



Renewable Energy Systems Limited
Willowbank Business Park, Willowbank Road, Millbrook, Larne
County Antrim, Northern Ireland BT40 2SF, United Kingdom
T +44 (0)28 2844 0580 F +44 (0)1923 299 299
E info@res-group.com www.res-group.com

The Committee for the Environment
Room 247
Parliament Buildings
Stormont Estate
BELFAST
BT4 3XX

Our ref: DV01-010173

12 November 2013

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RES Response to Local Government Reorganisation Bill Consultation

RES is one of the world's leading independent renewable energy project developers with operations across Europe, North America and Asia-Pacific. At the forefront of wind energy development for over 30 years, RES has developed and/or built more than 7,500 MW of wind energy capacity worldwide. In the UK alone, RES currently has more than 1,000 MW of onshore wind energy either constructed, under construction or consented. RES is active in a range of renewable energy technologies including large-scale biomass, solar, offshore wind, wave and tidal and on-site renewable installations.

From our office in Larne, RES has been at the forefront of wind farm development in Northern Ireland since the early 1990s. To date we have developed 20 wind energy projects across Northern Ireland. Our recently extended office in the Willowbank Business Park currently supports 21 staff.

RES welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Local Government Reorganisation Bill as this will provide the legislative framework for the re-organised local Councils from April 2015. RES' specific comments on the Bill are outlined below:

Part 9 Conduct of Councillors – Code of Conduct – RES would be of the opinion that a code of conduct should be issued providing a framework for Councillor responsibilities and proper practices, and that this code of conduct should be in place prior to the implementation of the Reform of Public Administration. RES also believes that the Councillors Code of Conduct should be extended to make provisions for responsibilities and practices pertaining to the planning process.

Part 10 Community Planning – RES believes that community planning provides a welcome opportunity for communities to become involved in sustainable development within their area. We welcome the inclusion of environmental objectives being a core element of Community Plans, as well as the objectives of achieving sustainable development in Northern Ireland. Given the importance of renewable energy in helping to achieve these objectives, as well as the scale of the natural resources available in Northern Ireland, RES suggest that a further long term objective for Community Plans should be *“Positively plan for renewable and low carbon energy generation in order to improve the environmental, economic and social well-being of the district”*.

RES also believes that the renewable energy sector should be represented on community planning partnership panels and that the sector should have an input into the development of the area plan.

Once the Community Plan is produced and published, RES believes that it would be beneficial to allow a period of consultation on the document as the finalised plan will not be subject to review until the end of a 4 year period.

However RES believes that large scale renewable energy projects and associated grid infrastructure should be considered of national significance and as such, decisions on them made centrally. By their very nature, wind energy developments have the potential to go beyond a single district council area, both in terms of potential impacts and benefits.

RES proposes that wind farm applications over 5MW continue to be assessed centrally as Major Applications due to their strategic importance and potential in meeting the ambitious targets for renewable energy as set out in the Strategic Energy Framework 2010.

RES looks forward to the continued engagement with Department of Environment and other stakeholders in developing an appropriate policy framework for the implementation for Local Government Reform.

Yours faithfully,

Lucy Whitford – BY EMAIL

Head of Development - Ireland

E lucy.whitford@res-ltd.com

D +44 (0)28 2844 0592