



Press Release: 22/02/2010

## **DUDDON ESTUARY TIDAL ENERGY** **STUDY UNDERWAY**

A STUDY is underway to explore options for tidal energy generation across the Duddon Estuary in South Cumbria. Tidal barrages, fences, reefs and other innovative technologies will all be considered along with the potential for a road link between Barrow-in-Furness and Millom at the southern tip of Britain's Energy Coast™.

Regeneration organisation Britain's Energy Coast West Cumbria has commissioned consultants Parsons Brinckerhoff to undertake a feasibility study which will help to identify the best options for any potential development. Parsons Brinckerhoff will review the findings of previous studies carried out by Balfour Beatty and Sir Robert McAlpine for the Department for Trade and Industry back in 1994; while taking into account the recent revival of interest in tidal energy and the introduction of challenging renewable energy and carbon reduction targets.

Previous studies have suggested the Duddon Estuary has potential to generate around 100MW of energy – enough to power in the region of 200,000 homes – and provide a new transport link that would cut 17 miles off the current journey between Barrow and Millom.

This latest study for a *Duddon Estuary Tidal Energy Scheme* will examine options from an energy, infrastructure and environmental perspective. It will assess the suitability of existing and emerging tidal technologies, set against the cost of development and, of huge importance, the potential environmental impact of any scheme. It will also set options against the wider context of the pressing need to update Cumbria's connection to the National Grid and to improve transport links in Furness and West Cumbria to support the wider Britain's Energy Coast™ initiative.

The study has been funded with a £30,000 grant from Britain's Energy Coast West Cumbria and a further £30,000 from the Carbon Challenge Fund, which is administered by the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA). Britain's Energy Coast West Cumbria is to hold a workshop for invited key stakeholders in March, and a second more comprehensive workshop before it publishes the findings of the study in the summer.

**Stuart Cowperthwaite, Programme Director of Britain's Energy Coast West Cumbria**, said: "With Cumbria poised to play an important role in tackling the pressing issues of climate change and energy security through the Britain's Energy Coast initiative, it is an ideal time to revisit and update the potential for tidal energy

generation across the Duddon Estuary. Alongside tidal schemes being considered for Morecambe Bay and the Solway Firth; continued offshore and emerging community-owned onshore developments; and the County's first farm-based anaerobic digestion plant about to come on line, we are starting to see a brighter, more prosperous and greener future emerge."

**Simon Sjenitzer, Strategy Director at Cumbria Vision**, said: "Tidal power is in constant development and therefore it is important we examine all existing and emerging technologies to find the best possible option for the Duddon Estuary, along with other schemes for the Solway Firth and Morecambe Bay. Cumbria already has a strong cluster of businesses involved in tidal energy which could play an important part in delivering schemes not only in Cumbria, but in Britain and further afield."

**Steven Broomhead, Chief Executive, Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA)** said: "As part of our commitment to creating a low carbon economy, thorough delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan the NWDA continues to work with regional partners on a range of projects and initiatives such as the Carbon Challenge Fund. The Duddon Estuary Tidal Energy Scheme will also compliment the work we have undertaken for the Solway Firth and the Mersey, and allow us to identify how we can help meet the government's targets relating to renewable energy generation and carbon reduction."

The start of the Duddon Estuary feasibility study comes just a few weeks after the publication of the *Solway Firth Energy Feasibility Study*, which identified options for four tidal barrages, two lagoons and three tidal reefs which could generate between 100MW and 6GW of energy. The findings can be found at [www.solwayenergygateway.co.uk](http://www.solwayenergygateway.co.uk).

The importance of tidal energy in Cumbria's push to become a major generator of low carbon and renewable energy, was outlined in a recent study written by renowned environmental scientist Sir Martin Holdgate entitled *The Scope for Renewable Energy in Cumbria*\*\* . While Sir Martin outlined the huge potential for tidal schemes he stressed the importance of striking a balance between energy generation and the need to protect Cumbria's stunning natural environment.

**Ends**

#### NOTES TO EDITORS

\*\**The Scope for Renewable Energy in Cumbria* says Cumbria is poised to meet a third of its total energy needs from renewable sources by 2020, and double that by 2050. By 2050 the County could become a significant exporter of renewable energy with 5.5gigawatts\*\* (5.5GW) of installed capacity, and meet the energy needs of over 300,000 people through a vibrant mix of wind, hydro, tidal, solar, geothermal and biomass. In turn this could create and safeguard in the region of 7,000 jobs and bring a significant boost to businesses and investors. The full study and its findings are available to download at the *Renewable Energy* section of [www.cumbriavision.co.uk](http://www.cumbriavision.co.uk).

#### About Britain's Energy Coast™

The Britain's Energy Coast™ initiative aims to establish the boroughs of Copeland, Allerdale and Furness as major generators of low carbon and renewable energy, helping to transform the local economy while at the same time supporting Britain's response to the pressing challenges of climate change and energy security. The initiative includes not only the construction of a least one new nuclear power station but also improvements in grid transmission, infrastructure, education, hospitals, skills

and R&D and enterprise as well as the development of other renewable and low carbon energy sources. Together these developments will transform the West Cumbrian economy whilst providing clean sustainable energy for the UK.

[www.britainsenergycoast.com](http://www.britainsenergycoast.com)

1: For further information contact Cumbria Vision PR & Communications Manager Luke Diccico on 07799035390 or email [luke.diccico@cumbriavision.co.uk](mailto:luke.diccico@cumbriavision.co.uk).

2: Cumbria Vision is the organisation charged with leading the economic regeneration of Cumbria and is responsible for identifying clear priorities for investment; bringing together skills and higher paid jobs; promoting private sector investment and growth. [www.cumbriavision.co.uk](http://www.cumbriavision.co.uk)

3: Cumbria Vision is supported by the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA), that works to deliver economic success in England's Northwest by building the competitiveness of businesses, people and places. Leading the region towards a low carbon economy by ensuring the Northwest reduces its environmental impact, adapts to climate change and capitalises on key business opportunities.

- The NWDA's Carbon Challenge Fund is a key part of the Northwest Climate Change Action Plan, which sets out the region's mission to become the leader on climate change by 2020, and is being delivered by the Northwest Climate Change Partnership. [www.climatechangenorthwest.co.uk](http://www.climatechangenorthwest.co.uk)
- The Carbon Challenge Funds support the deployment of low carbon technologies by minimising the risk of investment in new and innovative technologies, processes and approaches by signifying and monitoring their effectiveness, providing an incentive for adoption and demonstrating leadership.

4: Cumbria County Council is a founding partner of and the accountable body for Cumbria Vision. [www.cumbria.gov.uk](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk)

5: Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB) ([www.bpworld.co.uk](http://www.bpworld.co.uk)) is one of the UK's leading energy consultants and is currently leading the consortium appointed by the Government to study the potential of tidal power on the Severn. They are a global leader in developing and operating infrastructure around the world, with around 15,000 employees dedicated to meeting the needs of clients and communities across Europe, Africa, the Americas, the Middle East, Asia and the Australia-Pacific region. Clients come to PB for a wide range of advice, skills and resources in strategic consulting, programme management, planning, engineering, design, construction management and operations. For over a century PB has earned a distinguished reputation for delivering world-class infrastructure and its technical expertise in transportation, power, community development, water and the environment.