

renewable energy

The logo for Airtricity features the word "Air" in red and "tricity" in blue, with a stylized green and yellow swoosh element between them.

Airtricity

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**Public Inquiries: Lessons Learned
BWEA28 10th October 2006**





Topics to be covered

- Public Inquiries – should we be concerned?
- What are the practical implications?
- What are the benefits?
- What are the risks?
- Airtricity's experience to date.
- Key Findings.
- Summary



Public Inquiries – should we be concerned?

- 7 projects (1163MW) awaiting inquiry decision
- 8 projects (1322 MW) awaiting inquiry date
- 70 projects (3000MW) awaiting planning decision
- Potential for inquiry process to seriously inhibit development progress





What are the practical implications of going to public inquiry?

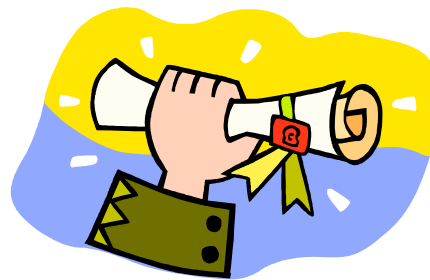
- Cost – double the initial development budget
- Delay in obtaining decision – 12 – 24 month wait
- Resource Implications – significant constraints on developer, planning authority, SNH etc





What are the benefits?

- Provides the means to challenge a refusal of planning permission.
- Can secure an independent assessment free of political bias
- Enables thorough examination of issues
- Ability to participate more fully in drafting of conditions and Section 75/106 Agreements
- May offer a quicker route to a decision





What are the risks?

- If already refused by local authority – nothing to lose
- Deemed refusal may appear attractive to reduce delays
- Reporter/Inspector can investigate any aspect, not just the grounds of refusal.
- Appeals can be conjoined – introduces competitive element between projects
- Increased uncertainty over decision – very difficult to pre-judge the outcome of an inquiry.





Airtricity's experience to date

Greenock – 55MW

- October 2001 – Scoping
- May 2003 – Application
- November 2003 – Local Authority Objection
- March 2005 – Public Inquiry
- October 2006 – Awaiting decision





Airtricity's experience to date

Clyde 579MW

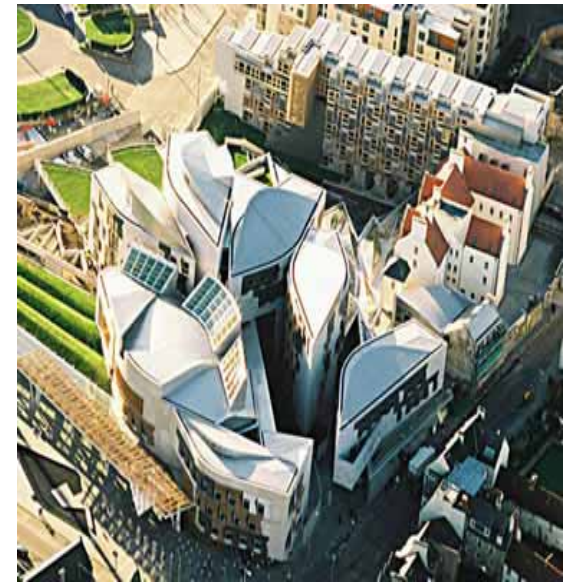
- February 2003 – Scoping
- November 2004 – Application
- June 2005 – Local Authority Objection
- August 2006 – Public Inquiry Opened
- October 2006 – Public Inquiry due to close
- April 2007 – Reporter due to complete report
- October 2007 – decision??





Key Findings

- Very expensive.
- Community unlikely to participate to same extent as at planning application stage
- 2 or 3 key issues emerge from inquiry process
- Generates a mountain of paperwork
- Constrains development of other projects
- Does not result in quick decision making





Summary

- ✓ Factor in potential costs of having to go to public inquiry
- ✓ Be aware of expert witness requirements when commissioning EIA
- ✓ Be prepared for a long wait

