

SEEDA WORKS WITH VESTAS ON FUTURE OF ISLE OF WIGHT FACTORY

28 April 2009

Following today's announcement that consultation will start on the future of Vestas Blades' Isle of Wight factory, the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) has pledged to work closely with Vestas and its staff.

SEEDA Chairman Jim Brathwaite CBE said: "Vestas have welcomed last week's Budget support for developing wind energy and we will be working with them to determine what opportunities this may create for Vestas Blades to continue manufacturing in the South East – for example modifying production to respond to the Government's impetus to the UK wind market.

"We are already working with sister company Vestas Technology on plans for an £89m global research and development centre on the Isle of Wight. This will bring much needed investment and 150 new jobs to the Island by 2010 – but we will also do everything we can to support Vestas Blades and their staff during consultation on their future."

He added: "Vestas is vital to the local economy on the Isle of Wight – both in terms of direct employment but also the impact on other local businesses – and we will do our utmost to keep the work."

Mr Brathwaite continued: "We are today setting up a rapid response task group to work alongside Vestas Blades to support their workforce – for example if they modify production, new workforce skills may be needed. If we face the worst case of redundancies, we will help the workforce retrain, start businesses or find alternative jobs. To do this we will work closely with partner organisations including the Isle of Wight Council, Learning and Skills Council, Jobcentre Plus and Business Link."

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Notes to editors

- **SEEDA, the South East England Development Agency**, is the Government-funded agency responsible for the sustainable economic development of the South East of England – the driving force of the UK's economy. Through supporting businesses, encouraging innovation, developing skills and engaging with public and private partners, we aim to create a successful, sustainable future for the region.

- **SEEDA's support helped deliver the following** over the period 2005-2008,:
 - 17,500 jobs created or safeguarded
 - 32,500 people helped to get work
 - 10,000 businesses created or attracted to region
 - 137,500 businesses assisted
 - £638m investment, 45% levered from private sector
 - 200ha Brownfield land remediated
 - 148,500 people assisted in skills development
- SEEDA recently launched a successful rapid response initiative with the Ford Motor Company at its Transit plant in Southampton, to provide a comprehensive and integrated package of support to assist the company and its employees during down-sizing.
- **Budget announcement**
On 22 April the UK Budget included announcements on:
 - **A £750m Strategic Investment Fund to support advanced industry projects of strategic importance** (to promote research and development in emerging technologies in advanced manufacturing, digital and biotechnology). £250m of this fund will be earmarked for low carbon investments and the fund will include £50m for the Technology Strategy Board and £10m for UKTI.
 - **£405m to support the development of a world-leading low-carbon energy and advanced green manufacturing sector**, funding technologies such as wind and marine energy. Funding will be delivered through existing programmes such as the Environmental Transformation Fund.
 - UK renewable and energy projects stand to benefit from up to £4bn of new capital from the **European Investment Bank**.
 - Reform of Renewables Obligation Certificates is expected to provide **£525m of new support over the next 2 years for offshore wind energy**.
- **Vestas Technology Centre on the Isle of Wight**
On 15 August 2008 Vestas Wind Systems announced that - based on the announced expansion of wind power Vestas had resolved to invest in a new blade technology centre on the Isle of Wight. In addition to blade design, the centre will provide facilities for testing the world's longest wind turbine blades. The new development centre is expected to become operational in the second quarter of 2010.
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