Renewable Energy: South West

Written Question

Sarah Wollaston (Totnes, Conservative)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change what assessment his Department has made of the potential for (a) tidal power, (b) wind power and (c) solar power in renewable energy projects in (i) Totnes constituency, (ii) South Devon and (iii) the South West.

Gregory Barker (Minister of State (Climate Change), Energy and Climate Change)

The Department assessed the potential development of marine energy projects in England and Wales as part of the development of the Second Offshore Energy Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) scoping report. The SEA Environmental report has just been published and is now open for consultation. The SEA should pave the way for future leasing rounds for marine (wave and tidal) energy in English waters.

The Department has funded renewable and low carbon energy opportunity assessment studies covering some onshore renewable technologies in England, including for the south-west. We believe that the studies will be helpful to local planning authorities and local communities in drawing up local and neighbourhood plans. It will be for local planning authorities and communities to decide how best to use the findings of the studies to inform their development plans and to maximise opportunities for the deployment of renewable and low carbon energy in their areas.

DECC has not made an assessment of offshore wind potential in the south-west. However, in January 2010, the Crown Estate leased the Bristol Channel Round 3 offshore wind Zone 8 to RWE Npower Renewables, the UK subsidiary of RWE Innogy. The target capacity for this zone is 1.5 GW. The total Bristol Channel zone area is 950 km(2).

Following the award of the zone, RWE Npower renewables announced their intention to develop a 1.5 GW wind farm called ‘Atlantic Array’ within the zone. The site extends over 492 km(2) and is 14 km from the north Devon coast and 18 km from the south Wales coast at its closest point.

The Element Energy report on ‘The Growth Potential for Microgeneration in England, Wales and Scotland’ provides an overall picture of the current and potential future level of demand for microgeneration, including solar power. It includes regional specific information. Further information is available at: Department of Energy and Climate Change

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