

Introduction

DONG Energy contracted Mistral to organise a series of public exhibitions as part of the formal consenting process for its proposed offshore wind farm, Westermost Rough.

The Westermost Rough Wind Farm proposal is for a 240 megawatt offshore wind farm development of up to 80 turbines, offering the capacity to provide clean carbon-free electricity for around 150,000 homes every year. This would be situated 8 kilometres off the coast of the East Riding of Yorkshire, approximately 25 kilometres north of Spurn Head at the Humber Estuary.

The scope of Mistral’s work included site visits to gather knowledge of the local area, including finding suitable exhibition venues in three coastal towns; indentifying relevant stakeholders at statutory, strategic and community levels; advertising and issuing invitations to the exhibitions; producing promotional materials for the exhibition including a leaflet and exhibition panels; developing questionnaires for gathering feedback at the exhibitions, and preparing a Statement of Community Involvement to support the planning application. Mistral additionally provided a media monitoring service covering a three month period before, during and after the exhibitions, together with a local press office on behalf of DONG Energy.

Objective

The main objectives were to engage with the public and other local stakeholders by holding successful

public exhibitions; ensure the appropriate stakeholders were identified and invited to participate; and gather and analyse feedback from visitors to the exhibitions.

Strategy

Pre-consultation communication

In order to meet these objectives, Mistral conducted two site visits and a political and community audit to identify appropriate statutory, strategic and community stakeholders, including relevant councils and officers, and business and community groups to receive personalised invitations to the exhibitions.

Advertising

To ensure the community was informed about the exhibitions, Mistral researched and identified the most relevant media and community outlets in which to place advertisements and posters containing information about dates, venues and times of the events.

Promotional materials

Mistral produced a range of materials to support the exhibitions, including adverts and posters, exhibition panels, project information leaflets and consultation questionnaires.

Exhibition

Mistral and its contractors were on site to facilitate the smooth-running of the public exhibition, including logging visitors and encouraging them to fill in the feedback questionnaire.

Evaluation

Following the exhibitions, Mistral produced a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) detailing all the steps taken throughout the project and an analysis of the results of the community consultation.

Results

A total of 227 people visited the exhibitions over a three day period, 62 per cent of whom completed questionnaires. The community response from the exhibitions was largely positive and local residents felt they had been well-informed and appreciated having their comments considered. Fifteen items of well-balanced coverage were secured in the local media, including a segment on the local news, BBC Look North, with an interview with the DONG Energy project manager.

The client was pleased with the successful exhibitions and the DONG Energy-Mistral relationship will continue as the project proceeds into the next phase of the consenting process.

