

Press Release

Date: 24 September 2008

Subject: npower renewables unveils unique habitat restoration proposal

npower renewables, the UK division of European renewable energy company, RWE Innogy, has unveiled a proposal to develop one of the largest onshore wind farms in England and Wales, in the county of Powys. The proposed site, is located on land which lies within Strategic Search Area B, outlined within the Welsh Assembly Government's planning policy guidance note for renewable energy, Technical Advice Note 8 (TAN 8) Strategic Search Area B..

The proposal, known as The Carnedd Wen Wind Farm and Habitat Restoration Project, is made up of two distinct elements. The first is a wind farm consisting of 65 wind turbines, each with a capacity of 2-3 megawatts (MW) and a maximum tip height of 137 metres. The proposed wind farm would have an installed capacity of between 130 and 195 MW and the potential to supply the electricity needs 63,000 – 94,500 homes annually.

The second element of the Carnedd Wen proposal is a habitat restoration project that has been developed in partnership with leading UK environmental consultants and conservation experts.

The habitat restoration project - the largest restoration activities ever to be proposed in Wales - would involve the clearing of the majority of the trees on the wind farm site at Llanbrynmair Forest, in order to restore a habitat once considered by environmental experts to be one of the finest examples of blanket mire and dwarf shrub heath in Wales.

As Llanbrynmair Forest matures, and the tree canopy closes, the habitat of the black grouse that populate the area is dwindling. Black Grouse have suffered a serious decline in Wales and are currently a conservation priority species across the country.

In recent times Black Grouse have existed throughout most of the Llanbrynmair Forest, and a small area adjacent to Carnedd Wen is being managed by the Countryside Council for Wales, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Forestry Commission Wales, in their Welsh Black Grouse Recovery Project (WBGRP). There are 6 such areas throughout Wales, together providing habitat for around 80% of the remaining Welsh Black Grouse population. However, surveys over the last few years have indicated that the habitat suitable for Black Grouse is now decreasing, and so their long-term future in the area remains uncertain.

npower renewables is proposing to undertake some extensive advance habitat management up to 3 years before the wind farm would go into construction. This would provide this fragile population with a 'refuge' during construction of the wind farm. The refuge is complementary to the existing WBGRP area to the east of the forest, and the total additional managed area will be around twice the size of that currently being managed. Black Grouse are very high up on the Welsh conservation agenda, and Carnedd Wen will make an important contribution to their future survival in Wales.

The restored habitat will also provide extensive breeding habitat for the hen harrier, one of the UK's most intensively persecuted birds, which thrives in semi-open areas with low vegetation and breeds on the upland heather moorlands in Wales.

Demonstrating that important raptor species can co-exist with sensitively-designed wind farms will be an important step forward for the wind farm industry.

Paul Cowling, Managing Director of npower renewables said:

“The Carnedd Wen Wind Farm and Habitat Restoration Project is a unique renewable energy proposal, which has the potential to greatly contribute to the growing need for renewable energy, while at the same time helping to secure the future of the bird populations that inhabit the area and prevent further deterioration of the peatlands.

“The Carnedd Wen proposal presents significant benefits for both the local and global environment, and we are proud to be pioneering the first habitat restoration scheme of this size in Wales in conjunction with the wind farm proposal.”

Ends

Notes for Editors:

Site Statistics

Maximum number of wind turbines	65
Installed capacity of project	130 - 195 megawatts
Number of average homes supplied	63,000 – 94,500 homes each year
Height of turbines	Up to 137 metres (m) to the tip of the highest blade

npower renewables is one of the UK's leading renewable energy developers and operators, committed to developing and operating wind farms and hydro plant to produce sustainable and environmentally-friendly electricity. The company operates 17 hydroelectric power projects and 19 wind farms in the UK, including the country's first major offshore wind farm, North Hoyle. npower renewables is also working with marine energy technology partners to deliver new wave and tidal stream power projects in the UK. Through our existing projects and those in development, we are working in close partnership with communities and companies throughout the UK. As Government policy drives the UK towards a target of supplying 10% of electricity from renewables by 2010, and 15% by 2015, we will be at the forefront of realising this aim.

In Wales, the company operates six hydroelectric power projects in North Wales, the UK's first major offshore wind farm, North Hoyle, off the North Wales coast and seven onshore wind farms from Neath in South Wales to Anglesey in the North.

npower renewables is a fully owned subsidiary of RWE Innogy, and sister company to RWE npower, a leading integrated UK energy company with around 6.6 million customer accounts. RWE npower also owns and operates a flexible portfolio of conventional power stations as well as a portfolio of cogeneration plant producing more than 10% of the electricity used in England and Wales.

RWE is a major employer in Wales, with renewables staff working from three office locations in south, mid and north Wales, the Aberthaw Power Station and two Combined Heat and Power plants at Barry and Bridgend. In all, RWE's installed conventional and renewable energy generation in Wales supplies the equivalent of around one-third of Wales' electricity needs.

For further information about npower renewables and RWE Innogy visit www.npower-renewables.com and www.rweinnogy.com For further information about RWE npower visit www.rwenpower.com

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