Planning chief returns to the Humber with delivery mandate on huge port project he presided over

Able Marine Energy Park's ambition to play a key role in the Humber renewables industry has been re-energised with the appointment of one of the area's leading regeneration figures.

Marcus Walker, a former senior planning officer within North Lincolnshire Council, has joined Able UK as development director for the region.

He played a key role in the application process and eventual consenting for what is one of the largest port infrastructure projects in Europe. Mr Walker was also successul in securing £150 million of investment to improve access to the South Humber Bank, while leading work on major housing and other mixed use schemes.

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Able UK executive chairman, Peter Stephenson, said: "We are delighted that Marcus is joining us at a time when it is vital that the UK is at the forefront of transforming to the energy businesses of the future.

"His experience and especially his knowledge of the region and our business greatly strengthens our senior management team."

He has more than 30 years' experience in the public and private sectors, and he returns to the region after a near six year spell in the North West with Coolsilk, the property and investment firm led by Scunthorpe United owner Peter Swann. A highlight has been the development of Blackpool's first five-

star hotel.

Mr Walker said: “I am delighted to be joining one of the country’s most ambitious and enterprising businesses operating across a wide range of sectors, including being at the heart of exploiting the huge opportunities in the green energy revolution.



Marcus Walker, left, and Peter Stephenson, pictured back in December 2013, when a first planning hurdle was cleared by Able UK for Able Marine Energy Park, only for it to be dragged through parliament until early 2015 as objections and rival applications were submitted.
(Image: Reach Plc)

“Able Humber Port, including the Marine Energy Park and Logistics Park, is potentially Europe’s largest new port development and has been identified by the UK Government as a strategic location in the National Renewable Infrastructure

Plan.

“I believe that we can play a major role in transforming the economy and opportunities for the South Bank of the Humber and the wider region.”

Designated a freeport zone as part of the yet to be fully enacted Humber allocation, it was dealt a bitter blow earlier this year when a major manufacturer in the offshore wind industry reneged on plans to build a £300 million plant there, opting for Teesside instead.

SeAH, with Able, had signed a memorandum of understanding for the creation of the heavy industrial operation in September 2020, with a promise of 400 jobs. By the following April a planning application was in the offing, and by July the £250 million proposal’s jobs figure had almost doubled to 750. That autumn then brought a provisional first order from Orsted for Hornsea Three.

That work is now set to be done in the North East, as just announced, in the region Able calls home.

Further plans for Spanish turbine tower specialist GRI Renewable Industries to locate at North Killingholme, with a £100 million investment creating 300 jobs, also appear to have stalled, with two operators understood to be required to make the huge quay build viable.

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