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RES WELCOMES APPROVAL OF DEN BROOK WIND FARM

RES UK & Ireland has welcomed the Planning Inspectorate's decision today to approve the nine turbine wind farm at Den Brook in Devon following a second public inquiry into the scheme earlier this year.

In evidence to the inquiry, RES demonstrated how the 18MW project will generate clean, renewable electricity equivalent to the annual needs of more than 8,000 homes – or around half of West Devon - without having a detrimental impact on local residents or the local environment. It will contribute to important regional and national renewable energy targets and help cut carbon dioxide emissions.

Rachel Ruffle, Project Manager, said;

"We are absolutely delighted that after nearly 5 years in planning the Den Brook wind farm can finally go ahead. At a time when world leaders are gathering in Copenhagen to try to come to an important deal on climate change, it is heartening to know that renewable energy projects are being consented here at home and that we can make a difference on the ground. Our team presented a solid case demonstrating that the project has been designed sensitively and will be an asset to the local community. We are pleased that the Inspector recognised this and that we can now start planning for construction. We are also excited about taking forward our plans to offer shares in the wind farm to local people."

The Den Brook wind farm will bring local benefits including a £27,000 a year community fund to be spent by the local community on local projects; funding for improvements to Dartmoor Railway, which will benefit commuters between Exeter and Okehampton; jobs during construction, with local sourcing of labour and materials wherever possible; a sustainable income for farmers who own the land; improvements to wildlife habitats at the site and the possibility of community ownership of the wind farm.

In his decision, the Inspector said that when considering all the issues he had 'sought to balance the requirement that any adverse effects on the locality should be weighed against the widely accepted benefits of renewable energy generation'. On the issue of noise, which was the main topic at the inquiry, he said 'subject to some important conditions, I have concluded that the effect of the scheme is likely to fall within the limits which were designed, in part, for the protection of wind farm neighbours.'



Rachel Ruffle added:

“The main reason the project went to a second public inquiry was because of concerns about the noise impact of the turbines. We have always been confident that the wind farm was designed to safeguard local residents against noise nuisance and this has now been endorsed by the Planning Inspector’s decision. It has been a long and expensive process for all concerned but we stuck with it because we knew it was the type of good renewable energy project that has to go ahead if we are to meet our renewable energy targets, tackle climate change and have a secure and reliable source of energy in years to come. Now that we have got the planning out the way, we are looking forward to the next steps, which include talking to the local community about the possibility of share ownership in the wind farm.”

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Notes to editors:

1. RES is a leading UK renewable energy company with offices around the world. The RES Group has to date completed over 4,600MW of wind power capacity worldwide and is active in a range of renewable energy technologies (biomass, solar, ground source, wind), as well as sustainable building design. RES is a holder of the Queen’s Award for Enterprise for its commitment to renewable energy. For more information, visit www.res-group.com
2. The planning application for Den Brook Wind Farm was submitted to West Devon Borough Council in November 2005 after two years of careful survey work, design and consultation with independent experts and the local community. It was granted planning permission in February 2007 after a full public inquiry. A legal challenge was lodged by opponents to the scheme in March 2007 and was dismissed in the High Court in February 2008. Leave to appeal was granted and consent for the project was quashed in July 2008. RES agreed not to continue with court proceedings, but rather to bring them to an end by consent and return to public inquiry to resolve the matter. The second public inquiry was held in Okehampton between July and October 2009.

CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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