

GWYNT Y MÔR OFFSHORE WIND FARM

Project Update: Community benefits



One of the two offshore substations installed in Liverpool Bay for Gwynt y Môr

The construction of Gwynt y Môr Offshore Wind Farm eight miles off the North Wales coast in Liverpool Bay carries with it community benefit funding worth a total of £19m over its 25 year operational lifetime – £768,000 per annum, index linked to inflation. RWE npower

renewables, the company constructing Gwynt y Môr, consulted widely on the how this £19million fund should be set up. More than 1,000 people were consulted across the region and this update is designed to provide some key findings from that process.



PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION

Gwynt y Môr Offshore Wind Farm Limited contracted an independent market research company from North Wales, Cogent Research, to undertake the survey. It conducted a series of focus groups, in-depth interviews and drop-in sessions alongside an online questionnaire to ascertain opinions on:

- the geographical area of benefit for the fund

- the types of projects to be supported
- the structure of the administrative/ decision-making panel/body
- the level of support for proposed ideas generated by Welsh Government and Local Authorities
- preferred communication channels for Gwynt y Môr Offshore Wind Farm Ltd to provide funding updates for relevant individuals and community groups

- the level of support for funding themes identified by focus group attendees.

The findings from these main areas will be used to inform the structure, administration and type of projects to benefit from the funding, once it becomes available in 2014.

KEY FINDINGS

Geographical area of benefit

The funding zone concept for distribution of community funding was a popular suggestion raised during the initial stages of research for the consultation.

Approximately four out of five individuals surveyed (78%) believed that Zone 1 should receive funding assistance, whilst around three in five people felt that Zone 2 should be helped (59%). Around two in five respondents felt that Zone 3 (41%) should be included; around a third (34%) expected Zone 4 to benefit, whilst a minority felt Zone 5 (15%) should be able to access funding.

“There is not a lot in North Wales jobs wise. Lots of my friends went to Manchester Uni because there were a lot of jobs around there.

My generation are not having a great time at the moment. I am twenty one and I left school when I was eighteen and I knew there would be no jobs when I left which is a shame really.”
Member of the public, Colwyn Bay

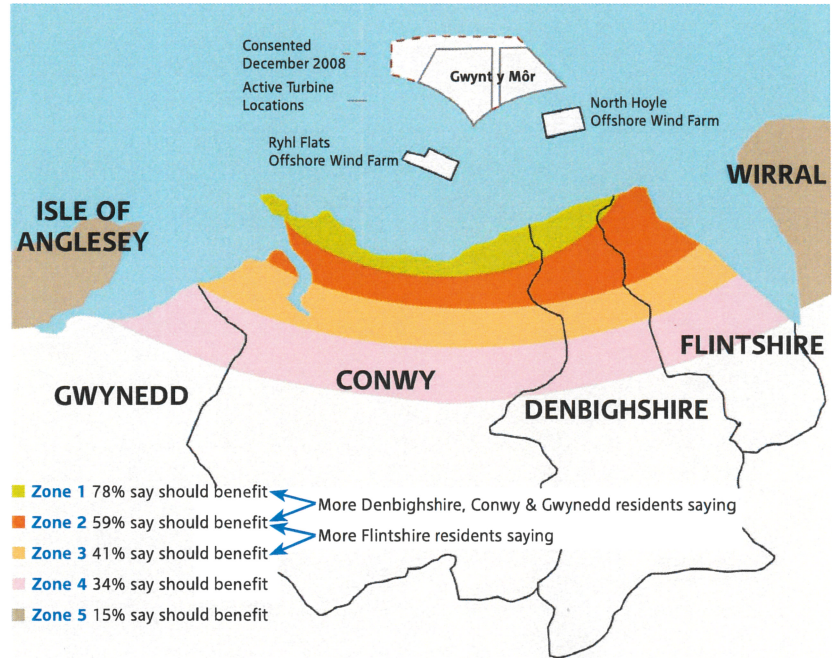
Types of projects suggested

Funding to support young people struggling to envisage a long term future in the area was the common thread running through the consultation (see graph 1).

The lack of amenities available for young people was another major concern. Facilities closing down due to authority cut backs or simply inadequate provision for youths were issues raised.

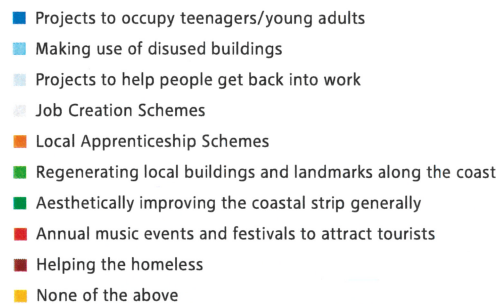
Stakeholders supported the concept of funding projects to occupy teenagers and young adults. This funding area received the most backing of the ideas derived from the focus group and depth interview stage of the research.

Respondents made it expressly clear that the funding should not be used to fund initiatives that are the responsibility of local councils.



Area of benefit – funding zones

Graph 1 – Which, if any, of these types of projects would you like to see the fund help?



“They shouldn’t waste the money by talking about ‘let’s build this and build that’. Use what you have got in your community already and just touch it up.”
Member of the public, Llandudno

Projects to support people back into work (61%), job creation opportunities (61%) and local apprenticeship schemes (60%) were also popular choices.

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for funding concepts

suggested by the Welsh Government and local authorities in North Wales. Themes receiving the most support included:-

- apprenticeships, youth training, education and employment (60%)
- schemes aimed at children and young people (55%)
- ideas to support health and wellbeing (54%)
- town centre improvements (51%)
- projects to create sustainable local economies (50%)
- suggestions that improve local environmental quality (50%)
- regeneration of tourism areas and tourism infrastructure (49%).

KEY FINDINGS CONTINUED

“Youth unemployment is a major issue. It is seasonal jobs there is no industry around here. There is not much investment going on, that is the biggest letdown. People from inner cities that have problems – they seem to migrate in.”
Community Group Volunteer, Prestatyn

Respondents felt that local voluntary/charitable organisations (68%) and schools (64%) should qualify for funding, along with (see graph 2):-

- local community groups and projects (41%)
- national voluntary and charitable organisations (40%).

Support was less evident for the following potential beneficiaries:-

- local individuals (21%)
- statutory groups e.g. local authorities (16%)
- campaigning organisations (14%).

Administrative structure and decision-making criteria

More than eight out of ten respondents felt that the long term benefit to the community was the key consideration for the application criteria. Other suggestions receiving strong support included (see graph 3):-

- evidence that the group behind the application is sound (67%)
- the long term sustainability of the project (63%)
- the number of people who will benefit from the project (62%)
- the project being visible to the rest of the community/area (44%).

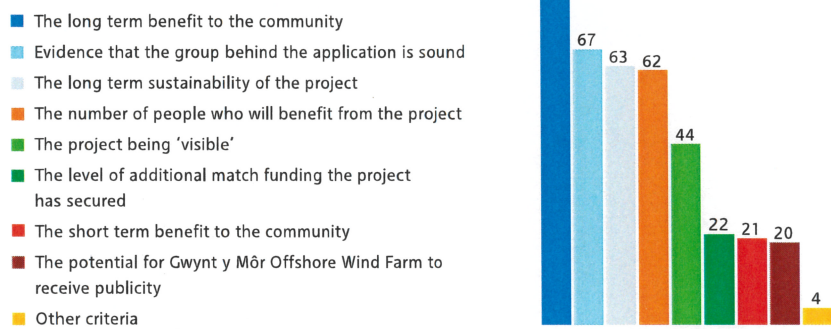
“They need to take into account community benefit. How well is it going to benefit the community in the long term? It needs to be long term benefit and not short term glory.”
Member of the public, Prestatyn

Concerns existed that the application process could become too bureaucratic making the fund appear beyond the reach of small community groups wishing to apply.

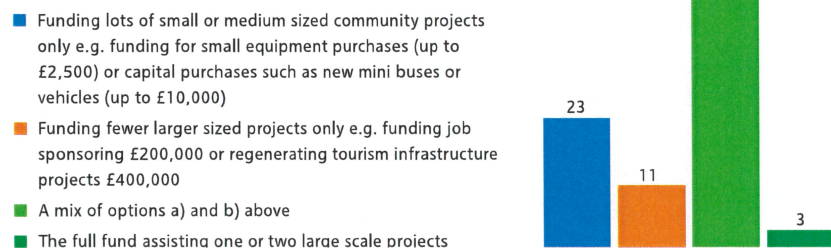
Graph 2 - Which, if any, of the following types of people and/or groups do you think should qualify to receive the funding?



Graph 3 - What should decision makers take into consideration when deciding how to award funds?



Graph 4 - How would you like to see the £768,000 per year allocated?



The most popular response was for the money to be used to fund a mix of small, medium or larger sized projects (see graph 4).

“I think the money should be used across the board, there are some fantastic projects out there.”
Local Voluntary Council Employee

The vast majority of respondents welcomed the concept of a decision making panel made up from all sectors of the community.

Around half of the survey sample thought the panel should be made up with between six and ten people (49%). One third of the sample (31%) thought the panel should comprise 11 or more people.

KEY FINDINGS CONTINUED

Respondents suggested a range of community figures they would like to be involved in a decision making panel, they also wanted to see ordinary members of the public represented from across a broad spectrum of age groups and backgrounds.

Opinions were divided regarding the funding supporting a full time worker. 57% approved, the remainder either opposed the idea (21%) or were undecided (22%).

The most popular solution for administering the fund was felt to be the creation of a new local organisation, dedicated Board or Trust.

The second most popular choice was to utilise existing voluntary and charitable agencies in the locality.

Respondents suggested that Gwynt y Môr Offshore Wind Farm Ltd needed to make a big splash about the launch of the community benefit funding in the local papers in addition to support provided from a website presence and exposure in community venues/high footfall locations e.g supermarkets.



Fredrich Ernestine installing a transition piece



Foundation Installed at Gwynt Y Môr

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Gwynt y Môr will be further analysing the results of the consultation and working with relevant stakeholders to devise the exact shape and structure of the community benefit fund. The geographical area of benefit for the fund is likely to be

released in the coming weeks. Further details on the shape and structure of the community benefit fund will be announced in due course.

The community benefit fund will be open

for applications once Gwynt y Môr is fully operational in 2014.

If you would like further information about the community benefit fund, please email karen.maurice@rwe.com

GWYNT Y MÔR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At 576MW, Gwynt y Môr is one of the largest offshore wind farms currently under construction in Europe, and is a shared investment between funding partners RWE Innogy, Stadtwerke München GmbH and Siemens¹.

Once fully operational in 2014, energy generation from Gwynt y Môr is expected to be equivalent to the average annual needs of around 400,000 homes².

Offshore construction of the 160 turbine wind farm is well underway more than

13 kilometres off the North Wales Coast, in water depths of 12-28 metres.

Onshore cable installation work and the construction of a 132/400kV substation at St Asaph, North Wales, are almost complete.

RWE npower renewables has set up a project information line which people can call if they have a query about the construction of Gwynt y Môr. The number is **0845 026 0587**.

More information about Gwynt y Môr Offshore Wind Farm can be found at www.rwe.com/gwyntymor

If you would like this newsletter in larger print or other accessible format, please contact us on: 01639 816180.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Energy predicted to be generated by the proposal is derived using wind speeds monitored in the local area. This enables a calculation to be made to estimate the average annual energy Production for the site based on 160 turbines each of rated capacity 3.6 MW. The energy capture predicted and hence derived homes equivalent figures may change as further data are gathered.

² 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.

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