

WINDY EDGE CLG FEEDBACK, MEETING 24TH OCTOBER 2012, NEWCASTLETON

FEEDBACK NOTES FOR PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION – these are NOT minutes, they represent the content of the discussion held at the CLG meeting attended by those representing the N&DCC and the NBF. Formal minutes will be issued and posted on the village web site when they are issued.

Actions since the meeting are highlighted in Red.

Present: Ben Ridder: Infinis, Matt Chapman: Smithy House Associates, Barbara Elborn: NBF, Shaun Turnbull, Gordon Steele: N&DCC, Bob Francombe: Upper Teviotdale and Borthwick Water CC. No member from Newcastleton and District Community Council specifically representing Hermitage was present.

Summary of issues discussed:

Infinis web-site <http://www.infinis.com/windy-edge/> - now live, check for updates

LOCAL FORUM conclusion to provide a summary paper to all households with info outlining both pro's and con's of the proposal was noted. Infinis and Smithy House stated that this was not really feasible until the planning application had been submitted and all facts were published. The group acknowledged their concerns but stated that it would be remiss of them not to fulfil the communities wishes and that a paper would be prepared and circulated.

LOCAL COMMUNICATION TO HOUSEHOLDS not all had received mailings; Infinis stated that they were only obliged to inform those within 10k.

ACCESS Infinis reported that access had been the main comment from feedback cards received at the local presentations. They would prepare a 2nd 'newsletter' to all households within the 10k radius once details were confirmed. Currently nothing was decided only that access via A7 was not viable. 2 routes were being evaluated from 2 entry ports Blythe in Northumberland via A68 and Grangemouth via A720. 2 routes are being considered via Bonchester Bridge both require landowners permissions so cannot be discussed in detail. Likely entry point via Waverley Heritage Centre at Whitrope. Landowners in dialogue.

Major concerns expressed re moving equipment and infrastructure on single track roads and bridges. Bob Francombe, Upper Teviotdale and Borthwick Water CC, advised the meeting that the bridge at Roberton was now closed for 3 months because of damage caused by excessive weight from vehicles delivering infrastructure materials to the wind farm site. SBC are currently undertaking repairs costing £600k. Local residents have to take a 12 mile detour avoiding the bridge. No compensation is being paid to them for this inconvenience.. This happened as a result of SBC surveyors advising the developers that the bridge was sound thus SBC are liable for repairs. **Bridge surveys need to be undertaken once routes are known. Subsequent to the meeting members have been advised that the works at Martin's Bridge are being undertaken in preparation for the development and that the developers are contributing 50% towards the cost of these repairs. The bridge will be closed for 16 weeks.**

GRID CONNECTION earliest connection 2016, construction would coincide with this. Scottish Power confirmed that spare capacity to connect to the grid was most probable along A7. Infinis advised concerns re grid outage are unfounded as the developer pays SP to upgrade reducing the likelihood of this happening.

Need to determine impact of 'outage' issues which regularly affect the community; Community Energy Scotland will provide contact details for Scottish Power so members can write outlining current concerns.

NOISE Background noise monitoring completed. Concern expressed that no properties in the Hermitage valley had been given noise monitoring. Infinis advised that monitoring had been agreed in advance with the Environmental Health Department of Scottish Borders Council. Lack of monitoring in a particular area was most likely because they had been no identifiable risk of breaching noise regulations. Monitoring had been undertaken at Braidlie and Sundhope Farms. NBF and NDCC requested that Whitrope Cottage which was felt to be within the limits should be monitored.

SIZE OF TURBINES - SNH (Scottish Natural Heritage) asked that some be dropped by 10m to 70m from 80m. The maximum blade diameter is now 82m. ***The planning application will not quote specific turbines, but will set an envelope of parameters. When consented, the most appropriate turbines available on the market at the time will be selected.***

Subsequent advise was sought from Cllr Smith who advised that all turbines would need to be specified in every detail otherwise planning would not be granted. Subsequent changes to the plans would also necessitate specific detail and result in another full round of applications.

HYDROLOGY, PEAT ASSESSMENTS AND PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES - private water supplies have now been mapped and initial peat assessments undertaken. Detailed peat investigation still required when turbine locations and access tracks are more certain. NBF & N&DCC asked about impact on residents and specifically commented on the concerns raised by HAG which had been given directly to Smithy House. They said they would look into them and respond accordingly.

CULTURAL HERITAGE Infinis advise that there will be no physical cultural heritage impacts as a result of the wind farm; no views of the wind farm are possible from Hermitage Castle, 'the impact would also be small and limited to approach routes' Details would only be available in the planning application. They confirmed that White Dykes boundaries were unaffected. ***This needs monitoring.***

ECOLOGY, ORNITHOLOGY AND BATS - habitats mapped, report due end October.

SPADEADAM, ESKDALEMUIR & MOD – no developments.

EXPANDING THE WIND FARM – a question from the community forum was asked, 'can the wind farm would be extended at any stage?' Infinis indicated that detailed examination of the site meant the final proposed turbines and locations would be the maximum that could be accommodated within the constraints of the site, it could not be expanded. Other locations nearby had been reviewed and dismissed by Infinis but **not necessarily by other developers.** **This needs careful monitoring.** Partnerships for Renewables has undertaken initial feasibility studies on Forestry Commission land at Hyndlee Forest.

PROJECT TIMETABLE final design January. Anticipated submission of planning application in spring/summer 2013.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS & STRUCTURE Newsletter quoted Infinis position on Community Benefit of £2K pr MW. Infinis confirmed this was related to installed capacity NOT production, thus the offer was £100k pa for 25 years. Langhope Rig (Bob Francombe) advised that their benefit fund pays out when the first groundwork commences and was administered by the developer, not through Scottish Communities Foundation as anticipated. The fund had also been

changed so that £2k pr MW would go to a Scottish Borders wide fund managed by the developer (SSE) and an anticipated £2.5k pr MW would be available locally.

BE explained research had been undertaken to guide the communities thinking regarding trust structure and community benefit. Discussions had been had with the Southern Upland Partnership, Community Energy Scotland and Dumfries & Galloway Council's Economic Development officer (for wind farms). She was awaiting guidance from SBC Economic Development team. Their collective guidance and comments had helped focus community thinking:

TRUST to be created to manage funds. Could be made up of 8 – 10 members to include statutory representation (5) from CC's involved (1 pr CC) NBF (1) and local clergy (1) as well as nominated and elected representatives from community or community groups. Usual CC rules for application; must be on the electoral role, proposed and seconded by 2 other residents. If more nominees than places an election held. Infinis felt that this was in line with other groups and it was a sensible structure.

ADMINISTRATION Infinis would pay for the administration of the fund above the amount of the fund and this would be index linked to inflation.

VALUE The community asked for £5k pr MW based on the amounts now being agreed, particularly as this was likely to be 4 years hence and base levels might have risen even further in this time. D&G council & FCS were quoted as examples as being the norm now.

WHAT WOULD IT BE SPENT ON? It was hoped that if Infinis were in broad agreement to the terms, and if approvals to the wind farm were granted, then the CLG representatives via the local CC's and the NBF would facilitate a community consultation as to how best to spend the funds.

A development plan outlining projects would be prepared following the consultation that enabled the community to develop a lasting legacy for the future. It was hoped this would comprise of a mix of short term; *mobile phone penetration, improved broadband, and welfare support for Community First Responders and old people's welfare (transport specifically)* and long term aims; *employment, apprenticeships and infrastructure.*

Infinis requested that funds were not spent on 'state' resources which should be provided by public purse, but they acknowledged that our rurality and needs meaning that the consultation would determine the best strategy as to how funds were spent. Once Infinis had confirmed the outline structure of the trust then the process of community consultation could begin.

Infinis stated they needed to discuss proposals with their board but that nothing was off the table and proposals were in line with industry standards. They also confirmed that it would be feasible, if required, to capitalise money up front against income from future years, and they had no issues with any of the projects suggested.

EMPLOYMENT AND BENEFITS DURING CONSTRUCTION – discussed at length. Infinis advised that once approvals were granted a contractor would be appointed. It would be up to them to work with local businesses. We stressed the need for this opportunity to be offered - not just as a gesture. Infinis responded by saying that they could impose a preference on the contractor to employ local services if they met the tender requirements. There would be opportunities in catering, cleaning, hotels, accommodation and ground works. Infinis will provide info on when tenders will be available. We discussed organising open days where businesses could present their wares to prospective contractors; this would be considered nearer the time. **ANY OTHER SECTORS WHO FEEL THEY HAVE A ROLE SHOULD ADVISE THE CLG SO THEY CAN BE INCLUDED ON THE TENDER PROCESS.**

REPRESENTATION Matt advised that he had met with Malcolm McGregor prior to the meeting as there was no representation from Hermitage. It became clear that misunderstanding of CC protocols re declarations of interests meant that members from Hermitage could not voice their views at the N&DCC and felt that there was little value in attending. Protocols would be clarified with SBC. A separate meeting with SBC Councillors and N&DCC members would clarify rights and wrongs, once this was understood by the members this would enable the representation from Hermitage to be reinstated. It was agreed by all present that the residents of Hermitage should be included in the CLG and on the N&DCC going forward. Shaun and Gordon would report back once meetings had taken place.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING 19th of December, Venue to be confirmed

The community forum concluded that a site visit to an established wind farm would be helpful so the community could see first-hand how they operate and make their own decisions.

A trip (probably to Whitelee Wind Farm, Lanarkshire) is proposed. This is an established site with a visitors centre <http://www.whiteleewindfarm.com/>. If you would like to be part of the site visit – probably on a Saturday so as many people as possible can attend – then please put your name down for the coach trip, a decision will be made when we know the level of interest.

Form in the Post Office/Lumsden's.