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PUBLIC INVITED TO VIEW WIND FARM PLANS:

PROPOSALS for a wind farm development on the former Bleak House surface mine site between Heath Hayes and Burntwood will be outlined at two public exhibitions in the area next week.

Harworth Power, a subsidiary of UK COAL who own the site on which they completed mining operations around a decade ago, are inviting the public to view the proposals and meet representatives of the project team at exhibitions on Friday and Saturday.

The exhibition on Friday (October 5) will be at Burntwood Library, Sankeys Corner, Bridge Cross Road between 4.00pm and 8.00pm and on Saturday (October 6) at the Hednesford football club stadium, Keys Park, Keys Park Road from 10.00am to 2.00pm.

The Bleak House wind farm project has progressed through a feasibility and design process for a number of years. Since original plans for a five-turbine wind farm were outlined at an exhibition two years ago, the scheme has been modified, with three turbines - capable of producing 6.0-6.9MW of renewable energy, sufficient to meet the needs of around 3,400 homes - now planned.

Says Harworth Power's Wind Energy Director Eric Adams: "We would welcome the public and all interested parties joining us to preview the proposals at these exhibitions. We all use energy, and the national focus is on producing cleaner sustainable energy in an environmentally acceptable way, which the Bleak House scheme is designed to achieve."

Following the exhibitions, Harworth Power will be finalising its planning application for submission to Cannock Chase District Council by the end of the year. If the scheme is subsequently approved, construction of the turbines would take around six months following the appointment of contractors.

Once operational, the electricity the turbines generate would result in reductions in emissions of carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide and oxides of nitrogen. The project would also help achieve government greenhouse gas reduction targets, contribute to the UK's goal of producing 10% of the nation's electricity needs from renewable sources by 2010 and 15% by 2015, and the West Midlands' renewable generation target of 512MW as set out in the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy.

ENQUIRIES:

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BACKGROUND NOTE:

UK COAL is a mining, property and power company employing 3,100 people with its headquarters at Harworth Park, Harworth, near Doncaster, South Yorkshire.

Britain's biggest producer of coal, UK COAL operates four deep mines in the Midlands (Daw Mill, Thoresby and Welbeck) and Yorkshire (Kellingley), and four surface mines in the North East (North Stobswood and Maidens Hall), the North West (Cutacre) and the Midlands (Long Moor), producing around nine million tonnes of coal a year. Over 90% of the output is sold to generate around 5% of Britain's electricity requirements.

The Group also owns around 47,500 acres of land and other property. The Company property arm, Harworth Estates, currently has plans to develop more than 70 sites increasing the current asset value of £398m to round £900m by 2012. The property portfolio will create opportunities for building around 20,000 homes and 29 million square feet of business space on sites over the next six years.

Its power generation business, Harworth Power, includes the use of engines to burn methane extracted from collieries for electricity generation, and the development of wind farms on 10 or more sites, mainly in the North East and the Midlands.