



Windy Edge Wind Farm Community Liaison Group Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 29th August 2012 at 6.30pm

The Grapes Hotel, 16 Douglas Square, Newcastleton, TD9 0QD

Present: MC - Matt Chapman, Smithy House Associates Ltd (Chair)
JA - Julie Aitkin, Infinis
BR - Ben Ridder, Infinis
JG - Jamie Grant, Infinis
AW - Andrew Warburton, (representing Hermitage) Newcastleton and District Community Council
ST - Shaun Turnbull, Newcastleton and District Community Council
GS - Gordon, Steele, Newcastleton and District Community Council
BE - Barbara Elborn, Newcastleton Business Forum

Apologies: Robert Francome, Upper Teviotdale and Borthwick Community Council
Walter Douglas, Upper Teviotdale and Borthwick Community Council
Chris Griffiths, Hobkirk Community Council
Chris Levell, Hobkirk Community Council

Next Meeting: Grapes Hotel, Newcastleton, Wednesday 24th October 2012, 6:30pm

Welcome and Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, explaining that this was the first of a proposed new series of Community Liaison Group meetings (CLG). Round-table introductions, including Ben Ridder who will become Project Manager for the Windy Edge Wind Farm proposal whilst Julie Aitken is on maternity leave.

Review of the role of Community Liaison Group.

The Chairman reviewed the role of the Community Liaison Group in light of new members and the time lapsed from the last meeting:

- Smithy House Associates is an independent company engaged by the developer to help ensure clear and transparent communications
- The CLG is a forum for discussion and exchange of information between community representatives and the developer
- The CLG will address issues of concern and queries about the development
- The CLG enables the developer to learn from the community and to help ensure that local knowledge informs the design.
- The CLG will help the developer to ensure the community trust fund that will be paid if the development becomes operational will have a structure and administration that will bring the maximum benefit to the area from the fund.

Two amendments were requested by members to the Terms of Reference (ToR).

- Barbara Elborn informed that Sandi Hellowell, Visit Scotland has been replaced by Paula McDonald as Regional Director.
- Buccleuch Estates were added to the list of recipients of the agreed minutes.



Clarification was sought on the following issues: -

- In the ToR it states that the minutes would be published on the project website. JA to report back when Infinis' Windy Edge Website is scheduled to be launched.
- Agreed Minutes are to be a public record of these meetings, so member groups are at liberty to make Agreed Minutes public and distribute as they require, including on community websites.

Project Update

Julie Aitken, Project Manager, presented an update to the meeting

- Environmental Impact Assessment is underway, led by appointed consultants SKM
- Residents close to the site will have been aware of peat probing and investigation of private water supplies.
- Spadeadam:
 - The Ministry of Defence (MoD) do not participate in pre-application consultation, so aviation consultants have been engaged.
- Eskdalemuir:
 - Scottish Government has formed the Eskdalemuir Working Group (EWG) with membership from the MoD, Scientists and representatives from the wind industry.
 - Eskdalemuir is one of 172 seismic listening stations worldwide.
 - The Windy Edge site is approximately 23km from the array. MoD will be a statutory consultee for any Wind Farm within 50km of the array.
Additional Explanatory Note subsequent to meeting.
The Eskdalemuir Array can operate with a degree of background noise, but too much could mask potentially important signals. Some wind turbines and believed to produce small seismic vibrations, only detectable with highly sensitive seismometers. A "Noise Budget" of 0.336nm has been set to protect the operation of the array.
 - "Noise Budget" determined in 2005 is allocated to wind farms on a first-come, first served basis. The budget is now fully allocated so the EWG are working to look at ways to release more turbine capacity within the budget and protect the Eskdalemuir Array.
 - A technical Proposal from the MoD is being discussed by the EWG and publication is anticipated.
 - The Eskdalemuir situation does not prohibit submission of a planning application.
- Grid Connection.
 - Grid connection is subject of a separate planning application by the Network Operator (Scottish Power)
 - Developer will approach Network Operator for a grid connection
 - Grid Connection offer is made by the Network Operator
 - At the point at which the Grid Connection Offer is accepted by the developer, fees are incurred, so this is often delayed until after planning consent is gained.
 - Members highlighted the fragility of the local grid network, in which a recent power-cut caused an outage of 5 hours. This has a massive effect on businesses, particularly during the key summer season.



- JG explained that in making the grid connection offer, the network operator is contracting to ensure that the grid is robust enough to manage the additional power generated, and any loss of connection would be subject to punitive penalties through breach of contract.
- One could reasonably expect that as a result of the wind farm the local grid will be made stronger
- Any upgrade required for the grid connection will be paid for by the developer.
- Grid connection cabling will require road works and this is a major local concern.
- If Grid connection is subject of a separate planning application, CLG members will need to be notified by Infinis when a connection offer has been accepted, so discussions can take place with Scottish Power to ensure that disruption is minimised.
- Roads and access
 - The access route has not been finalised and a number of options are being examined.
 - CLG members expressed concern that if the installation of a grid connection results in the closure of roads, this would have huge consequences locally.
 - Members highlighted nearby experience from close to Robertson, where upgrade of a bridge led to a road closure, entailing a 12 mile detour for local residents. It was still not clear whether a temporary Bailie Bridge would be utilised to overcome the problem.
 - Closure of any roads around Hermitage would result in much longer detours than in Robertson.
 - Road surveys will be conducted prior to and after the construction phase, and any notable deterioration during constructing the wind farm will be made good from funds held by the council in a planning bond.
 - Infinis aim to finalise the access route prior to the public exhibitions.
- Ecology
 - 1 year of bird surveys has been completed, and further work is underway to conclude an additional breeding bird survey.
 - Blanket Bog is subject to further investigation.
 - Bat and other ecological surveys are ongoing.
- Cultural Heritage
 - Hermitage Castle is a key cultural Heritage asset of concern.
 - Ongoing discussions are underway with the council's Archaeology Officer and Historic Scotland who are custodians of Hermitage Castle on behalf of owner Buccleuch Estates.
 - Views from the roads approaching Hermitage are minimal but are being discussed and assessed.
 - White Dyke, which forms part of the Castle's Deer Park is also being assessed.
- Visual Impact Assessment
 - Viewpoints are being agreed with Scottish Borders Council, taking input from Planning, Landscape Architects and Archaeology, Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Scotland.
 - CLG members suggested a list of 5 further viewpoints of local interest to be assessed for potential views and for which visualisations should be generated if appropriate. They are:
 - The col of the road from the A7 to Hermitage



- B6357 Steele Road at the point from which Hermitage Castle can be viewed
 - Holme Hill
 - Priest Hill
 - Hermitage Hall (or nearby)
- Noise Monitoring
 - The Met Mast is monitoring wind speed to ensure the viability of the project and to aid turbine selection, but wind speed is also a key factor in assessing the noise impact of the proposed development on local receptors.
 - Nearby properties will be contacted shortly to discuss hosting noise monitoring equipment.
 - It is generally considered beneficial to host noise monitoring equipment, and it gives greater course to redress if there is an unforeseen problem when the turbines are in operation.
- General:
 - The outcome of the Environmental Impact Assessment surveys EIA will be presented in an Environmental statement which will be submitted to the council along with the planning application, this ES will be made available to the public through the council web page and also copies placed in hermitage and newcastleton (apart from anything concerning protected species)
 - A non-technical summary of the Environmental Statement will be made available on the project website.

Project Timetable

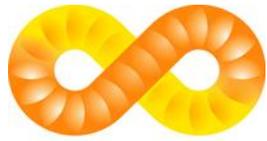
- Infinis are working towards submitting a planning application in 2013
- Public Exhibitions will be held in Hermitage and Newcastleton in the second week of October 2012.

Community Benefit

- It has become customary for wind farm companies to pay community benefit funds to benefit local communities.
- Some Council areas dictate how funds are managed, but this is not the case in Scottish Borders.
- Only caveats on using the money are that it does not fulfil any responsibility of the council (fixing roads etc), it does not support Religious groups or political groups.
- Scottish Borders' Guidance on Community Benefits from Wind Farms is believed to still be a current document.
- Community Councils will generally not become the trust administration body
- Existing bodies could be utilised to administer the fund if their constitution is appropriate for the purpose, but the longevity of the body would need to be assured for the full 25 year lifespan of the project.
- Infinis' standard terms for community benefit funds are £2000/MW capacity, paid annually. In the case of Windy Edge, the capacity is currently expected to be in the region of 50MW, but this is subject to change as the evidence from the environmental impact surveys are assessed.
- Sample Terms of Reference for existing Community Benefit Funds shall be made available at the next meeting

AOB

Next meeting Wednesday 24th October 2012, Grapes Hotel, Newcastleton.



infinis

Future agendas should be set out to address the main chapters of the Environmental Impact Assessment.

The Chairman thanked members for their attendance and input to the meeting.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8:45pm