



## **BWEA PRESS RELEASE**

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**For Immediate Release**

### **Wind farm planning approvals by local councils slump to record new low of 25%**

Figures revealed today at the wind industry's annual conference in Liverpool show that local council approvals of wind farm applications have fallen to a shocking new low of just 25%.

The British Wind Energy Association's (BWEA) *State of the Industry Report* shows that despite the strong growth in the number of wind farms being built, there is now an alarming drop in the number of new applications being approved locally.

This week the capacity of operational wind farms will reach a record 4GW of installed capacity, however approvals of new wind farm applications by local authority has fallen from 63% in 2007 to just 25% so far this year, forcing more developers to appeal applications to the Planning Inspectorate. Approval rates at appeal are running at over twice the rate by local councils at 62%, showing that many of the fears raised at Council level were unjustified.

BWEA Chief Executive, **Maria McCaffery MBE** said:

*"The planning system is broken when it comes to wind energy. A 25% approval rate is truly shocking, especially when you think that there is an approval rate of over 70% for roads, housing and supermarkets.*

*Winning approvals at appeal is second best for everyone, it is expensive, slow and cumbersome for developers and frustrating & confusing for local people. We need a fresh, new approach to local decision making where Councils are not unduly swayed by vocal NIMBY pressure groups but make their judgements on the facts."*

The Government's Renewable Energy Strategy published in July set a target of 14GW of installed capacity for onshore wind by 2020. Onshore there are currently 3.2GW installed, 0.8GW being built and 3.4GW under construction – making 7.4GW total or just over half way to the target. However there are another 7.4GW in planning – enough to reach the target in time if they are approved.

Speaking at the BWEA conference where the report was launched former Deputy Prime Minister **Rt Hon John Prescott MP**, who was the UK's Chief Negotiator for the Kyoto Climate Change Treaty and is now the Council of Europe Rapporteur on Climate Change said.

*"It is absolutely scandalous that three quarters of all planning applications for onshore wind turbines are turned down. We cannot let the vocal minority stop our move to a low carbon economy and stop us meeting our global emissions targets."*

**McCaffery** added

*"We need wind to be delivered quickly because over the next decade fully one third of our existing power stations will be decommissioned, and without a dramatic change in our energy production we will reach the tipping point for catastrophic and irreversible climate change."*

*Although there is enough wind in the system to meet the 2020 renewable energy targets half the pipeline of these projects still needs to win approval - a local council approval rate of 25% threatens the delivery of that target in time."*

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### **Note to Editors**

1. BWEA is the trade and professional body for the UK wind and marine renewables industries. Formed in 1978, and with 532 corporate members, BWEA is the leading renewable energy trade association in the UK. Wind has been the world's fastest growing renewable energy source for the last seven years, and this trend is expected to continue

- with falling costs of wind energy and the urgent international need to tackle CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to prevent climate change.
2. Under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 planning decisions on electricity generation applications over 50MW are taken by the Secretary of State in Whitehall and the Scottish Minister in Edinburgh. However all decisions under 50MW are still taken by local councils. Of the 7,419 MW worth of schemes in planning 2,311MW or just under a third are waiting for decisions by local authorities.
  3. There has been a dramatic fall in approvals by local authorities since 2007, when local approvals by MW were 63% to just 25% capacity approved so far this year.