

Athea wind farm prepares to move into construction

Construction works at SSE's 34MW Athea wind farm in West Limerick are ready to remobilise, following a scheduled break to co-exist with the local bird breeding season.

Following an agreement with the Local Authority, SSE agreed that it would cease all construction works from 31 March until the beginning of July in this Special Protected Area, to help facilitate and encourage any breeding of local protected species.

Turbine manufacturer, General Electric will supply sixteen 2.75MW and 1.6MW turbines which are due to start arriving on site later this month and it's expected that construction of the 34MW site will be completed by December.

In advance of the turbine delivery, pre-construction road improvements are now underway and total resurfacing works have been completed on local roads surrounding the wind farm. On site, civil works at the substation are 90% complete and electrical works are progressing well, with first energisation planned for September.

The €70m project commenced construction enabling works in September 2012 and at its construction peak it's expected more than 300 people will be employed on site, including a mixture of local suppliers and international companies.

Seamus Lynch, SSE Renewables Project Manager for Athea Wind Farm, commented:

"Over the coming months we'll be assembling the remaining turbines, and we aim to complete the handover of Athea to our operations team towards the end of the year. The project is being delivered on a tight programme to allow a maximum period for any possible wildlife breeding. The site is located in a very valuable and diverse environment and many new initiatives have been used to ensure that the construction process delivers an appropriate and respectful project here"

Athea Wind Farm is located close to SSE's existing Tournafulla, Dromada and Rathcahill wind farms. When completed, SSE's County Limerick wind farms will have a combined generation capacity of in excess of 100MW– enough electricity to power almost 51,000 homes.