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RES SUBMITS APPLICATION FOR REVIEW TO THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL ON FORSS WIND FARM REFUSAL

RES has submitted an Application for Review following the refusal by the Highland Council for an extension to Forss Wind Farm. RES owns and operates the six turbines at Forss Wind Farm near Thurso in Caithness and applied for planning permission for an additional five turbines in October 2010. The application for the extension was refused in October 2011 by a planning officer using delegated decision-making powers.

Graeme Kerr, Development Project Manager, commented: *“We are disappointed with the decision to refuse the extension and concerned that the application did not go before the Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross Planning Applications Committee. Both planning applications for Forss I and Forss II went before the local planning committee and local councillors decided on the applications. It is important for Councillors who represent the views of the local community to have a say on developments in their local area.”*

The planning officer stated the reasons for refusal on the grounds on landscape and visual impacts, and cultural heritage. However, the application received no objections from statutory consultees and conforms to Scottish Planning Policy.

Graeme continued: *“Given the approval of the turbines currently operating at Forss, Highland Council clearly feel that this is an appropriate area for wind energy development. The turbines we are proposing for the extension of the wind farm will be seen in conjunction with those already operating at Forss Wind Farm, which are an established part of the local landscape. This is reflected in the consultation response from SNH who considered that there would not be any significant additional adverse impacts on the landscape character of the surrounding area arising from this proposal.*

There is strong support for the current wind farm and the extension plans. A recent telephone survey showed that 54% of people felt favourable towards the current wind farm. When asked about the proposed extension to the wind farm, 56% were favourable to the plans for the extension. Forss Wind Farm currently brings significant benefits through a community fund; the money has been used for the erection of Christmas lights, swimming training camp, sports equipment for the local Beaver Group and educational trips for students.



Page 2 of 2 / RES / Forss LRB / 26 January 2011

RES has submitted an application Highland Council Planning Review Body, requesting a review of the decision.

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Notes to editors:

1. RES is one of the world's leading independent renewable project developers with operations across Europe, North America and Asia-Pacific. At the forefront of wind energy development since the 1970s, RES has developed and/or built more than 5 GW of wind energy capacity worldwide including around 10% of the UK's wind energy. In Scotland, RES has developed and/or owns seven wind farm projects. The RES Group is active in a range of renewable energy technologies (biomass, solar, onshore and offshore wind, wave and tidal). For more information, visit www.res-group.com
2. Forss Wind Farm, consisting of six turbines, was built by RES in two phases. The first phase consisting of two turbines, was built in 2003 and performed above expectations given the exposed location; in 2007 a further four turbines were erected. For more information, visit www.forss-windfarm.co.uk
3. RES commissioned Populus to undertake a telephone survey. Populus, a member of the British Polling Council, surveyed 500 adults aged 18+ in the local area between 9-12 January 2012. 54% of those surveyed feel favourable towards the wind farm currently at Forss, 24% feel neither favourable or unfavourable; 20% feel unfavourable and 2% didn't know. 56% of those surveyed feel favourable towards the plans for the extension, 18% feel neither favourable or unfavourable; 25% feel unfavourable and 1% didn't know.

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