



**Statkraft**

## **Oliver Forest Wind Farm**

# **Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report**

**August 2024**



Photomontage of Oliver Forest Wind Farm from south on the A701

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 Oliver Forest Wind Farm Limited ('the Applicant') has prepared this Pre-Application Consultation Report (PAC Report) for the proposed Oliver Forest Wind Farm (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development').
- 1.1.2 The Applicant is applying to the Scottish Ministers for Section 36 (S36) consent under the terms of the Electricity Act 1989 and for deemed planning permission under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 for permission to construct and operate the Proposed Development.
- 1.1.3 While engagement is not considered a requirement of a S36 application, it is a key priority of the Applicant to engage meaningfully with residents and communities surrounding any of their proposed developments. The Applicant has used the [best practice principles](#) recommended by the Scottish Government for community engagement.
- 1.1.4 This PAC Report sets out the consultation activity undertaken ahead of the Proposed Development application submission. In addition, it sets out the feedback received throughout the consultation period and where it has or where it could not be used, to shape the Proposed Development. A timeline of all consultation undertaken is provided in Appendix A.

## 1.2 The Proposed Development

- 1.2.1 The Applicant is Oliver Forest Wind Farm Limited, a company wholly owned by Statkraft UK Limited. The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 308300, 624200 and covers an area of approximately 350 ha in total. The Proposed Development would comprise of seven three-bladed horizontal axis turbines up to 200 m blade tip height with a combined rated output over 50 MW; and approximately 23 MW of battery storage.
- 1.2.2 The key components of the Proposed Development which would be constructed in accordance with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 including detailed design and relevant Health and Safety requirements, comprise the following:
- seven variable pitch (three-bladed) wind turbines, each with a maximum blade tip height of up to 200 m;
  - turbine foundations (up to 30 m diameter) and a crane hardstanding area which includes areas for blade, tower and nacelle storage (approximately 2,400 m<sup>2</sup>) at each wind turbine;
  - up to 1.5 km of new on-site access track with a typical running width of 5 m (wider on bends) and 3.5 km of upgraded existing access track (widened from 2.5 m to 5 m) and associated drainage, four turning heads and five passing places;
  - underground cabling and electrical infrastructure along access tracks to connect the turbine locations, and the on-site electrical substation;
  - one on-site substation compound (70 m x 120 m) which would accommodate a control building for the Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) substation and the wind farm substation;
  - one SPEN construction compound (50 m x 100 m) which would be the location for the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) following construction of the wind turbines;
  - two temporary construction compounds, the main compound (50 m x 100 m) and a satellite compound (20 m x 40 m);
  - search area for up to three borrow pits (covering approximately 18,000 m<sup>2</sup>);
  - clearance of 50.4 ha of on-site forest and replacement planting within the site of approximately 26.1 ha; and
  - Approximately 1 km of new path forming part of an overall 5km recreational heritage trail with associated car parking spaces and interpretation boards.

## 1.3 About the Applicant

- 1.3.1 The Applicant is a wholly owned subsidiary of Statkraft UK Ltd (hereafter referred to as 'Statkraft').
- 1.3.2 Statkraft is a leading company in hydropower internationally and Europe's largest generator of renewable energy. The Group produces hydropower, wind power, solar power and supplies district heating. Statkraft is a global company in energy market operations and has 6,000 employees in over 20



countries. Statkraft produces hydropower, wind power, solar power and supplies district heating, generating 62 TWh of renewable power.

- 1.3.3 Statkraft is at the heart of the UK’s energy transition. Since 2006, Statkraft has gone from strength to strength in the UK, building experience across wind, solar, hydro, storage, grid stability, EV charging, green hydrogen and a thriving markets business. Statkraft has invested over £1.4 billion into the UK’s renewable energy infrastructure and facilitated over 4 GW of new-build renewable energy generation through Power Purchase Agreements (PPA). Statkraft develops, constructs, owns and operates renewable facilities across the UK and employs over 500 people in offices across Scotland, England and Wales.
- 1.3.4 Further information about Statkraft can be found at [www.statkraft.co.uk](http://www.statkraft.co.uk)

## 2 Consultation Guidance and Measures

### 2.1 Public Consultation Guidance

- 2.1.1 Permission for the Proposed Development is being sought under Section 36 (S36) of the Electricity Act which does not carry a statutory requirement for public consultation or production of a Pre-Application Consultation Report (PAC Report).
- 2.1.2 However, as noted in Section 1 above, the Applicant prioritises community engagement and recognises the benefits of carrying out early and meaningful consultation during the planning process and follows best practice of producing a PAC Report.
- 2.1.3 Two documents which set out best practice for engaging with communities during development have been used as a framework to support the delivery of the Proposed Development’s engagement programme. The Scottish Government Advice Note (PAN) 3/2010 – Community Engagement and the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit (ECU) best practice Guidance for Applications under Section 36 and 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 issued in February 2022 and updated in July 2022.
- 2.1.4 Tables 1 and 2 set out a summary of the activities undertaken within these frameworks to help plan, monitor and evaluate community engagement in relation to the Proposed Development.

**Table 1 – An Overview of Community Engagement – Consultation Stages**

Standard	PAN 3/2010 Standard	Activities Undertaken
1	Involvement: Identify and involve the people and organisations who have interest in the focus of the engagement.	The host and neighbouring Community Councils, locally elected Ward Members for the host and neighbouring Wards, Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) and Member of Parliament (MP) for the Proposed Development were identified and contacted with information about the Proposed Development at the time of Scoping December 2022. Scoping is when the Proposed Development first enters the public domain. Key local representatives were offered the opportunity to meet with the Proposed Development team, virtually or in person. A dedicated website with contact details was launched when the Proposed Development went into Scoping. Two periods of public exhibitions were held in February - March 2023 and February – March 2024. Both entailed an online exhibition for a c. three week period and two in-person events in the local area, Tweedsmuir (8 March 2023 and 5 March 2024) and Broughton (9 March 2023 and 6 March 2024). Invites and feedback forms were sent to 615 (first mailing) and 673 (second mailing) residents and businesses surrounding the Proposed Development at the start of each of the consultation periods. The increase in number can be accounted for by new data sources used by the mailing house. Emails were sent to host and neighbouring Community Councils and the locally elected representatives. A press release was issued about the project in February 2024 and picked up by the local press.
2	Support: Identify and overcome any barriers to involvement.	Respondents could communicate with the Proposed Development team via the project website, email, letter, telephone or in-person. Accessible online exhibitions were held in 2023 and 2024. In-person exhibitions were scheduled to avoid public and school holidays and held at local venues in Tweedsmuir and Broughton. The event timings aimed to accommodate residents’ commute times to work etc. The exhibitions were advertised in Southern Reporter (23 February 2023 and 15 and 22 February 2024) and the Peeblesshire News (24 February 2023 and 16 and 23 February 2024). Adverts were provided to Community Councils and Councillors to share on their

Standard	PAN 3/2010 Standard	Activities Undertaken
		<p>social media. For the Second Exhibition, an advert was also placed in the locally produced newspaper, Upper Tweed Community News. Details of the exhibitions were published on the Proposed Development website.</p> <p>Invitations were sent to 615 and 673 households and businesses surrounding the Proposed Development for each respective exhibition period. The invitations included information about the Proposed Development, and the exhibition, the location, the timings, what information would be made available and how to get involved. A feedback card and freepost envelope were included in the mailing to make it easy for local people to return their views on the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The Applicant engaged with Community Councils and Ward Councillors to offer meetings for project updates, ask questions and find out more. Two meetings were held with Tweedsmuir Community Council (12 January 2023 and 1 February 2024) and one with Upper Tweed Community Council (19 February 2024).</p>
3	<p>Planning: Gather evidence of need and resources to agree purpose, scope and actions.</p>	<p>The Applicant prioritises undertaking meaningful consultation with the local community and this was set out in correspondence with them.</p> <p>When contact was made with Community Councils and wider representatives the proposed approach was outlined and feedback was requested on the approach to ensure as many people as possible knew about the Proposed Development and could provide feedback.</p>
4	<p>Methods: Agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose.</p>	<p>Information presented on the Proposed Development website was and will remain accessible to interested parties.</p> <p>The website provides the opportunity to find out the latest information about the Proposed Development and ask the team questions.</p> <p>The Applicant held two exhibitions, providing residents and interested groups an opportunity to meet and interact with the team, allowing discussion and feedback. Both exhibitions were held in person and online.</p> <p>At the in-person exhibitions an interactive computer model was available for residents to understand what the Proposed Development may look like from various points within the local environment i.e. their home, key local locations, in addition to the viewpoints.</p> <p>Feedback Forms with additional questions, particularly in relation to potential community benefit funds uses were made available at the exhibitions.</p> <p>The Applicant offered to meet with Community Councils and Ward Councillors several times during the Development period i.e. ahead of exhibitions.</p>
5	<p>Working Together: Agree and use clear procedures that enable participants to work together effectively and efficiently.</p>	<p>Pre-application consultation enabled the Applicant to listen and take on board comments from interested parties, with responses received influencing design.</p> <p>The Applicant encouraged the use of meetings, feedback forms and contact details provided at public exhibitions to receive input. Contact information for the Proposed Development was provided on all public documentation and included a dedicated website.</p> <p>Physical exhibitions were held.</p> <p>An interactive model and viewpoints provided at both exhibitions enabled attendees to understand what the Proposed Development would look like.</p> <p>The Applicant offered to meet with the Community Councils.</p> <p>The Applicant sought engagement and involvement from the community to suggest potential uses for Community Benefit Funds at the exhibitions.</p>
6	<p>Sharing Information: Ensure necessary information is communicated between the participants.</p>	<p>Interaction online and at physical exhibitions including following up on any questions and providing further information if requested.</p> <p>An exhibition brochure, Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and viewpoints were made available online and in person. An interactive model was available at the in-person exhibitions to help attendees understand what the Proposed Development may look like. Printed versions of viewpoints were shared with some members of the community.</p> <p>Provided summary consultation reports for Community Councils, key community groups and the public following feedback from community engagement events.</p> <p>Offering to attend Community Council meetings and to keep them informed following submission of the application.</p>

Standard	PAN 3/2010 Standard	Activities Undertaken
7	Working with Others: Work effectively with others with an interest.	Interaction and comment from residents and Community Councils was sought. Feedback provided at the consultation sessions has been considered as the Proposed Development progressed, particularly on height, local/visibility of several turbines and accessibility of the site.
8	Improvement: Develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of the participants.	Experienced team members (including the Project Manager and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Consultant Team) attended the public exhibition events to provide information requested by visitors and answer questions. The Applicant provided visitors at the exhibitions the opportunity to view a representation of the Proposed Development from different viewpoints.
9	Feedback: Feedback results to the wider community and agencies affected.	The Applicant provided responses direct to every feedback form received during the public consultation (if GDPR allowed). The Applicant undertook dialogue with individuals regarding specific queries posed before or during the consultation process, with responses to queries followed up. The Applicant provided a 'Frequently Asked Questions' (FAQ) document of the key questions asked during each consultation period. The Applicant provided Consultation Reports for Community Councils and the public (published on the Proposed Development website) following feedback from each exhibition and consultation period. Consultation reports sent to key representatives are also published on project specific website.
10	Monitoring and Evaluation: Monitor and evaluate whether engagement achieves its purpose and meets the national standards of community engagement.	The Applicant followed best practice as set out in this PAC Report.

**Table 2 - Good Practice Guidance for Applications Under Section 36 and 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 Requirements**

Activity	Minimum Expectation	Activities Undertaken
Pre-application consultation events	The Applicant is expected to hold at least two public consultation events prior to submitting the application. The final public event should be held at least 14 days after the first public event. The public events are to give members of the public the opportunity to make comments to the Applicant regarding the Proposed Development. At the final public event, the Applicant should provide feedback to members of the public in respect of comments received by the Applicant as regards the Proposed Development.	Two periods of public exhibitions were held in February - March 2023 and February – March 2024. Both entailed an online exhibition for c. three week period and two in-person events in the local area, Tweedsmuir (8 March 2023 and 5 March 2024) and Broughton (9 March 2023 and 6 March 2024). Invites and feedback forms were sent to 615 (first mailing) and 673 (second mailing) residents and business surrounding the Proposed Development at the start of each of the consultation periods. The increase in number can be accounted for new data sources used by the mailing house. At the second exhibition the brochure and boards made it clear how the Proposed Development had changed and why.
Notice of the Pre-application consultation events	At least seven days before holding a public event, the Applicant should publish on the Applicant's website and in a local newspaper circulating in the locality in which the Proposed Development is situated a notice containing: A description of, and the location of, the Proposed Development; Details as to where further information may be obtained concerning the Proposed Development; The date and place of the public event; A statement explaining how, and by when, persons wishing to make comments to the Applicant relating to the proposal may do so; and A statement that comments made to the Applicant are not representations to the Scottish Ministers and if the Applicant submits an application there will be an opportunity to make representation on that application to the Scottish Ministers.	The exhibitions were advertised in the Southern Reporter (23 February 2023 and 15 and 22 February 2024) and the Peeblesshire News (24 February 2023 and 16 and 23 February 2024). Adverts were provided to Community Councils and Councillors to share on their social media. For the second exhibition, an advert was also placed in the locally produced newspaper, Upper Tweed Community News and the Southern Reporter on 15 and 22 February 2024. The exhibitions were published on the project website.  The details set out opposite were published as required.
Content of public event and pre-application consultation report	The Applicant is expected to prepare a pre-application consultation report ("PAC Report") setting out what has been done to accord with the guidance set out above. The PAC Report should be submitted with the application.	All the details required are presented within this PAC Report and Appendices. The Applicant confirms that attendees of both in-person and online exhibitions were advised that they are able to comment on the final application once it is made to Scottish Ministers.

Activity	Minimum Expectation	Activities Undertaken
	<p>The PAC report should contain the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the dates on which and places where public events are held;</li> <li>a description of any additional steps taken by the applicant to consult with members of the public regarding the Proposed Development;</li> <li>a list of bodies, groups and organisations who were consulted by the Applicant and a description of how they were consulted;</li> <li>a description of any materials sent to consultees and materials provided to those attending public events.</li> <li>copies of any visual presentation shown or displayed at a public event, and photographs of any display boards or models at public events;</li> <li>confirmation as to whether consultees and attendees at public events were informed that pre-application consultation does not remove the right or the potential need to comment on the final application once it is made to the Scottish Ministers;</li> <li>a summary of the written responses to consultations and views raised at public events, including an indication of the number of written responses received and the number of persons who attended the public events;</li> <li>an explanation of how the Applicant took account of views raised during the pre-application consultation process; and</li> <li>an explanation of how members of the public were given feedback on the Applicant's consideration of the views raised during the pre-application consultation process.</li> </ul>	

## 3 Consultation Approach and Activity

### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The Applicant's approach has been to provide information and consult with local residents and community representatives from an early stage in the design evolution of the Proposed Development and to provide a line of communication throughout the development process.
- 3.1.2 The Applicant first engaged with key stakeholders in December 2022, shortly after the EIA Scoping Report was submitted to ECU in November 2022, and will continue to engage at application and post application submission stages.
- 3.1.3 In Section 3.2 of this PAC Report the key stakeholders and consultation area for the Proposed Development is set out.
- 3.1.4 Section 3.3 provides details of the key methods used to engage with community members i.e., the Proposed Development website, correspondence, Community Council meetings, public exhibitions activity and summary consultation reports.

### 3.2 Key Stakeholders and Consultation Area

- 3.2.1 The Applicant identified the key stakeholders and the consultation area for the Proposed Development ahead of the entering the public domain in December 2022.

#### Community Councils

- 3.2.2 The following Community Councils were identified as key stakeholders. In line with best practice, they consist of the host and surrounding Community Councils:
- Tweedsmuir (Host);
  - Upper Tweed;
  - Manor, Stobo and Lyne; and
  - Ettrick and Yarrow.



### Elected Representatives

- 3.2.3 The following elected representatives were identified as key stakeholders for the Proposed Development. They consist of the host and neighbouring Borders Council Ward Councillors, MSP and MP.

#### Ward Councillors

- 3.2.4 Tweeddale West is the host ward with Tweeddale East and Selkirkshire being the neighbouring wards. The host and neighbouring Ward Councillors remained the same throughout the consultation. They are listed in Table 3.

**Table 3 - Ward Councillors Throughout Consultation**

<b>Tweeddale West</b>	<b>Tweeddale East</b>	<b>Selkirkshire</b>
Councillor Drummond Begg	Councillor Marshall Douglas	Councillor Caroline Cochrane
Councillor Eric Small	Councillor Julie Pirone	Councillor Leagh Douglas
Councillor Viv Thomson	Councillor Robin Tatler	Councillor Elaine Thorton-Nicol

#### Member of the Scottish Parliament

- 3.2.5 The Proposed Development falls into the Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale Constituency. The MSP for the area throughout the consultation period has been Christine Grahame MSP.

#### Member of Parliament

- 3.2.6 The Proposed Development falls into the Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale Constituency. The MP for the area throughout the consultation period has been the Rt Hon, David Mundell MP.

### Local Resident Consultation Area

- 3.2.7 The consultation area selected also defined the mailing zone used to contact local households and businesses surrounding the Proposed Development (Appendix B).
- 3.2.8 Every household and business within this zone will have received an invite to the public exhibitions. The invite included information about the Proposed Development, a feedback card and a freepost envelope.
- 3.2.9 When considering the consultation zone for the Proposed Development the Applicant began with an approximate 10 km boundary around the Proposed Development. The zone was then refined to reflect particular aspects of the project such as the, Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), Community Council boundaries and Scottish Borders Council boundary. Final minor amends were also made to ensure that everyone in the same street or hamlet received the mailing.
- 3.2.10 The mailing zone covered an area of c.150 square miles and included 615 households and businesses in the first mailing and 673 households and businesses in the second mailing. The increased number can be accounted for through the mailing houses' new data sources.

## 3.3 Consultation and Engagement Activities

- 3.3.1 The Applicant has both digital and in-person engagement methods to ensure as many people as possible were made aware of the Proposed Development and have been given the opportunity to engage throughout the pre-application stage, from EIA Scoping to application submission.

#### **Digital: Main Project Website Available Throughout the Project**

- 3.3.2 A dedicated project website [www.oliverforestwindfarm.co.uk](http://www.oliverforestwindfarm.co.uk) was made live in December 2022 and has been kept updated throughout the consultation period. The website will continue to be kept live and updated post submission.
- 3.3.3 The Proposed Development website provides an easy way for interested parties to access the latest information about the Proposed Development. It contains an FAQ section, maps, and a timeline of the Proposed Development.
- 3.3.4 Finally, the website provides a convenient way for individuals to contact the Proposed Development team with questions not covered via the FAQ, or provide their feedback via an online feedback form.
- 3.3.5 Appendix C has details the Proposed Development website.

### **Key Project Milestone Engagement**

#### Scoping: Email Including Presentation and Offering Meetings

- 3.3.6 When the EIA Scoping Report was made live on the Scottish Government ECU website an email and an overview PowerPoint presentation of the Proposed Development was sent to the key stakeholders listed in Section 3.2 (Appendix D). The presentation was also made available on the Proposed Development website.
- 3.3.7 A meeting and presentation was held with Tweedsmuir Community Council in February 2023. A copy of this presentation is available in Appendix E. This provided the opportunity to present the Proposed Development to the community and, gather early community opinions and questions to inform further design evolution.

#### *Public Exhibitions*

- 3.3.8 Two periods of public exhibitions were held between February and March 2023 and between February and March 2024. Both entailed an online exhibition for c. three-week period and two in person events in Tweedsmuir Village Hall (8 March 2023 and 5 March 2024) and Broughton Village Hall (9 March 2023 and 6 March 2024).
- 3.3.9 To ensure as many people knew about the exhibition as possible a range of engagement activities were carried out and are outlined below.
- 3.3.10 A total of 38 people attended the first in person exhibitions, 21 at Tweedsmuir and 17 at Broughton. A total of 28 attended the second in person exhibitions. 15 at Tweedsmuir and 13 at Broughton.

#### *Emails with Public Exhibition Information and Social Media Advert to Key Representatives*

- 3.3.11 Ahead of both public exhibitions, key community representatives were emailed with information about the exhibitions. The emails contained details of the event, timings, locations, and information that would be available to view. In addition, it set out who had been invited and where the exhibition had been advertised (Appendix F). The event advert was attached to the correspondence to provide them with the opportunity to publicise the event on their social media channels (Appendix G).

#### *Press Adverts*

- 3.3.12 Ahead of both public exhibition periods adverts were placed in the local press. This notice provided key details about the Proposed Development, details of where and when the exhibitions would be held, website address, the freephone telephone number and freepost address so that readers could find out more or contact the Applicant if they had any comments relating to the Proposed Development.
- 3.3.13 The public exhibitions were advertised in the Southern Reporter (23 February 2023 and 15 and 22 February 2024) and the Peeblesshire News (24 February 2023 and 16 and 23 February 2024). For the second exhibition an advert was also placed in the local newspaper, Upper Tweed Community News and the Southern Reporter on 15 and 22 February 2024 (see Appendix H and I).

#### *Invites Sent to Local Residents including Feedback Form and Freepost Envelope*

- 3.3.14 At the start of each online exhibition period a mail drop, inviting residents to the exhibitions was sent to all local homes and businesses within the mailing zone (Appendix J and K).
- 3.3.15 The invitation provided information about the Proposed Development and about the online and in-person exhibition events.
- 3.3.16 A feedback card with a freepost envelope was included in the mailing, providing a convenient way for local residents to provide their feedback and aiming to ensure that the maximum number of people could participate.

#### In-Person Public Exhibition

- 3.3.17 During the public exhibition, exhibition boards (Appendix L and M) were used to share the key information about the Proposed Development. During the second public exhibition, a board was displayed setting out the key changes to the Proposed Development since the first public exhibition and why these changes had been made.
- 3.3.18 Each public exhibition had a Proposed Development brochure (Appendix N and O) made available to take away. The brochure included details about the Applicant, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report and the benefits of the scheme.
- 3.3.19 The viewpoints made available online were also available to view on a localised screen (Appendix P and Q) and a Feedback Form for attendees to provide their comments and questions for the Proposed Development was provided. (Appendix R and S).

3.3.20 At the public exhibitions an interactive computer model of the Proposed Development was available. An area for children was provided to find out more about renewable energy and Solar Aid. The details of this can be found in the pictures taken of the events (Appendix T and U).

3.3.21 After both public exhibitions the Applicant compiled a consultation feedback report. The reports summarised the details of the public exhibitions, the number of people who attended and key outcomes of the feedback forms and are provided to Community Councils, elected representatives for their information. The reports are also published online so that all interested parties can access the report. A copy of the full reports sent can be found in Appendix V and W.

#### Digital: Exhibition Websites and Q&A Session

3.3.22 Unique exhibition websites were set up for each round of public consultation. The websites could be accessed at any time over the exhibition periods via a link from the main Proposed Development website (Appendix X and Y).

3.3.23 The online exhibition sought to replicate the type of information and materials available at a physical exhibition and could be accessed at any time over the exhibition period. The Online Exhibition included an online version of the exhibition brochure and a viewpoints brochure. An extensive FAQ section on the Proposed Development; and a feedback form, providing an opportunity for members of the public to leave comments through the form.

3.3.24 In addition, a live online Q&A session was held during the first exhibition period.

#### Post Exhibition Emails and Letters

3.3.25 The Applicant wrote, within the constraints of GDPR, to each person who responded to the exhibition with a comment or question after the public exhibition. The letter answered their query and included an FAQ document. (Appendix Z, and AA).

#### **Other Activities**

##### Press Release

3.3.26 In February 2023 a press release for the Proposed Development was issued to a range of local papers. This was to ensure the wider area were aware of the Proposed Development (Appendix BB).

##### Local School Engagement

3.3.27 In February 2024 the Applicant sought to engage with the local Broughton Primary School, offering to visit the school and provide a presentation on Renewable Energy and the Proposed Development (Appendix CC) (this offer has not yet been accepted).

##### Meeting Local Residents

3.3.28 Meeting held with residents to discuss the project in relation to their property and what the Proposed Development may look like.

##### Community Council Meetings

3.3.29 Ahead of the second period of exhibitions members of the Applicant's team attended the Tweedsmuir and Upper Tweedsmuir Community Council Meetings in February 2024 to provide an update on the Proposed Development.

## **3.4 Conclusion**

3.4.1 A comprehensive programme of engagement was undertaken throughout the development period of the Proposed Development.

3.4.2 A range of consultation and communication methods, including two exhibition periods, were used to ensure as many people knew about the Proposed Development and had the opportunity to engage and provide their views.

3.4.3 The details of the feedback provided through these consultation activities, and how the Proposed Development has changed in response to these, are outlined in Section 4 below.

# **4 Consultation Feedback and Developer Response**

## **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 A comprehensive programme of engagement was undertaken throughout the development period of the Proposed Development.

- 4.1.2 Meetings were held with Tweedsmuir (two meetings) and Upper Tweedsmuir Community Council (one meeting).
- 4.1.3 Feedback was gathered during the two periods of public exhibitions. Attendees were able to respond via an offline and an online form. A total of 80 feedback forms were received, 46 from the first exhibition period and 34 from the second exhibition period. Four emails/letters were also received, providing feedback on the Proposed Development across the two exhibition periods.
- 4.1.4 All the key feedback gathered by the Applicant from the public consultation process described in Section 3 was analysed and used to identify the communities' key comments and issues. The details of the feedback provided by the Applicant and how the Proposed Development has changed in response to these are outlined below.

## 4.2 Feedback from Stakeholder Meetings

- 4.2.1 During the meetings with Tweedsmuir and Upper Tweed Community Councils which took place in January 2023 and February 2024, a number of comments and issues were raised. These are set out below.

### Visual Impact and Cumulative Impact

- 4.2.2 Tweedsmuir Community Council in particular raised the issue regarding the visual impact of the Proposed Development and the cumulative visual impact of all wind farms in the local area currently and if future applications all go ahead. The Community Councils believe that there are sufficient wind farms in the local area, with the Tweedsmuir Community Action Plan highlighting that local residents value the beauty of the unspoilt landscape. The Community Councils raised concerns regarding wind farm and commercial forestry developments industrialising the area and impacting the local landscape.

### Traffic

- 4.2.3 The Community Councils requested clarity on how the traffic would be managed throughout construction and operation.

### Tourism

- 4.2.4 Tweedsmuir Community Council highlighted that it is the priority of local residents to develop Tweedsmuir as a place to visit to experience unique heritage and culture. The Community Council have plans to develop small scale sustainable tourism and raised concerns over the siting of the Proposed Development.

### Recreation

- 4.2.5 The Community Council requested that if consented, the Proposed Development provides a sustainable community benefit and contributes to the wider activity underway in the area.

- 4.2.6 The Community Council were keen to understand how the Proposed Development will be connected to the national grid infrastructure.

### Private water supplies and Run-Off

- 4.2.7 Tweedsmuir Community Council raised the issue of the potential impact of construction and operation on surface water run-off and private water supplies.

## 4.3 Feedback Analysis: First Exhibition, Online and Postal responses

- 4.3.1 Feedback was gathered at the first public exhibitions (February and March 2023) via the freepost responses, exhibition feedback forms and the website.
- 4.3.2 At the time of the first exhibition the Proposed Development consisted of up to 10 turbines, up to 250 m to blade tip height.
- 4.3.3 The feedback from the first exhibition, 46 unique forms returned from the 615 households mailed, showed that:
- 78 % of those who responded to the questions agreed that the country needs to generate more electricity from renewable sources, 13 % didn't agree and the remaining 9 % were unsure or did not answer.
  - 65 % of those who responded to the question agreed that onshore wind power is a good way to help achieve this aim, 22 % didn't agree and 13 % were unsure/didn't answer.
  - Of those who responded to the question: "Do you think this site is an acceptable location for a wind farm?", 37 % agreed, 46 % didn't think so and the 17 % remaining respondents were unsure.

- In terms of interest in Shared Ownership, the feedback forms revealed that 24 % are interested and 41 % were unsure.
- 4.3.4 Attendees at the exhibition events also had the opportunity to provide more details on what they would like to see the community benefit used for and details of this will be provided to the administrators of the fund should the Proposed Development be consented<sup>1</sup>.
- 4.3.5 Attendees were also asked which topics they would like to see covered in more detail at the next exhibition, which included:
- 4.3.6 more information about landscape and visual amenity, noise, hydrology and ecology of the site.
- 4.3.7 Respondents were also offered the opportunity to make additional comments. Both negative and positive comments received during the first exhibition are outlined in Table 4.

**Table 4 - Comments Received from the First Exhibition**

Positive	Negative
'I think the proposal looks well thought out with a lot of consideration for its surroundings.'	'Surrounded by wind farms here. Please no more!!'
'No immediate concerns. Look forward to viewing the final proposal.'	'Very close to Tweedsmuir village and dwellings'
'Please give more details of 'shared ownership'.'	'Location would be okay for the turbines like the ones already in area. The turbines proposed are going to have a much bigger impact.'

- 4.3.8 From the full set of comments received the following main issues/queries were raised and responded to in the FAQs provided as part of the Consultation Feedback Report:
- the location of the Proposed Development and cumulative impacts; Why here/close to homes/too many wind farms in this area?;
  - the scale of the Proposed Development turbines; The turbines are too tall;
  - the adverse environmental/ecology impacts of the Proposed Development; Wind farms are bad for the environment i.e. wildlife; and
  - the Community Benefit Fund, local electricity discounts and Shared Ownership queries.

#### 4.4 Developer Response to First Exhibition Feedback

- 4.4.1 Between the first and second exhibitions, the Applicant took on board community feedback and completed further studies which influenced the design in a number of ways.
- 4.4.2 The Proposed Development presented at the second exhibition had changed in the following ways:
- **Reduced from 10 to 7 Turbines:** Three turbines removed for landscape, noise and visual amenity, proximity to watercourses and impacts on scheduled monuments.
  - **All tip heights reduced from 250 m to 200 m:** The tip height for all turbines was reduced by 50 m taking into account visual impact.
  - **Refined turbine layout:** The turbine positions were altered to increase the distance from residential properties and to minimise the impacts on bog habitats. This was balanced with selecting key locations to maximise the predicted available wind yield.
  - **Effective and efficient design progressed:** The Proposed Development was designed to minimise construction footprint i.e. upgrading existing access tracks.

#### 4.5 Feedback Analysis: Second Exhibition, Online and Postal Responses

- 4.5.1 Feedback was gathered at the second public exhibitions (February and March 2024) via the freepost responses, exhibition feedback forms and the website.
- 4.5.2 The feedback from the second public exhibition, was 34 unique forms returned, from the 673 households mailed, the completed forms revealed that:

<sup>1</sup> It is recognised that community benefit is best practice while it is not mandatory or material in planning, and other than providing £5,000 per MW per annum no decision on how the fund will be split or administered have been taken



- 59 % of those who responded to the question agreed that the country needs to generate more electricity from renewable sources, 35 % didn't agree and the remaining 6 % were unsure or did not answer. There is more doubt around whether the country needs to generate more renewable energy since the first exhibition.
- 44 % of those who responded to the question agreed that onshore wind power is a good way to help achieve this aim, 47 % didn't agree and 9 % were unsure/didn't answer. There is a significant increase in the number of people who do not agree that onshore wind is a good way to help produce more renewable energy.
- Of those who responded to the question: "Do you think this site is an acceptable location for a wind farm?" 35 % agreed, 62 % didn't think so and the 3 % remaining respondents were unsure. In comparison to the first exhibition responses, the number of people who agreed that the site was a good location has fallen by 2 % the number who do not think it is a good location has increased by 16 %, with fewer people being unsure or preferring not to answer only 3 % of respondents were unsure or did not answer.
- In terms of interest in Shared Ownership, the feedback forms revealed that 9 % are interested and 71 % are not and the remaining 20 % are either unsure (11 %) or did not respond (9 %). The number of interested parties has fallen from 24 % interested and 41 % unsure since the first exhibition.

4.5.3 Attendees at the exhibition events were also given the opportunity to provide more details on how they would like to use the community benefit.

4.5.4 It is recognised that community benefit is best practice while it is not mandatory or material in planning, and other than providing £5,000 per MW per annum no decision on how the fund will be split or administered have been taken. Details of the ways respondents would like to see the community benefit used will be passed across to community groups involved in this, which is expected to be much later in the development process.

4.5.5 Respondents were also offered the opportunity to make additional comments. Some negative and positive comments received during the second public exhibition are outlined in Table 5:

**Table 5 - Comments Received from the Second Exhibition**

Positive	Negative
Just get on with it.'	Too many wind turbines in this area.'
I think it is an acceptable location if neighbours agree.'	Wind turbines are an eyesore and have a finite time span.'
.. one tangible community benefit being requested by the community is that of access to and the creation of identified walking routes within the wind farm.'	Concerns about impact on village, which is very close. Both visual and noise issues due to proximity.'

4.5.6 From the full set of comments received the following main issues/queries were raised and responded to in the FAQs provided as part of the Consultation Feedback Report:

- Use of the Proposed Development site: Will local residents be able to use the site for recreational purposes?;
- The location of the Proposed Development and cumulative impacts: Why here/close to homes/too many wind farms in this area?;
- Scale of the scale of the Proposed Development turbines: The turbines are too tall;
- The grid connection route;
- Queries regarding the adverse environmental/ecology impacts of the Proposed Development; and
- The Community Benefit Fund, local electricity discounts and Shared Ownership queries.

## 4.6 Developer Response to Second Exhibition Feedback

4.6.1 After meeting with Tweedsmuir Community Council in February 2024 and following feedback from the second exhibition the Applicant took on board community feedback regarding the opportunity to improve recreational access to the Proposed Development.

- 4.6.2 The Proposed Development would include a 5 km recreational heritage trail starting in the south-eastern part of the site and linking into the wind farm access tracks and wider forestry tracks. Interpretation boards would be provided at various points along the route to describe environmental features in and around the site focusing on those of heritage and ecological interest.
- 4.6.3 A stretch of wheelchair accessible path (approximately 1.2 m wide) (to allow for all abilities' access including wheelchairs and buggies) would be created at the start of the trail approximately 380 m in length, focusing on interpretation of the two Scheduled Monuments within the site, finishing just before the Hallow Burn.
- 4.6.4 Two small single span wooden bridges would be installed over the Hallow Burn (and its tributary) and a new path (approximately 1.2 m wide) (not suitable for wheelchair use or buggies) would be created of locally sourced stone (approximately 620 m) leading to the Proposed Development access tracks to the west.
- 4.6.5 The path would be accessed by an existing vehicular access point off the A701 approximately 650 m south-east of Tweedsmuir village. Up to three car parking spaces and bins would be provided.

## 4.7 Conclusion

- 4.7.1 The Applicant has assessed all the feedback received and regards the Proposed Development submitted to the ECU (up to 7 turbines up to 200 m tip height) to find the right balance between maximising the electricity output of the site while carefully siting and designing the wind farm while relating to the existing landscape, environmental and technical considerations including other wind developments in the vicinity.
- 4.7.2 The design of the proposal also addresses the other comments and issues raised throughout the consultation period, turbines removed for landscape, noise, proximity to watercourses and impacts on scheduled monuments.
- 4.7.3 The Applicant wishes to thank local community members for engaging during the consultation periods. The feedback, along with findings of studies, have helped shape the design.

## 5 Summary

### 5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This Section provides a summary of how the feedback from both public exhibition periods, in addition to ongoing community consultation activity, has helped inform the design process of the Proposed Development.

### 5.2 Design of the Proposed Development

- 5.2.1 Feedback from the consultations aided the Applicant in making a number of key decisions, including:
- **Reduced from 10 to 7 Turbines:** Three turbines removed for landscape, noise and visual amenity, proximity to watercourses and impacts on scheduled monuments.
  - **All tip heights reduced from 250 m to 200 m:** The tip heights for all turbines was reduced by 50 m.
  - **Refined turbine layout:** The turbine positions were altered to increase the distance from residential properties and to minimise the impacts on bog habitats. This was balanced with selecting key locations to maximise the predicted available wind yield.
  - **Effective and efficient design progressed:** The Proposed Development was designed to minimise construction footprint i.e. upgrading existing access tracks.

### 5.3 Benefits to the Community

- 5.3.1 Further to the above primary design considerations, the Applicant has used the consultation responses to inform the proposed measures which are aimed at bringing benefits to the community. These include:
- **A circular 5 km recreational heritage trail** In response to community feedback the Applicant has included a recreational heritage trail with information boards and public parking.
  - **Delivery of a Community Benefit Fund:** In line with Scottish Government best practice a Community Benefit fund of £5,000 per MW of installed wind capacity.

- **Local Suppliers:** The Applicant is keen to ensure local suppliers can be involved in delivering goods and services, should the Proposed Development be consented. At both exhibitions and on the Proposed Development web site local suppliers are encouraged to register their details with the Applicant for any future opportunities.

## 5.4 Biodiversity

5.4.1 Further to this, the Applicant recognises, and is committed to, delivering a Proposed Development which in addition to delivering clean, green energy, also brings biodiversity benefits in line with the requirements of National Planning Framework 4. During the consultation some members of the community were interested in the environmental and ecology impacts of the proposal and ecology of the area. The Applicant is committed to delivering a robust Nature Enhancement Plan (NEMP) which will include:

- enhancement of peatland habitats, within Glenmuck Bog.
- enhancement and management of grassland in the River Tweed Valley.
- enhancement of fisheries habitats.
- improvement to opportunities for nesting and foraging birds and bats.

## 5.5 Engagement following Section 36 Application Submission

- 5.5.1 The Applicant is committed to ensuring that local stakeholders and residents are kept informed throughout the planning process via email, face-to-face meetings or the Proposed Development website as appropriate.
- 5.5.2 All Section 36 planning documentation relating to the Proposed Development will be available on the Proposed Development webpage accessible at [www.oliverforestwindfarm.co.uk](http://www.oliverforestwindfarm.co.uk) in addition to the ECU website.
- 5.5.3 The Applicant will remain available to respond to feedback or queries regarding the Proposed Development via existing channels.
- 5.5.4 While support for the option of shared ownership with the community has been limited to date, the Applicant remains committed to the principle of community ownership and welcomes further discussions regarding this.
- 5.5.5 The Applicant would like to thank the Community Councils, elected representatives and residents for their input and time in the planning process to date.

## 6 References

Scottish Government (2010) Planning Advice Note (PAN) 3/2010 Community Engagement available online at <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2010/08/pan-3-2010-community-engagement/documents/pan-3-2010-pdf/pan-3-2010-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/pan%2B3%2B2010.pdf> accessed 25/06/2025

Scottish Government (Updated July 2022) Energy Consents Unit Good Practice Guidance for Applicants under Section 36 and 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 available online at <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2022/02/good-practice-guidance-applications-under-sections-36-37-electricity-act-1989/documents/energy-consents-unit-good-practice-guidance-applications-under-section-36-37-electricity-act-1989-february-2022/energy-consents-unit-good-practice-guidance-applications-under-section-36-37-electricity-act-1989-february-2022/govscot%3Adocument/energy-consents-unit-good-practice-guidance-applications-under-section-36-37-electricity-act-1989-february-2022.pdf>