

**PRESS RELEASE**

6 March 2008

**PLANS TO BE SUBMITTED  
FOR EASTGATE RENEWABLE ENERGY VILLAGE**

Plans to create Eastgate Renewable Energy Village in Weardale will take a significant step forward next month with the submission of an outline planning application to Wear Valley District Council.

The submission follows four rounds of community consultation and long-term liaison with local residents and businesses and the application will be displayed from the first week of April onwards in Crook Civic Centre, Durham Dales Centre and Wolsingham Library.

In addition, information boards and posters showing plans contained in the application will be visible at a number of locations throughout the Dale and at the Weardale Hub in Stanhope.

One NorthEast's John Topliss, Eastgate project manager says: "This is the first stage in seeking planning approval for Eastgate Renewable Energy Village and we're hoping for a positive decision by this autumn.



"Our aim is to create around 350 sustainable jobs for local people, drawing investment from outside the area and bringing economic and social benefits for the whole of Weardale.

"We're receiving strong commercial interest from businesses both within this region and nationally and we are working with local skills, employment and education providers to ensure residents of the Dale are well-placed to take advantage of resulting job opportunities.

"Subject to a positive outcome on the planning application, we will begin to apply for detailed planning approval on the various elements of the proposals and look forward to a positive, green future for Weardale."



**MORE**

Unique in this country, Eastgate will be the only Renewable Energy Village to feature all five forms of land-based renewable energy available in the UK – hydro, solar, wind, biomass and geothermal. It will generate sufficient 'clean' electricity to offset the energy consumption of the whole of Weardale.

It will create an estimated 150 jobs from business investment, a further 200 jobs in the visitor and hospitality sector and a wealth of other opportunities are anticipated in the surrounding area as a result of the new economic activity at Eastgate.

The Renewable Energy Village will encompass a mix of homes, office and workshop accommodation, a hotel and a public geothermally heated spa – only the second in the UK. The entire site, including the actual Renewable Energy Village, Riverside Meadows, The Slopes (hillside) and The Tops (quarry areas) will cover a vast area, greater than 800 football pitches, and incorporates visitor attractions and aqua-farming.

For a range of information on the project, go to [www.weardale-works.com](http://www.weardale-works.com), call **01388 761571** or email [regeneration@wearvalley.gov.uk](mailto:regeneration@wearvalley.gov.uk).

## **ENDS**

### **Media Enquiries:**

Robson Brown PR  
Liz Luff / Michaela Crosthwaite  
(0191) 2446659 / (0191) 244 6653  
0797 4698759

### **About Eastgate Renewable Energy Village:**

Eastgate Renewable Energy Village is a regeneration project on the site of the former Lafarge Blue Circle cement works for the benefit of people of Weardale. It will maximise the potential of the site to provide an eco-friendly living, working and learning environment and visitor attraction.

It will demonstrate best practice in sustainability by utilising all five forms of land-based renewable energy available in the UK, which are wind, solar, hydro, biomass and geothermal – a unique concept in this country.

The project will enhance the lives and prosperity of the existing population of the Dale by creating sustainable jobs, homes and recreational facilities for local people within a development that is at the forefront of eco-friendly living. It will also provide opportunities for links with other businesses and leisure facilities in the Dale.

The new eco-village will provide one of only two public hot springs in the UK utilising geothermal hot water, and a centre for education for residents and visitors to learn about renewable energy, sustainable living, life in the Dale and the surrounding North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

It is estimated at this stage that a planning application will be submitted in early 2008\*, with planning permission hoped for later in the year.

*\*Previous reported timings of a planning application submission have been superseded due to ongoing viability studies, essential to meeting planning requirements and an additional round of community consultation.*

### **About Weardale Task Force:**

Weardale Task Force is the body responsible for overseeing the formulation of a master plan for the proposed Renewable Energy Village and is made up of members from One NorthEast, Wear Valley District Council, Durham County Council and Lafarge Cement UK.

### **Local residents are requested to contact the Task Force with any queries or concerns on:**

(01388) 761571  
[economic.regeneration@wearvalley.co.uk](mailto:economic.regeneration@wearvalley.co.uk)