

Wind Power News

Brechfa Forest West Wind Farm and Brechfa Forest East Wind Farm proposals



Ffynnon Oer Wind Farm – 2 megawatt turbines, 58 metre tower, 70 metre rotor diameter. (Photographs of existing operational wind farms within this newsletter are not intended to represent the appearance, size or scale of the proposed Brechfa Forest Wind Farms.)

Moving forward on proposals

RWE npower renewables has spent the last year preparing information in support of a proposal to install wind turbines within Brechfa Forest, Carmarthenshire.

We have looked at which locations within the forest are most suitable for turbines and have now concluded that, due to geographic differences between the two sites, there will be two separate wind farm sites and applications. The two proposed sites would be:

- Brechfa Forest West Wind Farm, centred around the Afon Pib valley, east of Alltwalis
- Brechfa Forest East Wind Farm, centred around Banc Llywelau, south of Rhydcymerau.

Our studies so far suggest that Brechfa Forest West could accommodate 28 turbines and Brechfa Forest East could accommodate 12.

To ensure information about both proposals is available to everyone at the same time, we have decided to discuss both sites together when engaging with the local community.

RWE npower renewables project manager Bethan Thomas explains: *“As the project manager for both sites I can be consulted on either proposal. Residents’ queries are likely to be similar for the two proposed wind farms, so it makes sense to present both projects at the same time. We sincerely hope that local people will take the opportunity to come and meet us when our public exhibitions take place, and we will do our best to answer any questions at the time.”*

Final proposals are still some way off, and this newsletter provides information about the current plans for the projects and explains how they will progress. Importantly, it gives you details of upcoming public exhibitions. These are an opportunity for local people to find out more about our proposals.

Public exhibitions details

Thursday 25th March 2010

2pm – 7pm

Llansawel Village Hall

Llansawel

Llandeilo

SA19 7JH

Friday 26th March 2010

2pm – 7pm

Brechfa Church Hall

Brechfa

Carmarthenshire

SA32 7RA

Saturday 27th March 2010

12pm – 4pm

Cae’r Felin Primary School

Pencader

Carmarthen

SA39 9AA

What is the plan for Brechfa Forest?

In November 2008, RWE npower renewables signed an agreement which gave the company the rights to potentially develop a wind farm on land in Brechfa Forest, which is managed by Forestry Commission Wales, on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government.

After initial studies, two geographically separate areas were identified for development; one in the western block of the forest and the second in the eastern block.

Studies suggest that Brechfa Forest West could accommodate up to 28 turbines and

Brechfa Forest East up to 12 turbines. Draft site plans showing the location of turbines will be available at the public exhibitions and can be seen on the next page. It is important to note that these are not the final plans and they may change.

Plans for both sites will be decided following discussions with Forestry Commission Wales on how best to minimise the wind farms' impacts on the forest. This may be achieved, for example, by positioning turbines in existing open spaces or within areas recently felled where possible, and by maximising the use of existing access tracks.



Previously cleared areas could make good turbine locations, and minimise impacts on the forest

Checking every angle

Developing a wind farm involves many complex technical and environmental studies.

Firstly, and most importantly, we have to establish that there is a good wind resource. This is done using an anemometry mast, and four have been installed in Brechfa Forest.

A 'Scoping Request' allows stakeholders such as Carmarthenshire County Council, the Countryside Council for Wales and the Environment Agency to provide their views on subjects that they think should be covered in environmental surveys, for example, ecology, ornithology, traffic and telecoms.

We use the scoping opinions to refine the studies that we carry out. These studies started in winter 2008 and some are still

taking place to ensure that we have thorough and comprehensive information. The next stage of the process is the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which will look at the potential impacts of the proposed wind farms and how these might be reduced.

Once the EIA report is completed for Brechfa Forest East, a planning application will be prepared and submitted to Carmarthenshire County Council.

Once the EIA report is completed for Brechfa Forest West, further consultation will take place on the proposal, including more exhibitions, before an application can be made to the Infrastructure Planning Commission.

What are the next steps?

RWE npower renewables will need to get permission to construct and operate the wind farms in Brechfa Forest.

Due to the differences in size, each site will follow a different application route. For each application the local authority is formally involved.

As Brechfa Forest East is smaller, a local planning application will be submitted to Carmarthenshire County Council for consideration.

As Brechfa Forest West is likely to be over 50MW, it will need to be considered by the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC). Beginning on 1 March 2010, this newly created, independent body will consider applications for 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects' - including large wind farms - and will make decisions based on policies which are set out by the Government. Carmarthenshire County Council will be involved throughout each step of the formal process.

The IPC takes a national approach to such applications, but local views remain very important to these proposals. In addition to the current round of public information sharing, RWE npower renewables will be conducting further consultation on our detailed plans once all project information is available and before submitting our application to the IPC.



IPC will determine "Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects" including large wind farms

Project details

The following maps have been simplified for use in this newsletter. More information about the turbine layouts will be available during the public exhibitions in March.

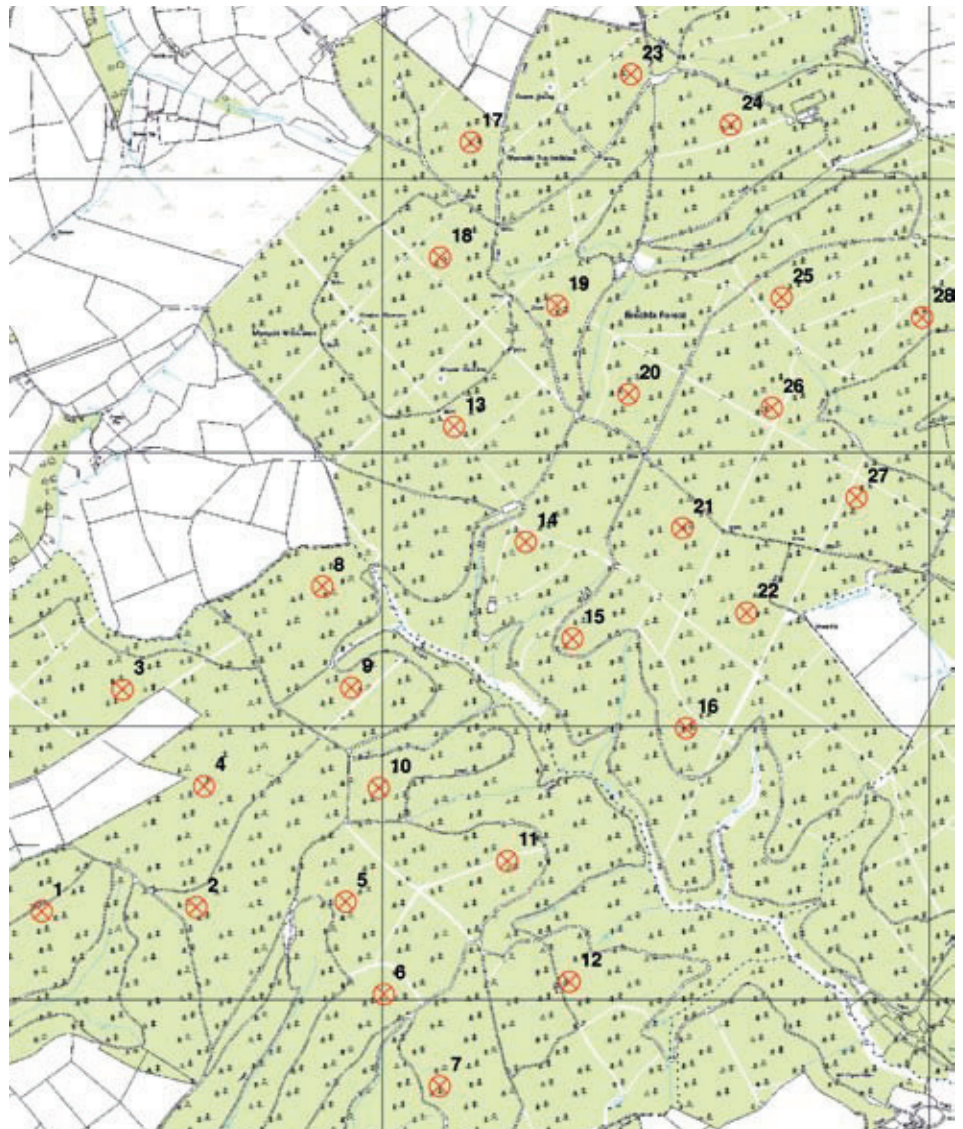
Specifications

- Current layout could provide installed capacity for Brechfa Forest West wind farm – between 56 and 84 MW and Brechfa Forest East wind farm – between 24 and 36 MW¹
- Installed capacity of each turbine: between 2 MW and 3 MW per turbine¹
- Tip height: up to 145m
- Capable of providing the equivalent energy needs of up to: 33,900 homes (Brechfa Forest West); 14,500 homes (Brechfa Forest East)²
- Area covered by Potential Development Area Boundary:
 - Brechfa Forest West: 750 hectares
 - Brechfa Forest East: 270 hectares
- Total area of Brechfa Forest: 5,700 hectares.

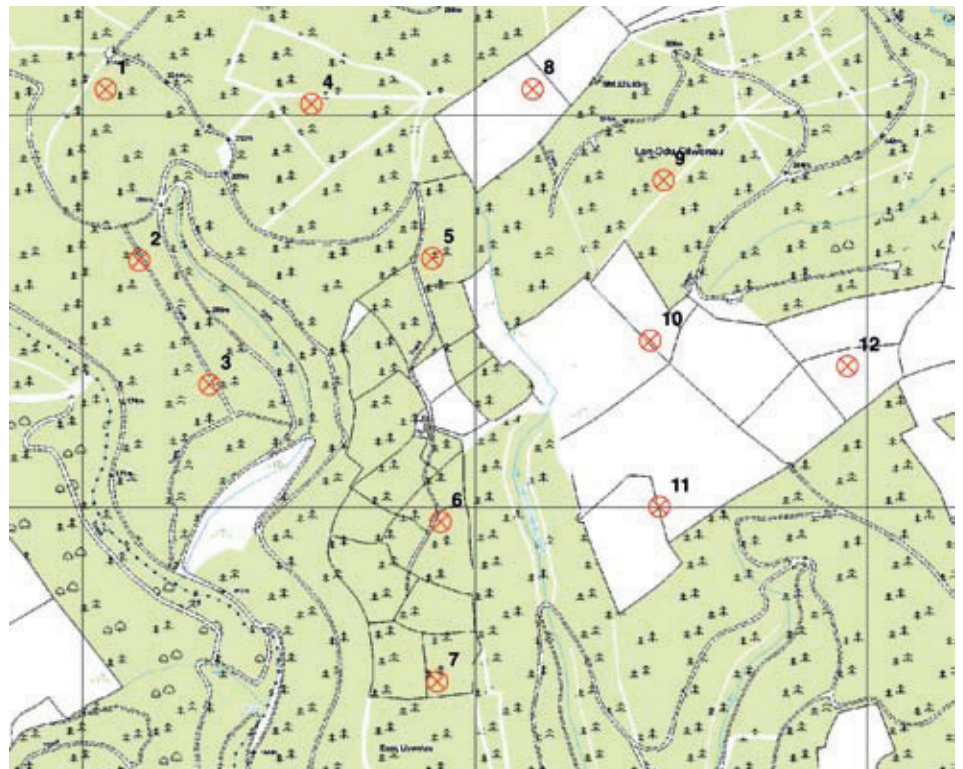
Footnotes:

¹These predictions are specific to the site of RWE npower renewables' proposed Brechfa Forest West and Brechfa Forest East wind farms as outlined in this newsletter.

²Energy predicted to be generated by the proposal has been calculated using an assumed capacity factor of 26% (DTI Energy Trends UK regional capacity factors 1998-2004). For Brechfa Forest West, this is based on an installed capacity of 70MW. For Brechfa Forest East, this is based on an installed capacity of 30MW. For both sites, the energy capture predicted and hence derived homes equivalent or emissions savings figures may change as site specific information is gathered. Equivalent homes supplied is based on an annual electricity consumption per home of 4700 kWh. This figure is supported by recent domestic electricity consumption data available from The Digest of UK Energy Statistics and household estimates and projections from the UK Statistics Authority.



Brechfa Forest West location and initial proposals for the layout of the turbines



Brechfa Forest East location and initial proposals for the layout of the turbines

Why RWE npower renewables?

RWE 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 electricity.

Recently we have begun working with marine energy technology partners to deliver new wave and tidal stream power projects. Our Welsh portfolio includes six hydroelectric

power projects, two offshore wind farms and seven onshore wind farms.

RWE is a major employer in Wales, operating four renewables office bases in South, Mid and North Wales, the Aberthaw Power Station and two combined heat and power plants. In all, RWE's installed conventional and renewable energy generation in Wales supplies the equivalent of around one-third of Wales' electricity needs.

Community benefits

If we receive planning consent, RWE npower renewables will offer a benefits package designed to meet the needs of the local community.

RWE npower renewables has a long track record in delivering benefits for the communities in which it operates and we look forward to exploring what the priorities might be for people living near to the Brechfa Forest.

Welsh Assembly Planning Policy for Renewable Energy (TAN 8) clearly explains that "experience has shown that there are opportunities to achieve community benefits through major wind farm development."

The policy also states that "It is perfectly acceptable for a business to enter into a legally binding agreement with third parties to deliver particular and agreed benefits to the community."

At a later and more appropriate point in the project lifetime, we will begin a thorough process with the local community, to determine how a Community Benefits package could work best for the local area. This would be entirely independent of the planning process, because the offer of a Community Benefits package is not a material planning consideration.

Watch out for more information about the process and how you can get involved locally through the media, our website and other local communication channels.

For more information about our approach to Community Benefits, visit the 'Benefits' section at our website: www.npower-renewables.com

Key communication

Getting involved in the communities in which we operate is key to our success, as it allows us to develop positive relationships and understand local issues and concerns.

RWE npower renewables is keen to meet with local people living in and around the Brechfa Forest and will be holding public information exhibitions in March, as detailed on the front page.

During these exhibitions, there will be opportunities to find out more about the proposed wind farm projects in their current draft form. Following the exhibitions, progress will be communicated through newsletters, and the website will be updated to provide ongoing information.



At the exhibitions we hope to explain how our proposal will work alongside the forest

In Autumn 2009, a Community Liaison Group was set up to enable local representatives to meet and discuss the progress of and ask questions about the proposals. The group is made up of representatives from organisations including Community Councils, the County Council, recreational groups and the voluntary sector.

If you would like to know more about the CLG, please visit the group's website: www.brechfaforestclg.org.uk

This booklet is printed on paper which is made from FSC certified pulp and has been printed using vegetable inks.

If you would like this newsletter in larger print please contact us on: 01738 825132

Contact us

If you have any questions about the proposal then members of the project team would be pleased to meet you at the public exhibitions.

However, if you are unable to attend, please don't hesitate to contact the team.

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