

## **PRESS RELEASE**



### **GUILDFORD FIRM LAUNCHES SOUTH EAST'S LARGEST ALTERNATIVE FUEL SUPPLY**

27<sup>th</sup> November 2007

A Guildford based firm, launched today, aims to make Surrey the largest provider of alternative sustainable energy in the South East.

LC Energy, based in the Surrey Hills region on the outskirts of Guildford, produces premium grade wood chips to supply the growing demand for wood fuelled boilers as an alternative source of heat energy. As well as providing the raw material fuel, it will also provide customers a 'one-stop shop' consultancy service to include the supply, installation and maintenance of wood fuelled boilers.

Timber will be sourced from sustainable woodland within a 10-15 mile radius of the new facility and will be chipped and stored before being transported to end users. The company will use local agricultural vehicles and labour – in its first year of operation LC Energy estimates it will invest over £150,000 into the local community by outsourcing its entire timber collection and delivery process to businesses operating in the area. This figure is expected to increase to over £350,000 over the following 18 months as demand increases.

The county of Surrey is the most wooded in the UK, with 22% of its area covered by trees, and yet only half of this is being proactively managed. In the area around Guildford this figure is even higher – 40%. By implementing sustainable woodland management practices, the Forestry Commission, a key partner of LC Energy, estimates that the South East could supply over 500,000 tonnes of timber a year to be converted into wood chips to fuel boilers.

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500,000 tonnes is enough sustainable fuel to heat 2,500 care homes or 1,000 large schools. In Surrey there are currently 450 care homes and approx. 550 large schools.

Mark Lebus, Managing Director of LC Energy said, "Woodchip boilers are well established across mainland Europe as a primary source of heat, but the UK has lagged behind due to unreliable supplies of woodchip. The launch of LC Energy will address this issue and, by guaranteeing a regular supply of raw material, enable widespread adoption of sustainable energy across the region.

He continued, "LC Energy can supply premium grade woodchip at the same cost as gas, making wood burning a genuinely long-term alternative source of heat energy than burning fossil fuels.

In the first year of its operation, LC Energy aims to supply over 3,000 tonnes of wood chip to fuel boilers in the region. It already has contracts in place to supply 700 tonnes annually to three customers – a primary school in Richmond, a care home in Bramley and a new housing development in Chobham.

LC Energy has been launched with support from the partners at the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Surrey Hills hub will be the first of five opened in the region over the next five years.

**For further information or to contact us please visit our website:**

**[www.LCENERGY.co.uk](http://www.LCENERGY.co.uk)**