



# Suffolk County Council

## News Release

**For Immediate release - Friday 25 July 2008**

### **Suffolk links with European leaders in energy efficiency and carbon reduction**

Suffolk will lead in carbon emission reduction thanks to ANSWER (A North Sea Way to Energy-Efficient Regions) an exciting new project bringing together European leaders to build a low-carbon, sustainable future for the region.

With EU funding of 1.8 million euros (£1.4 million), the project involves partners in the UK, Belgium, Norway, Germany, Denmark and will start in September 2008. ANSWER will support an ambitious programme of developing new approaches together to help in the challenge of reducing carbon emissions in the UK. Suffolk will offer leadership to establish these regions as low-carbon community and business pioneers.

Partners include Suffolk County Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Norfolk County Council, Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, Environment Agency, Province of West Flanders, Province of East Flanders, Bremen, Lolland, Stavanger, and Rogaland.

The ANSWER project will bring together existing expertise in renewable energies and will help to tackle common environmental problems identified by the regional partners.

The project will create an ambitious partnership of some North Sea Regions and will demonstrate and evaluate good practice, so other regions within the North Sea can use established models, tools and techniques. It is hoped this will help meet local, national, and international targets for greenhouse gas reduction and will lead to on-going reductions in energy use and carbon dioxide emissions.

ANSWER will support urban and rural communities to reduce energy consumption and CO2 emissions, compare results between pilot communities, help to install LED displays of real-time emissions, provide community footprints and reduction advice, encourage a sense of community-ownership and competition on emissions reduction and increase enthusiasm for behavioural change and ultimately reduced emissions, and finally examine and test common sourcing of energy supplies and the feasibility of options for co-operative green energy.

ANSWER, is not the only renewable partnership designed to reduce carbon footprints across Europe. POWER CLUSTER, a partnership between 18 partners from Denmark, United Kingdom, Norway, The Netherlands, and Sweden has also been given the green light, with a 5 million euro budget.

The East of England partners are Suffolk County Council and EEEGR (East Of England Energy Group). The partnership project will bring together organisations and authorities, and aims to communicate the benefits, opportunities and challenges of renewable energy technology to the public.

Key activities of the project include; undertaking a major international study to assess how offshore wind can learn from the experience of the oil and gas industry, so practical proposals on how to reduce costs, whilst maintaining safe and efficient operations between the two sectors can be learnt. A development web based tool to facilitate partner search for energy related EU projects is also planned, as is a North Sea Grid study conducted by universities in Sweden and Denmark.

As well as working on the supply chain, EEEGR will be focusing on the skills/workforce needed for energy projects, which will in the long run help the UK to reduce its carbon footprint. The project will draw on the strengths of the Skills for Energy Partnership and focus on workforce shortages, promoting working in the sector, offer career perspectives and enhance training.

On the two projects, Eddy Alcock, Portfolio holder for environment and waste management, said "I am delighted these two projects have been approved. Suffolk really is at the forefront of renewable

energy, exemplified in Lowestoft's OrbisEnergy centre. As a big council player, we have been able to offer real leadership in bringing these international partners and money together. By working with other partners across Europe we can gain the best insight into how, as a county, we can reduce our carbon emissions. There is no better way to learn and develop than to use examples of best practice, which have proved to be successful in other regions."

John Best, CEO, EEEGR said: "I am really pleased to work with Suffolk County Council on this project. When we began POWER (Pushing Offshore Wind Energy Regions) almost 4 years ago an offshore renewable centre in the East of England was just a "project proposal". Today OrbisEnergy in Lowestoft is built and ready to deliver flexible office, boardroom and conferencing facilities for more than 30 small and medium sized companies involved in this fast expanding energy industry sector. The timing is perfect!"

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to editors:**

- The background to the two projects stems from the Kyoto Protocol which committed the EU to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 8% on 1990 levels by 2012. The two routes available are renewable sourcing and increased energy efficiency. The Green Paper 'Towards a European Strategy for the Security of Energy Supply' highlights rising energy consumption and increasing dependence on external sources. It proposes reducing consumption through improved energy efficiency. The 2007 'Energy Policy for Europe' includes a target of improving efficiency by 20% by 2020.
- Funding for both projects has been secured from the European Interreg IVb Programme
- More information about EEEGR can be found at [www.eeegr.com](http://www.eeegr.com)
- More information about OrbisEnergy can be found at [www.orbisenergy.net](http://www.orbisenergy.net)

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