

Interaction with the North West Development Agency, Businesslink NW and Envirolink 5.6.9

Visit by Steve Dealler and Steve Jenkins to them in Warrington. The aim was to see how these organisations, that were funded by Government sources, could be of value to the company that was to be set up to organise the wind farm planning applications and then the wind farm creation.

Initially Steve Jenkins describes the Transition City Lancaster group and how its directions should be looked on as part of a much larger movement that is international and seen by Government as a major opportunity.

Steve Dealler describes the business behind Transition City Lancaster Renewable Energy Company and how it is expected to create income which would allow a much greater decrease in carbon footprint by the town than if this was done by major corporations. Also, the mathematics of the company income was rapidly gone over indicating how quickly any investor would be expected to see a return.

One of the major factors that appeared was that we were local and that the extremely difficult problems concerning planning was about local people not wanting the wind farms locally.

We were then asked questions and discussions by the three people present:

1. **Helen Seagrave.** Helen.Seagrave@nwda.co.uk (working with Joe.Flanagan@nwda.co.uk). NWDA but contactable through Envirolink. She has been involved in wind farm projects off-shore and the extreme difficulty with on-shore wind farms has made it clear that they were extremely economic at this time. She understood the ROC system and why this would be expected to allow any wind farm produced at this time to remain economic for a long period. She asked:
 - a. Had we contacted Wind Prospect? I was not sure but in fact we have.
 - b. She claimed that Community Windpower Ltd (the one applying for Claughton Moor) did in fact return some of the money to the community.
 - c. Had we looked into CLASP? This may well have a good model for renewable energy.

2. **Nicola Ball.** From Envirolink Northwest n.ball@envirolinknorthwest.co.uk 01725 856037. She did not say a lot but this became clear when she said that a new section to their group was being recruited at the current time and should be in place by August:
 - a. A planning specialist
 - b. Help wrt planning policy of the local councils (she was warned that they did not look any further than PPS22)
 - c. Financing of renewable energy models.
 - d. Grid Connections. (she said that Electricity NW in fact was in charge locally and had given much of the work to United Utilities but it was not UU that one should contact for data about link-ups of wind farms to the grid.

- e. Interim specialists would be available from around July.
3. **Jan Collier.** From Businesslink jan.collier@businesslinknw.co.uk based in Preston. We had made it clear that we were expecting for money that we created would be expected not just to decrease carbon in the atmosphere but also to create much more in terms of turnover and employment in the area. I.e. if we (and not big corporations like Eon) put in the wind farms then the money would remain within the economy. She was exceptionally encouraging.
- a. She would organise at least 2 specific **advisors for business set up and layout advice.** We would pick one of them.
 - b. She realised that this was the sort of company that would appeal to **business ‘Angel’ risk investors**, who assessed things in a particular manner. She could organise and arrange interactions with them as soon as we had become a company with a business plan and the sort of layout that would be expected (much the same as Andrew King would expect). She was talking about large sums and would come up to see us here and go over exactly what we had to show to them in order to make it all work.
 - c. **Contact with Grants.** She realised that grants certainly were not the answer to any long going company but they often did help at this point. Apparently there is someone called Ben Terry that has access to many small pots sitting around and is based here in Lancaster.
 - d. **Links into official structures.** There is the local equivalent of her locally and others in the UK. She would send examples.
 - e. **Premises.** It was realised that we would require a manager and probably 3 people working with the manager at some point and that would appear within the first year. We told her that a lot of the work currently was being done voluntarily. Apparently there are local economic partnerships. She would send us details. The aim of this **would be to look for office sites centrally in Lancaster.**
 - f. **Employer activity.** The fact that we would probably have to be employers in all this means that we would have to know about various factors. There is a group called ‘train to gain’ that would help dramatically in terms of organising skills development for us, and for any manager, for the taking on of a manager, advertising, leadership.

We were asked as to when any company could be set up and SD/SJ suggested mid-July. In fact the aim of this was to make sure that we in fact turned up with things faster than this.

We were given a document showing all the local renewable energy companies in the NW.

The meeting was exceptionally helpful and showed good ways in which help would be available for the setting up of the company of an early standard, but aimed at large amounts of risk capital.

Steve Dealler