

PRESS RELEASE

8 February 2013

WEST COAST ENERGY SUBMITS PLANNING APPLICATION TO WEST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR ITS 9 TURBINE WEST DORSET WIND FARM

West Coast Energy has now submitted a planning application and environmental statement to West Dorset District Council for a proposed nine turbine wind farm, with a total installed capacity of up to 22.5MW.

The wind farm is named **West Dorset Wind Farm** and is located on farmland south west of Milborne St Andrew, north of Tolpuddle and north east of Puddletown.

Over the past six months the renewable energy company has engaged with the local communities regarding their plans, and during this period held a series of local public exhibitions and presentations to a number of local Parish Councils and other community groups.

The public consultation programme has given local communities and residents the opportunity to learn about the proposals for West Dorset Wind Farm and to contribute their views on the scheme. These views have helped to shape the final design and number of turbines.

West Coast Energy is committed to the principle that communities that host wind farms should share in the financial benefits from the local generation of renewable electricity. If consent is granted for the wind farm the local community will therefore receive 10% of the net profits from the wind farm. Over the operational life of the wind farm, this community benefit is expected to amount to several million pounds which can be used to invest in local projects and to fund specific initiatives such as assistance to alleviate Fuel Poverty in the local area.

The company is currently seeking a partner body which represents the local community in order to set up an appropriate legal structure to ensure that the money generated by the communities share in the wind farm is distributed for the benefit of the wider local community around the wind farm site.

The use of wind power carries with it significant environmental benefits. West Dorset Wind Farm is projected to generate clean green electricity to meet the annual domestic electricity consumption equivalent to around 12,000 homes, making a meaningful contribution to the UK Government's renewable energy target. Over its 25 year life, it is estimated that the wind farm could displace around 635,000 tonnes of CO₂ that would otherwise have been produced had fossil fuels like coal or gas been used instead.

Coincidentally, last week saw the publication of the finalised Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Renewable Energy Strategy to 2020. This identifies that barely 1% of Dorset's total energy demand derived from renewable sources in 2010 (compared to the UK average of 3%). The document sets a target of generating 15% of electricity from renewable sources by 2020, of which half (7.5%) must derive from local sources. The document emphasises that further development of onshore wind in Dorset has a vital role in helping to meet this local sources shortfall. West Dorset Wind Farm will make a significant contribution to this target.

Steve Salt, Planning and Development Director of West Coast Energy, said:

"We are pleased to announce that we have submitted our West Dorset Wind Farm planning application to West Dorset District Council. We look forward to a continued engagement with the community and with the Council as the application progresses through the planning system".

A copy of the planning application, environmental statement and supporting plans and drawings may be viewed on the West Dorset District Council website and at the Council offices at 58/60 High Street West, Dorchester. The documents will also be available to download on www.westcoastenergy.co.uk

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For more information, contact Project Manager, Matthew Hayes by email at matthew.hayes@westcoastenergy.co.uk or by phone on 01352 757604.

Notes to Editor

The application was submitted to West Dorset District Council on 5 February 2013 by West Dorset Wind Energy Ltd, which is a subsidiary company of West Coast Energy Ltd.

Site Location

The West Dorset Wind Farm site occupies farmland south of the A354 and north of the A35, to the south west of Milborne St Andrew, north of Tolpuddle and north east of Puddletown.

Project Description

It is proposed to install 9 wind turbines, each with an installed capacity of up to 2.5 megawatts (MW), giving the wind farm an overall installed capacity of up to 22.5MW.

The proposal will also include a wind monitoring mast, substation building, formation of a new entrance junction via the A354, new internal access tracks and a temporary construction compound. The wind farm would take up to 9 months to construct and would then operate for up to 25 years, before being decommissioned and the land restored.

Turbine Dimensions

The maximum height of each turbine will be up to 126.5m to the vertical blade tip.

Community Benefit:

West Dorset Wind Energy Ltd (WDWEL) and West Coast Energy Ltd are committed to the principle that local communities should benefit financially from the generation of local renewable energy. WDWEL has therefore decided to offer the local community the opportunity to participate in the wind farm project by the provision of a 10% share of the operational net profits. WDWEL will secure all the necessary development consents and financing facilities and procure, build and operate the wind farm. The community would then benefit on an annual basis from the 10% share of the net profits over the operating life of the wind farm development.

WDWEL is currently seeking a partner body that represents the local community in order to set up an appropriate legal structure to ensure that the money generated by the community

benefit package is distributed for the benefit of the wider local community around the wind farm site

Environmental Benefits

The essential environmental benefits of using wind energy for the generation of electricity are that it is renewable, safe, will never deplete, and does not release any gaseous emissions into the atmosphere during operation. The electricity generated by wind turbines is connected into the national electricity grid and therefore will generally displace other sources of generation, and the nature of the system is that these will normally be fossil fuel sources.

Assuming nine 2.5MW turbines are installed, and using a standard annual capacity load factor of 26.4%, which takes into account the variable nature of wind frequency and speeds, it is calculated that on average around 52,000,000kWh (52,000MWh) of electricity would be produced annually by West Dorset Wind Farm¹. This would make a significant contribution towards the targets for electricity generation from renewable sources as set out in the recently published Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Renewable Energy Strategy to 2020²

Utilising updated figures of average UK household electricity consumption of 4,370kWh per annum³ and a generic 26.4% capacity factor, computer based assessment calculates that the proposed wind turbines could each year supply the average annual domestic needs of around 12,000 homes⁴.

The proposed wind farm will therefore make an important contribution to International, European and UK commitments to reduce greenhouse gases and tackle climate change. Further savings will accrue from reduced energy use, transportation, pollution and congestion, currently incurred in transporting fossil fuels to power stations.

¹ Calculated as follows: 22.5 (max installed capacity in MW) x 0.264 x 8760 (number of hours in a year) x 1000 (conversion from MWh to kWh) = 52,034,000kWh per year (or 1,300,860,000kWh over the 25 year operational lifetime of wind farm). The figure is presented as an annual amount in recognition of the fact that throughout the year, the figure will vary, as there will be periods of maximum and minimal generation, depending on wind speeds and wind farm maintenance requirements.

² <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/renewable-energy-strategy-2020> published Jan 2013

³ DECC 2012- <http://www.decc.gov.uk/assets/decc/11/stats/publications/energy-trends/articles/4782-subnat-electricity-cons-stats-article.pdf>

⁴ A 26.4% capacity factor (CF) figure is derived by taking the average CF for onshore wind for the 5 year period of 2007 to 2011, as recorded in the 2012 Digest of UK Energy Statistics – Source: DECC 2012 - <http://www.decc.gov.uk/assets/decc/11/stats/publications/dukes/5956-dukes-2012-chapter-6-renewable.pdf>. Actual capacity factor will vary year on year as there will be periods of maximum and minimal generation, depending on wind speeds and wind farm maintenance requirements. Throughout the planning process West Coast Energy will continue to monitor the on-site wind resource.