
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Proposal

- 1.1.1 Eco2 Lincs Ltd (hereafter referred to as Eco2) has submitted an application for planning permission to North Kesteven District Council, for the development of a Renewable Energy Plant at Sleaford, Lincolnshire (hereafter referred to as the Sleaford REP). The facility would comprise a biomass fired power station, for which the primary fuel would be straw. This is virtually identical to an earlier application submitted by the company for the same proposal. The only material difference relates to modification to the architectural treatment of the main buildings.
- 1.1.2 The Sleaford REP development would be based around four main buildings comprising the turbine and boiler hall (circa 2,550m² and 29.2m high) two straw storage barns (circa 3,160m² each and 15.3m high) and a wood storage building (circa 532m² and 14m high). These four buildings would be linked by a series of high level conveyors. In addition there would be stack (chimney) of 60m in height. The development would also include a series of air cooled condensers, offices, control room and staff welfare facilities, external hardstanding areas for vehicle manoeuvring / parking, a weighbridge and extensive perimeter landscaping.
- 1.1.3 The facility would have an electricity generating capacity of 40MW and would use circa 240,000 tonnes per annum of biomass, consisting primarily of baled straw sourced from the local area.
- 1.1.4 Eco2 is in the process of completing contracts for the straw fuel which will be sourced from producers within a 50 mile radius of the facility (the majority of which are significantly closer). Contracts for fuel supply will be based upon a 12 year initial commitment and result in over £6 million per annum investment into the local agricultural economy. Whilst the vast majority of fuel will be straw, the plant would be able to accept a modest proportion of other biomass (e.g. willow coppice) and clean, untreated wood, which would be delivered to the site as chippings.

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- 1.1.5 Vehicles delivering the biomass material would arrive at the site from an easterly direction. A new vehicular entrance off Boston Road would lead into a one-way circulation system. Vehicles would unload within one of two straw storage barns or the wood storage building. A vehicle routing agreement would be put in place to ensure that delivery vehicles do not pass through the settlement of Sleaford.
- 1.1.6 The facility has a design life of 25 years, following which it could be refurbished. It would take approximately 2.5 years to construct and commission the plant.
- 1.1.7 A detailed description of the Sleaford REP development is contained within Section 4.0 of this document.

2.1 The Site

- 1.2.1 The site comprises circa 5.8 hectares of arable agricultural land which lies between Boston Road (from which the site is accessed) and the A17, which runs some 300 metres to the east. It is located approximately 1.6 kilometres east of Sleaford town centre and 650 metres from the edge of the main settlement boundary, defined locally by a railway line/embankment. To the east, at a distance of around 1 kilometre is the small hamlet of Kirkby le Thorpe. The site is ostensibly flat and open, and stands at a level of circa 12-13 m AOD.
- 1.2.2 The site itself has no obvious defining features, other than a drainage ditch on its northern and eastern edge, and an (immediately) adjacent mature woodland copse, which narrows down into a broad hedgerow, and forms the site's eastern boundary. The copse contains, and largely conceals, a small potable water treatment/pumping facility.
- 1.2.3 Due to the very flat nature of the surrounding area, views into and out of the site can be long distance, but even relatively small features can provide a high degree of screening. In terms of context, there is practically no intervisibility between properties in Sleaford (i.e. within the defined settlement boundary) and the site due to the aforementioned railway embankment. This feature, which wraps around the western and southern aspects of the site (at around

600metres distance), together with a tall, long conifer hedge also curtails many views to / from the south. Some views from due east are masked by the copse. Elsewhere, principally to the north, north east and south east, views are open although traffic along the A17 (to the north and north east) provides a degree of visual interruption.

3.1 The Applicant

1.3.1 The Applicant is Eco2 Lincs Ltd, which is one of the Eco2 biomass companies.

1.3.2 The Eco2 biomass companies each hold the assets and contracts associated with a particular project. Development of the projects themselves is achieved through the use of the management skills, technical expertise and administration offered by Eco2 Ltd.

1.3.3 The main development company, Eco2 Ltd, specialises in initiating, developing, financing and operating renewable energy projects throughout the UK. The company is committed to developing a broad based renewable energy business. It is this commitment that has already yielded considerable success across a wide range of renewable technology projects relating to biomass, wind farms, and landfill gas over the last five years.

1.3.4 Eco2 Lincs Ltd has been formed by the shareholders and senior management of Eco2 Ltd to facilitate the funding of the Sleaford REP. The total project cost will be around £80million and this will be funded through a combination of equity and bank debt which is a typical method of funding large investment projects such as this.

4.1 This Document

1.4.1 This document is the Environmental Statement (ES), which has been prepared to accompany the planning application. It describes the potential environmental effects of the proposed scheme, both during its construction and operation. It has been prepared in accordance with European Community (EC) Directives on the assessment of the effects of certain projects upon the environment (85/337/EEC updated by 97/11/EEC). This legislation is now manifest in England through the Town and Country Planning (Environmental

Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 (the EA Regulations), with which this report is fully compliant.

1.4.2 Section 2.0 of the ES outlines the scope of the assessment whilst Section 3.0 deals with the need for the development. Section 4.0 then describes the development in detail and Section 5.0 provides a detailed overview of planning policies and guidance, relevant to the determination of the planning application. Sections 6.0 to 13.0 assess the potential environmental impacts of the proposal during its construction and operation, including proposed mitigation measures, under a series of headings. Finally, Section 14.0 summarises the findings of the assessment.