

Statement of Community Involvement

DONG Energy – Westernmost Rough, East Riding of Yorkshire



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Statement of Community Involvement

Client	DONG Energy
Development	Proposed offshore wind farm, Westermost Rough
Exhibition Dates and Time	10, 11, 12 June 2008, 12 noon – 7pm
Exhibition Venues	Withernsea, Hornsea, Bridlington

Introduction

DONG Energy contracted Mistral to organise a series of public exhibitions regarding its plans for its proposed offshore wind farm, Westermost Rough. This included a media monitoring service covering a three month period before, during and after the exhibitions.

The Westermost Rough Wind Farm proposal is for a 240 megawatt offshore wind development of up to 80 turbines – offering the capacity to generate electricity equivalent to the annual needs of around 150,000 homes every year. This would be situated 8 kilometres (km) from the coast, approximately 25km north of Spurn Head at the Humber Estuary.

The scope of Mistral’s work included selecting suitable locations and venues to hold the exhibitions, advertising the exhibitions, identifying relevant stakeholders and issuing invitations to the exhibitions, developing an exhibition questionnaire and gathering feedback at the exhibitions. This has been analysed and evaluated and the results are included in Appendix 1.

About DONG Energy

DONG Energy is the Danish state-owned energy company. The company was formed in 2006 through a merger of Danish Oil and Natural Gas (DONG) and the major power utilities in Denmark. It is one of the leading energy groups in the Nordic region, based on procuring, producing, distributing, trading and selling energy and related products in Northern Europe. DONG Energy employs approximately 4,500 people and generates £3.8 billion annually in revenue.

DONG Energy is one of the leading offshore wind developers in the UK. Barrow came online in July 2006 and is partly owned by DONG Energy. Burbo Bank became operational in October 2007 and is fully owned by DONG Energy. As well as Westermost Rough, DONG Energy is either full or part owner of London Array, Walney, West of Duddon Sands, Cirrus Shell Flat Array, Scarweather Sands, and Gunfleet Sands offshore wind farms.

The planning application for Westermost Rough is expected to be submitted in September 2009.

Pre-exhibition communication

As part of the formal procedure surrounding the development of offshore wind farms, DONG Energy were required to hold public exhibitions regarding their proposals for Westermost Rough, and identified June 2008 as being the best month to conduct this exercise.

Two months before the exhibitions were scheduled, Mistral conducted two extensive site visits to towns and villages along the neighbouring coastline to determine a range of conduits for publicising information about the proposals and the accompanying public exhibition. This included identifying the most suitable venues for the exhibition; the key newspapers serving the local area and likely outlets for both distributing information about the proposal and displaying posters advertising the exhibition.

The towns of Bridlington, Hornsea and Withernsea were selected as the largest centres of population in the local area, with residents from outlying communities accustomed to travelling to these towns. Within each town a well-known and frequently used venue was selected on the basis of ease of access and familiarity to those local communities: the South Holderness Resource Centre (SHoRes) in Withernsea, the Floral Hall in Hornsea and the newly-refurbished Spa in Bridlington – all of which are seafront venues with good views of the proposed development area.

The neighbouring coastal area of the proposed Westermost Rough site is the East Riding of Yorkshire, which is a unitary authority with the East Riding of Yorkshire Council responsible for all local government functions in the area. The Yorkshire and Humber Assembly is a partnership of all local authorities in the region along with representatives of various economic, social and environmental sectors. As part of the communication process, Mistral identified relevant representatives from these organisations as well as local town and parish councils, business interests and community groups and other relevant statutory, strategic and community stakeholders and issued personal letters inviting them to their relevant exhibition on behalf of DONG Energy.

Adverts were placed in a selection of local newspapers to ensure the public were aware of the exhibitions and to encourage them to attend. Posters were additionally distributed to various local businesses and organisations to raise the profile of the exhibitions.

Exhibition publicity

DONG Energy intended that the public exhibition serve as a learning process for gauging the feeling of the local communities to its proposals for the Westernmost Rough Offshore Wind Farm, and did not therefore want to attract media attention before key stakeholders had the chance to see the information first-hand. Instead, the exhibitions were advertised in traditional outlets in advance to ensure awareness:

Newspaper advertisements

- Paid-for advertising was placed with three local newspapers in the weeks leading up to the date of the exhibition (Appendix 2):
 - **East Riding Mail: June 3, 2008**
The East Riding Mail is a daily newspaper with a total circulation of 56,854. It covers the East Riding of Yorkshire in its entirety.
 - **Bridlington Free Press: June 5, 2008**
This is a free weekly newspaper distributed to residents of Bridlington and environs. It has a circulation of 15,438.
 - **The Holderness Gazette: June 5, 2008**
This is a daily paper with a total circulation of over 42,337. It covers the whole of Yorkshire.

Posters

- The advert was also re-sized and produced as a colour poster, copies of which were distributed to approximately 50 outlets around Bridlington, Hornsea and Withernsea (Appendix 3)

Letters of invitation

- 360 personal letters of invitation were sent to statutory and strategic stakeholders, councillors and council staff, local business groups and organisations including clubs and groups in the local area, harbour-related representatives, churches and schools (Appendix 4).

Exhibition material

The exhibition consisted of seven panels which presented the proposed plans in as much detail as possible. This included background information on DONG Energy, offshore wind development including the site selection process, the importance of wind energy, details of the project, the grid connection, and the likely timetable of the project. To help visitors picture the likely appearance of Westernmost Rough, each panel included photomontages of the site developed by DONG Energy's

landscape consultants, as viewed from the seven recommended viewpoints on the coast and inland agreed with the East Riding of Yorkshire District Council. (Appendix 5)

All the information from the exhibition panels was additionally recreated in a leaflet which was available to visitors to the exhibition to take away with them. (Appendix 6)

The exhibition questionnaire was developed to provide an opportunity for attendees to submit their comments. The document was kept brief (a single side of A4 paper) and was constructed to capture maximum information in a short space of time. The questionnaires could either be filled in and handed back on the day, or taken away if visitors felt the need for more time to think about the proposals before feeding back their views.

The questions were in a 1-5 scale format, and covered how informative visitors found the exhibition, their thoughts on wind energy in general and the proposal specifically, whether they felt it would benefit the area and whether they were concerned about climate change.

The form also provided space for additional feedback and an option to receive updates on the project and indicate which format for future communication they preferred. (Appendix 7)

A DVD was on constant replay showing the construction of one of DONG Energy's Danish offshore wind farms – Horns Rev – to give visitors an understanding of the processes involved and constraints applicable to installation projects at sea.

Visitors to the exhibition

The exhibition was held over three days from Tuesday 10 June to Thursday 12 June and at three different coastal venues. In Withernsea the venue was The South Holderness Resource Centre (SHoRes); in Hornsea, the Floral Hall and in Bridlington the newly-refurbished Spa Theatre.

Holding the exhibition over three days and at three different venues maximised the opportunities for visitors to attend at their convenience, particularly as the exhibition times covered both lunchtimes and after work hours. Many local councillors, residents and fishermen visited the exhibition on both days, including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Bridlington.

Three members of the DONG Energy project team and two Mistral staff manned the exhibition over the three days. Visitors to were welcomed and given a brief introduction to the layout of the exhibition and also to the members of the team who were on-hand to explain the proposals and to answer any questions.

Media coverage

Despite efforts to keep the exhibitions low-key in terms of media, they attracted a fair amount of interest, culminating in a TV interview with project manager Kurt Jensen and a fisherman (BBC Look North) and a number of newspaper articles. A summary of key points from media coverage for Westermost Rough is included in Appendix 8 and coverage is collated in Appendix 9.

Consultation results

Attendance at the exhibitions was strong – a total of 227 visitors with 57 attending Withernsea, 52 Hornsea and 118 at Bridlington respectively. In total, 141 people filled in questionnaires (62 per cent). See Appendices 1 and 10 for a detailed analysis of all feedback received as of July 1, 2008.

Overall, the majority of visitors showed support for the proposed development:

- 69 per cent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the plans
- 14 per cent disagreed
- 15 per cent were unsure.

The exhibition was well received by visitors:

- 81 per cent found it informative or very informative
- 13 per cent were unsure
- 6 per cent did not find it informative.

Additional comments

Of those that filled out questionnaires, 44 per cent of respondents made additional comments in the area provided. 16 per cent of the comments were positive, 11 per cent negative, 9 per cent were neutral, while 8 per cent asked questions. See Appendix 11.

Conclusions

The exhibition successfully attracted 227 visitors from the local community. Those in attendance showed considerable interest in the proposals, with many engaging fully and asking detailed questions of the project team, and offering constructive comments.

The main opposition seemed to come from fishermen, who have concerns over the effect of the proposed project on their livelihood. The DONG Energy project team was able to answer many of these concerns and offer detailed explanations for most of the queries.

An overwhelming majority of the attendees found the exhibitions to be informative, and a strong majority (69 per cent) were in favour of the Westernmost Rough plans.

Next steps

Planning permission for the project is likely to be submitted in September 2009. Until then further work will be undertaken by DONG Energy on the Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Statement., as well as undergoing further negotiations with the fishermen.