### Key Issues –

- The Mersey Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Wetland Site is located less than 10m from the proposed wind farm site.
- Notable public interest in the scheme with around 550 people attending the exhibitions over three days.
- Collision risk assessment was completed for all species recorded flying through the proposed wind farm site. The results of the collision risk model indicate that there could be a potential impact on the local population of six species (Common Buzzard, Common Kestrel, Eurasian Hobby, Peregrine Falcon, Eurasian Golden Plover and Northern Lapwing).
- Bat surveys identified a significant number of Noctule bats at a county level within the proposed wind farm site.
- Helsby Iron Age Hill Fort, Schedule Monument is located 1.5km from the south of the wind farm site. The wind farm would be visible from this archaeological feature.

### Purpose of the project

The purpose of the Frodsham Wind Farm project is to generate renewable energy.

Once operational the wind farm would have a total potential capacity of 60MW, which would supply enough electricity for 23% of homes in Chester and Cheshire West and would contribute towards UK government targets.

### Description of the project

Planning permission was sought for 20 wind turbines, 125m in height and grouped in 2 clusters with a gap between. In addition, a substation and connecting cable were proposed as part of the scheme.

The wind farm site is located on land between the M56 motorway and the Manchester Ship Canal, north of the settlements of Helsby and Frodsham. The site is currently used to deposit canal dredging material and for agriculture.

Construction is proposed to commence in 2013, with an 18-24 month construction period.
Lessons learnt

The EIA was submitted in February 2010 but due to objections from Cheshire West and Chester Council and other statutory consultees a public inquiry took place.

RSK undertook extensive pre-inquiry consultation and were able to reach agreement with ecological consultees that the wind farm scheme would be suitable with further mitigation included, namely: one turbine was removed to minimise impacts on the adjoining Mersey Estuary SPA and a commitment was made to switch off the turbines at dawn and dusk to minimise impacts on bats.

A Supplementary Environmental Information Document was submitted in August 2011, in which one turbine was removed from the scheme. Following this objections to the project on ecological grounds were significantly reduced.

The public inquiry was called to examine, amongst other topics, impacts on ecology (particularly birds and bats), landscape and visual impacts and impacts on the setting of the Helsby Hill Fort (Scheduled Monument).

Lessons learnt cont. -

The project demonstrated the significance of consultation and the importance of considering alternative layouts and designs as mitigation. The project will provide an opportunity with regards to how effective turning off the turbines at dawn and dusk will be on reducing impacts on bats.

RSK supported the project through the public inquiry in December 2011, providing expert witness evidence for Archaeology and Landscape and Visual issues at the inquiry.

Planning permission was granted 19th October 2012. RSK are currently engaged to assist with the discharge of associated planning conditions.

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