

30 November 2009

Energiekontor Announces Possibility of Substantial Increase to Community Fund

The proposed Monkwith Wind Farm comprises 3 wind turbines that are 111m tall to tip and each would have an installed capacity of between 2MW and 2.5MW. As part of the proposal Energiekontor is offering to make a contribution to a Community Fund of £2,000 per MW of installed capacity for the 20 year operational lifetime of the wind farm, this would mean an annual, index linked, contribution to a Community Fund for worthy local causes of between £12,000 and £15,000 for 20 years.

A Government document entitled 'Delivering Community Benefits from Wind Energy Development: A Tool Kit' (BERR, May 2007), is designed to help make meaningful community benefits more routine and systematic in UK wind energy projects. However, it also makes it clear that *"any offer of community benefits by a developer should not be seen as 'bribes' or attempts to 'buy planning permission.'* They are a fully justifiable component of a wind energy development and its relationship with its host community." These Goodwill Payments are also encouraged through Appendix Nine of the East Riding of Yorkshire Interim Planning Document – 'Planning for Renewable Energy Development'. It encourages Goodwill Payments being made into a Community Fund that aims to support projects with the objective of improving local well-being and creating environmental, economic and community benefits.

The planning application for the Monkwith Wind Farm was considered by the East Riding of Yorkshire Planning Committee on 08 October 2009 where it was recommended for approval by the Council's planning officers. During the meeting Councillor Byram commended that he would like the applicant to take another look at the level of contributions that they were prepared to make to the community fund, this despite the existing offer meeting the guidelines set out in the Council's own Interim Planning Document on Planning for Renewable Energy Development. The Planning Committee decided to defer the application whilst further information was requested on other matters, however this has given Energiekontor the opportunity to revisit the matter of its contribution to the community fund.

It is accepted that planning appeals are a costly affair for both the Council and the developer, in the committee meeting Council officers indicated that it costs the Council somewhere in the region of £60,000 to £70,000 to defend councillors decisions to refuse wind farm proposals during an appeal. Planning appeals also take up a huge amount of time.

If planning permission is forthcoming without the need for an appeal, Energiekontor is prepared to offer an additional one off payment of £70,000 in the first year of the community fund to give it a good start in supporting worthy projects in the local area. There would also be the usual annual £12,000 to £15,000 payment into the community fund as outlined above. Energiekontor has also said that it will make a £10,000 contribution to the HEYwoods trust to support tree planting initiatives in the local area. Furthermore if the planning committee accepts their planning officer's recommendation for approval then there will be no need for an appeal and the Tax Payers in the East

Riding of Yorkshire will not be burdened with the £70,000 cost of defending another wind farm appeal. The Monkwith Wind Farm proposal is likely to be re-considered by the Planning Committee on Thursday 10 December 2009, where the Council's Planning Officers are likely to again recommend to Councillors that the application be approved.

ENDS

Notes for Editors:

Background information about the proposal can be found at www.monkwithwindfarm.co.uk

For more information contact:

Chris Gainey

Project Manager, Energiekontor UK Ltd

Tel: 01423 799041,

e-mail: chris.gainey@energiekontor.co.uk