

Ayrshire Powergrab newsletter



Shpeel and Ding Dong: Bringing even more coal and environmental damage to North Ayrshire

A new old-fashioned coal-fired power station that will waste more than 50% of the energy contained in its fossil fuel feedstock is proposed for North Ayrshire. ^[1]

Ayrshire Powergrab Ltd is a new company that has been formed by Manchester-based Shpeel and Denmark-based Ding Dong to develop plans for a new energy-wasting power station at Hunterston that will add unnecessary spare capacity to Scotland's already over-centralised power sector. ^[2]

Planning permission for the proposed development seems virtually guaranteed due to its late inclusion in

the Scottish Ministers' National Planning Framework document as one of fourteen special status "National Developments". ^[3]

The £2 billion project promises to create no more than 1500 temporary and 150 permanent jobs; compared to the 1700 being created for less than one tenth of the cost by the James Watt Dock development up the coast at Greenock. ^[4]

The proposed facility will burn large amounts of imported coal using the minimum required carbon capture and storage technology. Revenues from this surplus electricity will benefit first and foremost Shpeel's

shareholders and the Danish government who are majority owners of Ding Dong. ^[5]

In this issue:

Keeping you in the dark

Whose need?

Coal in, coal out

Plant emissions

Scotland's carbon budget

Continued>



The proposal to build a power station will require the additional import of 3.3 million tonnes of coal every year sourced from Russia, Colombia and South Africa

Keeping you in the dark

How to spring an unnecessary power plant on an unsuspecting public

January 2008

The Scottish Government publishes a discussion draft of the National Planning Framework 2 (NFP2) which again makes no mention of a new power station at Hunterston.

February 2008

Scottish Government planning officials meet with Clydeport. Clydeport is owned by the Shpeel Group. Clydeport reveals that a masterplan for Hunterston is in preparation and includes a 1600MW coal-fired power station.

April 2008

Clydeport submits a summary of its masterplan to the NFP2 consultation process. The document concedes that the proposals will not result in a "healthier" or "smarter" Scotland.

September 2008

The Scottish Government publishes a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the candidate national developments in the NPF2, which states that:

"It is important that stakeholder organisations and the public are given an opportunity to comment on the findings from this additional assessment work, before the proposed NPF is finalised."

The Hunterston development, it notes, *"is likely to result in significant adverse effects on a nationally protected biodiversity site.... Other potentially significant negative effects include emissions arising from shipping, which have the potential to be significant over the long term.... The health and atmospheric effects of the clean coal element of the development remain unclear..."*

October 2008

North Ayrshire Council considers the coal power station proposals for the first time. They duly submit their comments which, perhaps

surprisingly, neither welcome nor raise any serious concerns over the new proposals.

November 2008

News of Powergrab's proposals reaches a wider audience when the national media pick up the story.

December 2008

With the consultation "complete", the NFP2 is revised and passed to parliament for scrutiny and debate.

Powergrab submits to the Scottish Government an environmental scoping report which gives further details about the Hunterston proposals: a chimney stack around 152m high, boiler buildings approximately 115m high, dredging and infilling of existing seabird feeding areas, etc. The report insists that Shpeel and Ding Dong are:

"committed to extensive public consultation about their proposals. Plans will be made public well in advance of any planning application and the local community,

stakeholders, statutory planning and other consultees will be kept informed throughout the process. This will be done through a variety of different methods including briefings, brochures, leaflets and exhibitions”.

January 2009

At the beginning of January, the Scottish Government publishes the results of the SEA autumn consultation. Besides North Ayrshire Council, the RSPB, SEPA and Scottish Power have also contributed comments. Scottish Natural Heritage is oddly silent.

The RSPB expresses “serious concerns about biodiversity effects This is considered to be one of the two most important sites on the

Ayrshire coast for [wading birds]” and points out that “as carbon capture and storage is unproven, and it is unclear whether it would be built into the development from the start, this should be assessed as having a major (significant) negative effect on reducing energy consumption and / or CO2 emissions.”

With respect to the potential impact on human health, SEPA points to the need for “significant future assessment as the proposals are developed”.

June 2009

The local press carries an article by Kenny Gibson the local MSP who reports the results of his survey of local opinion on the development and

warns that the Powergrab is looking to the UK taxpayer to pick up a significant share of the tab for any carbon capture and storage equipment it is obliged to install. [6]

Following weeks of scrutiny in various parliamentary committees and a debate in the chamber, the NFP2 and Hunterston’s designation as a national development become law. Neither the local communities around Hunterston, nor the people of North Ayrshire, nor the wider Scottish public can now question the need for the development. Or so Ayrshire Powergrab and the Scottish Government would have us believe.

<p>Whose Need?</p>	<p>“There is a requirement for replacement electricity generation capacity in Scotland in the context of programmed closure of existing base load generating capacity. Hunterston offers the opportunity to develop a clean coal fired power station, a biomass/gas power station and associated downstream industrial processes all utilising the existing bulk handling terminal and jetty facilities.”</p>	<p>“There is a need for new baseload electricity generating capacity to replace the power stations programmed for closure over the next 20 years. Land at Hunterston offers the opportunity to develop a clean coal fired power station, a biomass/gas fired power station and associated downstream industrial processes using the existing bulk handling terminal, jetty facilities and grid connection.”</p>	<p>It is rather like one of those spot-the-difference games in <i>Puzzler</i> magazine.</p>
<p>Each national development listed in the NFP2 document requires the backing of a statement of need. This takes the form of a short paragraph that summarises why the development is indispensable to the Scottish people.</p>	<p>Compare this with the Scottish Governments own text in the Annex to NFP2 in June 2009 :</p>		<p>So far the Scottish Government has failed to produce any evidence of an independent critical assessment that demonstrates how the public needs of the Scottish people are so perfectly aligned with the private needs of a power industry polluter?</p>
<p>Here is the statement of need for Hunterston coal power as offered by Ayrshire Powergrab in April 2008:</p>			

“At a recent public meeting, which Ayrshire Power did not attend, it emerged that the company was seeking a government subsidy of £66 per tonne of coal burned on site. This is all the more outrageous as it comes from a company whose partner is 75 per cent owned by the Danish government, which will not allow Dong to build any new coal-fired power stations in its own country and is requiring Dong to spend millions of pounds over the next few years converting its existing coal stations to biomass, waste combustion and bio-ethanol. “

Extract of letter from David Campbell to the Scotsman, 31/08/09 [7]

Coal in, coal out

Import/export madness

The site alongside the existing Hunterston terminal currently handles 8 million tonnes of imported coal. This is more than the 7 million tonnes that Scotland extracts annually or the 6 million tonnes that the Scottish power sector burns as reported by the government's 2006 Scottish Energy Study.^[8]

Due to sulphur emissions legislation, most of the coal burnt in Scotland is imported (largely from Russia, South Africa and Colombia) and most of the coal extracted in Scotland is exported (mainly to England). For example Longannet burns only 23% Scottish.

Plant CO2 emissions

An unabated disaster

Shpeel and Ding Dong's scoping report states that the new coal plant will burn 3.3 million tonnes of coal annually. According to UK government figures, the combustion of 1 tonne of power station coal generates 2.28 tonnes of greenhouse gases in terms of their CO2 equivalent.^[9]

If Hunterston burns its coal unabated, that is without capturing any of the carbon dioxide, its annual greenhouse gas emissions will be 7.5 million tonnes. These would amount to 112.5 million tonnes in terms of CO2 in the first 15 years of service.

Scotland's carbon budget

Up in smoke

Scotland's CO2 budget for the period 2015 to 2029 is currently in the order of 660 million tonnes (assuming 52.5 million tonnes in 2015, 45 million tonnes in 2020 and 38.5 million in 2029).^[10]

The scoping report notes that carbon capture technology will only be fitted if it is "technically and financially viable" to do so.

It is therefore possible under current proposals that this coal-fired power station could account for more than one sixth of Scotland's entire carbon budget between 2015 and 2029.

"First Minister Salmond, we cannot avert our eyes from the basic fossil fuel facts, or the consequences for life on our planet of ignoring these fossil fuel facts. If we continue to build coal-fired power plants without full scale carbon capture, we will lock in future climate disasters associated with passing climate tipping points. We must solve the coal problem now."

Extract of open letter from NASA Climate Scientist James Hansen to Alex Salmond, published in the Scotsman, 31/01/09^[11]

References

- 1 <http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/files/pdfs/migrated/MultimediaFiles/Live/FullReport/7154.pdf> Decentralising Power
- 2 http://www.foe-scotland.org.uk/Attachment/125_PowerofScotland12ppt.pdf Power of Scotland Renewed
- 3 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/National-Planning-Policy/npp/Background#a1> NFP2
- 4 <http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/NewsR.aspx?id=554> James Watt Dock
- 5 <http://www.clydeandforthmedia.co.uk/media/ayrshirepowerstation.pdf> Hunterston Scoping Report
- 6 <http://www.largsandmillportnews.com/news/hunterston/> Millport and Largs Weekly News
- 7 <http://news.scotsman.com/opinion/Energy-dingdong.5601854.jp> Scotsman letter from David Campbell
- 8 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/01/19092748/7> Scottish Energy Study 2006
- 9 <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/business/reporting/pdf/20090928-guidelines-ghg-conversion-factors.xls>
- 10 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/climatechange/scotlands-action/climatechangeact> Climate Change Act
- 11 <http://thescotsman.scotsman.com/latestnews/In-full-Letter-to-the.4932922.jp> James Hansen's letter to the Scotsman

Links

<http://www.conchcampaign.org/index.html> Communities Opposed to New Coal at Hunterston
<http://www.rspb.org.uk/supporting/campaigns/campaignwithus/current/hunterston.asp?mediacode=T081TH0124&=125272>
http://www.wdmscotland.org.uk/news/press/NoNewCoal_Nov08.htm
<http://coalactionscotland.noflag.org.uk/>
<http://ayrshirepowergrab.wordpress.com/>

This newsletter has been produced by <http://ayrshirepowergrab.wordpress.com/> with the aim of filling in a few of the gaps in the information provided to the public by Ayrshire Power Limited.

Next issue: Coal and Health, Biodiversity Impacts, CCR and CCS, Frequently Unanswered Questions (FUQs)