It was mentioned that the grant scheme was acting as a barrier rather than as an incentive.

9. Any Other Business

Changes to the RSS coming out on Friday. Could be an issue for next meeting.

Venue suggestions required for holding meeting after next in the Region.

All

It was noted that there has been movement on the Merton Rule – a live issue. Significant development to source carbon from on-site generation.

10 Date of Next Meeting

December 2007 – date to be advised.

HT

Helen Todd

Service Administrator, Sustainable Development & Strategy Integration

2nd October 2007