

Navitus Bay – Public Exhibition (12th February 2013)

The Navitus Bay public exhibition was held on Tuesday 12th February 2013 at the Civic Offices and appears to have been well attended. There was much information on display, including visualisations and computer graphics enabling residents to view the wind farm from different perspectives (e.g. the road in which they live). Navitus Bay provided the following information, based on a number of questions asked.

Navitus Bay confirmed that there is a recommendation that the bulk of new offshore development (nationally) is outside a 12 nautical mile limit. Currently 90% of the round 3 plan (nationally) sits outside this limit. There is, however, no government guidance on the minimum distance offshore that windfarms should be placed from the coastline.

There are technical constraints that make it difficult to site Navitus Bay further out to sea (e.g. significantly higher presence of chalk, which could have an environmental impact if dispersed). Some adjustments have been made to the planned site, however, which has seen some distances to shore increase slightly.

Comparisons with the Prinses Amalia wind farm, off the Dutch coast, do not compare like with like. Navitus Bay has to generate a significantly higher capacity, therefore must have taller and more powerful turbines. Having said that adjustments have been made, including a reduction in the max number of turbines and a reduction in the height of the tallest turbines.

Navitus Bay's visualisations are in accordance with industry standards, adhere to Scottish Natural Heritage methodology and Navitus Bay will only amend its approach if there is a change in the methodology.

The environmental impact will be assessed in an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which is currently at its identification and assessment stage. The findings will be documented in an Environmental Statement (ES), which will be submitted as part of the application for development consent.

Although Navitus Bay is a relatively small development compared to some of the other round 3 licences, it nevertheless provides a significant increase to our current offshore wind capability (approaching a 50% increase on the current capacity). Although smaller than most of the other round 3 farms, Navitus Bay will still supply power to 790,000 homes and prevent 1.15 million tonnes of carbon emissions annually.

As some of the other phase 3 windfarms will take some time to come fully on line, Navitus Bay is considered to be an essential part of the whole, if the government is to meet its renewable energy targets by 2020.

Wave / tidal alternatives are considered to be 'emerging' technologies at the current time and are unlikely to be in a position to provide the same capacity as that required from Navitus Bay by 2020.