PRESS RELEASE

The University of Surrey's flagship Surrey Sports Park goes Green

June 2010

The University of Surrey has chosen LC Energy to provide heating for its new flagship Surrey Sports Park at Manor Farm using wood from the local hills.

LC Energy on the North Downs near Guildford, one of the UK's leading suppliers of low carbon energy services and wood fuel, has won a three year contract to supply 300 tonnes of sustainable[1] wood chip per annum to the new £36 million Surrey Sports Park facility in Guildford. The fuel is sustainable and local.

All the heating, including the 50 metre competition swimming pool, will be derived from the wood chip from the Surrey Hills area, saving around 222 tonnes[2] of carbon per year compared to burning fossil fuels, which is the equivalent carbon output of 45 three-bedroom houses.

The wood for the boiler will be sourced by LC Energy from sustainably-managed woodlands mainly situated within a 15 mile radius of the Surrey Sports Park. Surrey is one of the most densely wooded counties in the UK and has huge potential as a source of sustainable energy.

Once harvested, the wood is chipped and stored at LC Energy's hub situated less than ten miles from the boiler, which significantly reduces the environmental impact of transporting fuel over long distances.

John Davis, University of Surrey's Sustainability Manager, said: "LC Energy has clearly demonstrated an in-depth knowledge of the expanding low carbon energy sector and has put forward a cost effective solution to enable the University to utilise this natural heat resource from the Surrey Hills."

Mark Lebus, Managing Director of LC Energy said, "This is a highly significant contract for LC Energy as it demonstrates that woodchip fuel boilers are a genuinely viable alternative energy source for organisations wishing to not only reduce their carbon footprint, but also lessen their reliance on ever-decreasing fossil fuels.

“With the likely introduction of renewable heat incentives from April next year, this type of low carbon heating is already becoming a significant and cost effective part of the energy mix for the future.”

He continued, “It is also essential that the wood fuel is sourced from the immediate area as it capitalises on local wood to provide local heat, generates a greater local economy, provides more work for rural businesses and enables a significant reduction in transport emissions.”

According to the Forestry Commission it is estimated that if harvested responsibly, there could be a sustainable supply of wood chip from woodlands in the immediate vicinity of the University sufficient to supply the Sports Centre boiler.

Matthew Woodcock, Programmes Manager for the Forestry Commission in South East England, welcomes the decision by University of Surrey to utilise wood to provide a sustainable heat source for the sport park and said "Under the Woodfuel Strategy the Forestry Commission agreed to work with partner organisations and the private sector to bring 2,000,000 tonnes of wood from currently under-managed woodlands to the market. At least a quarter of this is likely to be from the south east, England’s most wooded Region. Exemplar developments as at the University of Surrey illustrate how effectively wood can be used as a carbon lean fuel.”

Now in its fourth year of trading, LC Energy supplies wood fuel to an airport, a number of schools, care homes, housing developments and private customers in the South and East of England.

END

For further information please contact:
LC Energy – Tel: 01483-205659 or enquiries@LCEnergy.co.uk

[1] Biomass takes carbon out of the atmosphere while it is growing, and returns it as it is burned. If it is managed on a sustainable basis, biomass is harvested as part of a constantly replenished crop. This is either during woodland or arboricultural management or coppicing or as part of a continuous programme of replanting with the new growth taking up CO2 from the atmosphere at the same time as it is released by combustion of the previous harvest. This maintains a closed carbon cycle with no net increase in atmospheric CO2 levels.

[2] The figure of 222 tonnes of CO2 being saved is based on the Surrey Sports Park estimated Mega Watt Hour (MWh) heat energy usage. It is estimated to consume 1,200 MWh per year. Natural gas has a CO2 emission of 185kg per MWh. Hence 185 x 1,200 = 222,000kg or 222 tonnes per year. Therefore by using a heating fuel which is carbon neutral, University of Surrey is saving 222 tonnes of CO2 per year.