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RWE and SSE Renewables sign up for extension to Greater Gabbard

- *World leading offshore wind developers join forces on new offshore wind farm extension*
- *Equal joint venture company has Agreement for Lease from seabed managers The Crown Estate*
- *150km² site in the southern North Sea adjacent to sister project, Greater Gabbard Offshore Wind Farm*

Two of the world's leading offshore wind developers have joined forces to develop an extension adjacent to the operational 504 megawatt (MW) Greater Gabbard Offshore Wind Farm, located more than 20 kilometres off the UK coast in the southern North Sea.

SSE Renewables and RWE Renewables, co-owners of the existing wind farm, have established an equal joint venture company and signed an Agreement for Lease with The Crown Estate, managers of the seabed, securing an option to develop an extension project on the site covering a total of 150 km².

The project has been named North Falls Offshore Wind Farm, after the North Falls sandbank located at the southern tip of the proposed site of the wind farm.

The Agreement for Lease with The Crown Estate has been granted to the joint venture company under an extensions application process launched in 2017. The signing of both the joint venture agreement and the Agreement for Lease means the extension project can now begin its development activity in earnest including comprehensive onshore and offshore surveys and studies to inform the Environmental Assessment.

During the coming three years, work will also include engineering design, stakeholder consultation and community engagement before the Development Consent Order application is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate.

The joint venture company will comprise staff from both organisations and will be led by newly appointed Project Manager Martin Whyte, who comes to the project with more than 11 years' experience working in the offshore wind sector.

The North Falls Offshore Wind Farm will comprise a number of wind turbines on fixed foundations, plus dedicated offshore and onshore electrical infrastructure. The newly-signed lease agreement is for an additional capacity of up to 504MW, the same as the existing Greater Gabbard Offshore Wind Farm. The final capacity of the project will be determined during the development and consenting process.

Project Manager Martin Whyte said: “Signing both the joint venture agreement and the Agreement for Lease with The Crown Estate is like firing the starting gun, although we have made some early progress, we can now accelerate our activities and move properly into development.”

The development will build on the expertise and learnings from the original project, and other shareholder developments, to ensure best practice and maximise the positive benefits.

Paul Cooley, Director of Capital Projects at SSE Renewables, said: “North Falls Offshore Wind Farm will build on the successful offshore wind legacy in the East of England. We’re looking forward to working with RWE Renewables to create more clean energy, create more jobs and move towards a net zero future.”

Richard Sandford, RWE’s Director Offshore Development Europe said: “Our positive partnership with SSE Renewables on the existing Greater Gabbard Wind Farm has given us invaluable experience that will ensure the success of the extension project. It is exciting to be working together again and to be further contributing to the UK’s green energy future.”

The Development Consent Order application is expected to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in 2023.

Ends

Photos: Map of the project location / Existing Greater Gabbard Offshore Wind Farm

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North Falls Offshore Wind Farm

North Falls Offshore Wind Farm is being developed by a joint venture company owned equally by SSE Renewables and RWE Renewables. The joint venture company comprises team members from both owner organisations. The project site is more than 20 kilometres off the UK’s coast in the southern North Sea and covers a total area of 150 km².

RWE Renewables

RWE Renewables, the newest subsidiary of the RWE Group, is one of the world's leading renewable energy companies. With around 3,500 employees, the company has onshore and offshore wind farms, photovoltaic plants and battery storage facilities with a combined capacity of approximately 9 gigawatts. RWE Renewables is driving the expansion of renewable energy in more than 15 countries on four continents. By the end of 2022, RWE Renewables targets to invest €5 billion net in renewable energy and to grow its renewables portfolio to 13 gigawatts of net capacity. Beyond this, the company plans to further grow in wind and solar power. The focus is on the Americas, the core markets in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region.

About SSE Renewables

SSE Renewables is a leading developer, owner and operator of renewable energy across the UK and Ireland, with a portfolio of around 4GW of onshore wind, offshore wind and hydro. Part of the FTSE-listed SSE plc, its strategy is to drive the transition to a net zero future through the world class development, construction and operation of renewable energy assets. SSE Renewables owns nearly 2GW of operational onshore wind capacity with over 1GW under development. Its 1,459MW hydro portfolio includes 300MW of pumped storage and 750MW of flexible hydro.

Its operational offshore wind portfolio consists of 487MW across two offshore joint venture sites, Beatrice and Greater Gabbard, both of which it operates on behalf of its asset partners. SSE Renewables has the largest offshore wind development pipeline in the UK and Ireland at over 6GW and has an onshore wind pipeline across both markets in excess of 1GW.

