Environmental impact assessment

In 2006, RSK produced a full environmental impact assessment (EIA) for a proposed new 500-MW, 139-turbine wind-farm development in the eastern Irish Sea for Morecambe Wind Ltd (Scottish Power–Elsam).

The landscape, seascape and visual impact assessments (LSVIA) included a detailed assessment from 18 coastal viewpoints from Cumbria to the Fylde coast and a cumulative assessment for six of the most sensitive viewpoint locations. The LSVIA for West of Duddon Sands was undertaken concurrently with that for the neighbouring proposed development at Walney.

The technical studies undertaken included baseline benthic and epibenthic surveys in the Morecambe Bay area, and an assessment of the planning policies, cumulative impacts and all aspects of the onshore works.

RSK undertook the detailed LSVIA of this Round 2 offshore wind farm, including all zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) plans and photomontage/wireframe images. A cumulative impact assessment was also undertaken for the four other offshore wind farms proposed within the eastern Irish Sea, including the production of cumulative ZTV plans and photomontage/wireframe images. Section 36 consent was given in 2008.

On- and offshore cable routes

RSK also undertook on- and offshore cable-routing studies for the West of Duddon Sands offshore wind farm. The specialist studies included an assessment of the implications of the project for coastal processes, benthic studies, assessments of the impacts on fish and shellfish, marine sediment contamination studies and archaeological surveys. The project gained consent in 2008.

In addition, RSK managed the EIA for a proposed extension to the existing electricity substation at Heysham. The extension was required to accommodate the power output produced by the proposed West of Duddon Sands offshore wind farm and connect it to the national grid. RSK managed the EIA process and conducted specialist EIA studies, including protected species surveys, ecological assessments, landscape and visual assessments, archaeology and cultural heritage evaluations, and geology, hydrology and socio-economic assessments.

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