

Knockcronal Wind Farm

Online and In-Person Consultation Feedback Report

September/October 2021

About Knockcronal Wind Farm

Knockcronal is a proposal for a 9-turbine wind farm. The site is approximately 5km south of Straiton in South Ayrshire. The graphic below highlights some key information about the proposal.

	No. of Turbines	Max Blade Tip Heights Up To	Installed Capacity (MW)	Estimated Generation (homes equivalent)	Community Fund (per year)
Knockcronal	9	200m	59.4¹	Over 48,000*	Estimated £297,000 per year**
			<small>¹ Based on 9 x 6.6MW</small>	<small>* Based on 59.4MW of Installed Capacity, wind resource assessment and Scottish average household consumption of 3,393 kWh pa (BEIS Dec. 2020)</small>	<small>** Based on 59.4MW x £5k per MW of installed capacity. If consented, value of fund determined by actual installed capacity.</small>

The project was introduced to community representatives in January 2021 and an online consultation event, adhering to Scottish Government advice in relation to Covid-19, was held in May and June 2021. A Feedback Report for this event was circulated to Community Councils and uploaded to the project website.

A second consultation, both online and in-person, was held in September and October 2021. This Feedback Report focuses on the second exhibition period.

Background

In a virtual meeting in February 2021, Crosshill, Straiton & Kirkmichael Community Council requested, if possible, and in line with Covid-19 guidance, an in-person exhibition event for Knockcronal Wind Farm. We committed to holding a physical exhibition event alongside a virtual exhibition when possible in order to give residents different opportunities to engage on the proposals. As the Covid-19 restrictions eased it was possible to hold in person events, as requested, with suitable Covid-19 risk measures in place.

We carried out risk assessments, which were approved by South Ayrshire Council, in advance of the physical exhibition events. The measures taken at the physical exhibitions included:

- An appointment-based system to ensure the number of attendees in the hall stayed within the hall capacity;
- Track and Trace in operation, with contact details of all attendees provided to Statkraft;
- Members of the Statkraft team taking Lateral Flow Tests in advance of the exhibitions;
- Mask covering in operation and hand sanitiser available to attendees;
- A one-way system in place for the halls; and
- Spacing out of information material.

Second Exhibition Period

This overview presents the findings of the feedback received during and after the second round of consultation. This was held from 14 September – 5 October 2021 and included in-person and online consultation opportunities. Feedback could also be provided by phone and postal feedback forms.

The consultation was publicised in various ways to ensure that as many local residents knew about the second exhibition event as possible, including:

- Advertisements in the Ayr Advertiser newspaper on Tuesday 14 September 2021 and in the Ayrshire Post on 15 September 2021 and 22 September. This notice provided information on how to book an appointment at the exhibition events and details of the online exhibition.
- Mailing to all households and businesses (over 1,300) within 10km of the site with an invitation and details to take part in the online consultation as well as providing feedback cards (which could be returned up to 22 October 2021) and freepost envelopes for those who preferred to write back rather than go online or attend an exhibition.
- Writing to host and neighbouring Community Councils and local ward members at the start of the consultation, with copies of adverts should they wish to highlight the events on social media.
- Providing details of the consultation on the Knockcronal project website.

In-Person Exhibition 21 and 22 September 2021

The In-Person Physical Exhibitions were held at:

- Dailly Community Centre, Dailly - 21 September 2021, 2pm - 7pm
- McCandlish Hall, Straiton - 22 September 2021, 2pm - 7pm

On display were a number of information boards, covering:

- Information about the developer;
- An overview of the proposed development, including layout, transport route and how the project has taken on board comments from the first exhibition event;
- A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) of the development; and
- Community benefit, construction opportunities and shared ownership.

Copies of the online exhibition brochure were available for members of the public to take away, and a screen was set up to run a presentation of several agreed viewpoints for the project.

We provided software which enabled visitors to view a visualisation of the project from a location of their choosing on a screen. Visitors were also able to select the locations by either providing a postcode or pointing to a position on a map.

If requested, we took details and sent hardcopies of the visuals from particular postcodes/areas.

Feedback forms were available at the event for members of the public to fill out or take away with a freepost envelope.

Dailly had 7 visitors and Straiton had 31 visitors attend the events. The majority of attendees had booked an appointment in advance. Several members of the public attended on the day without an appointment - they provided track and trace details and the hall was not at capacity so they were able to attend the exhibition. All members of the public who arrived were able to attend the exhibitions.

Representatives of Crosshill, Straiton & Kirkmichael Community Council, Dailly Community Council, Barr Community Council and Save Straiton for Scotland attended the exhibition events.

Online Exhibition, 14 September - 5 October 2021

The virtual exhibition, accessed via a link from the main project website, sought to replicate the type of information and materials available at the physical exhibition. This included:

- An Exhibition Brochure – to replace and expand on the information you would normally expect on Exhibition Boards, this included the layout and further details about the transport route;
- Specific information about how the proposed development had been progressed since the first exhibition;
- A separate predicted views brochure, which provided visualisations of the wind farm from several agreed viewpoint locations (agreed with South Ayrshire Council and NatureScot);
- Community benefit, construction and community ownership information;
- A live Q&A session on 5 October 2021, 12pm - 2pm, to provide members of the public with a dedicated interactive online event to engage with the project team;
- A 'ring back' service to allow members of the public to have a dedicated chat with our team at a date/ time suitable to them; and
- An opportunity to leave comments through online feedback forms.

Summary of Consultation Responses

Of the 1,394 households and businesses contacted with the invitation and freepost feedback form we received a response from 41 (2.94%). In addition, we received over 120 webpage views on the separate and dedicated website set up to host the online public exhibition website and one online form was completed between 14 September to 5 October.

In total, there were 109 interactions, including 38 attendees to the events, call backs, online forms, feedback forms, letters and emails sent (not including confirmation of attending the event).

The results of the returned offline and online forms are provided below:

Of those who provided a response to the question, 76% agreed that the country needs to generate more electricity from renewable sources. The belief of respondents that onshore wind is a good way to achieve this is quite evenly balanced 36% believe yes, 40% believe no, and 24% are unsure. The number of unsure respondents rose by 11% relative to the first exhibition.

Of respondents who answered the question: 'Do you think this is a good location for a wind farm', the response rates from the first exhibition remained very similar, three fifths (60%) said no, one third responded yes (33%) and 7% were unsure.

64% of all respondents wish to be kept up to date on the project and we look forward to engaging with the community over the coming months.

Although the exhibition has now closed, the exhibition material is still available on the project website at www.knockcronal.co.uk

Key Topics from Consultation

Similar to the first exhibition, we received positive, negative and neutral comments and questions regarding the wind farm proposals. We will directly respond to all feedback/letters (in line with GDPR rules).

Below is a summary of the main themes raised with us and we would welcome further discussion with the community on these topics.

Cumulative impact and landscape impact of the project

The project has reduced from 12 to 9 turbines from the original scoping layout. In addition, 3 of the 9 turbines have reduced in tip height. We have also moved turbines further to the west to better reflect the landscape and the topography of the site.

Cumulative assessments have been undertaken as part of the planning application. These studies are now complete and will be considered by the planning authority and the Energy Consents Unit as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report when the application is submitted to the Energy Consents Unit.

Broadband

There was continued interest in the broadband proposals. Some attendees highlighted the R100 programme in the area and that some communities are well served already by good broadband connections. Our study has taken this into account and investigates whether service improvements could be achieved for properties not covered by this scheme. Initial investigations show service improvements could be possible.

We will share the findings of the feasibility study with the Community Councils once it is complete.

Community Benefit Fund

Statkraft is committed to delivering a community benefit fund with all new wind farms at £5,000 per MW installed per year, as per Scottish Government guidance. The exact amount will depend on the installed capacity of the project, but as a guide, based on 59.4MW, this would equate to around £297,000 per year over the operating period of the wind farm. It is important to note the provision of the community benefit fund is not material in planning, i.e. it is not taken into account when deciding (or determining) the application.

No decisions have been made regarding the fund. We follow best practice in relation to this and we have outlined the community benefit offering to the host and near neighbouring community councils, Crosshill Straiton and Kirkmichael, Dailly and Barr Community Councils.

We are not prescriptive in terms of how the fund can be used. It is possible, should the community wish, it could be used for a local energy discount scheme.

Should the wind farm gain consent, we look forward to working with the community to deliver a fund that meets local needs.

Next Steps

As noted at our exhibition, the application is to be submitted before the end of 2021. The next steps for local engagement are:

- Send a copy of this summary report to the local and neighbouring community councils and elected representatives, and look forward to keeping interested parties updated on the project.
- We would welcome the opportunity to underline our commitment on community benefit and shared ownership with the community councils (whether they are supportive, opposed or neutral to the plans) to ensure that the community understand that the Community Benefit Fund will be for the local communities.
- Continue to update the project website.

We would like to put on record our thanks to the Community Councils, community groups and residents for their input and time in engaging with us and the planning process to date.

Appendix 1

Knockcronal Wind Farm

The second public exhibition for Knockcronal Wind Farm was held during September and October 2021. During the consultation, which included hosting two local drop-in sessions (in Dailly and Straiton), some questions and comments were frequently raised. Below are our responses to these.

(November 2021)

There are too many wind farms in this area; similar proposals have previously been refused

As part of our work towards the planning application for the project, we undertook substantial analysis into the landscape and visual sensitivities in the vicinity of the development. These studies are now complete and will be included in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report of the wind farm application expected to be submitted in late 2021.

We used these studies to develop a project, with the aim of finding the right balance between maximising electricity output while carefully siting and designing the project to relate to the existing landscape, including other wind farm developments. This has included moving the turbines further west and, to reflect the topography of the site, using differing turbine heights to produce a better overall design.

We presented the finalised proposal at the second public exhibition, a 9 turbine scheme with 6 turbines up to 200m to tip height and 3 turbines up to 180m to tip height. You can see how it may look like at several local viewpoints on our website at www.knockcronal.co.uk.

The Scottish Government has a target to achieve net zero by 2045. Onshore wind is expected to play a role in achieving this aim. Our analysis shows that the area suitable for onshore wind development in Scotland is limited due to a range of factors. To find out more about what makes a site suitable for onshore wind you are invited to watch the webinar: '*Location, Location – the challenges to siting onshore wind farms in Scotland*' where our Head of Development, Richard Mardon, explores the challenges faced in finding the best sites to maximise Scotland's excellent natural wind resources. You can view the webinar [here](#).

What are the benefits to locals?

There are several ways our projects can bring local benefits, and we are always open to discussing how this can be tailored to each area.

Broadband

The broadband feasibility study we undertake investigates how communities within the local area could benefit from improved broadband and the next steps required to deliver any improvements.

We are aware, through community feedback and the study, that part of the area will benefit from improved broadband through the R100 Programme. Our study has taken this into account and investigates whether service improvements could be achieved for properties not covered by this scheme. Initial investigations show service improvements could be possible. We will share the findings of the report with community councils once it is completed.

Community Benefit Fund

Statkraft is committed to delivering a community benefit fund with all new wind farms at £5,000 per MW installed per year, as per Scottish Government guidance. The exact amount will depend on the installed capacity of the project, but as a guide, based on 59.4MW, this is around £297,000 per year over the operating period of the wind farm. It is important to note the provision of the community benefit fund is not material in planning, i.e. it is not taken into account when deciding (or determining) the application .

No decisions have been made regarding the fund. We follow best practice in relation to this and we have outlined the community benefit offering to the host and near neighbouring community councils, Crosshill Straiton and Kirkmichael, Dailly and Barr Community Councils.

We are not prescriptive in terms of how the fund can be used. It is possible, should the community wish, that it could be used for a local energy discount scheme. Examples of Local Energy Discount schemes run by other groups are included here for information: [Carsphairn Local Energy Discount scheme](#) and [RES or Energia's Local energy schemes](#).

Should the wind farm gain consent we look forward to working with the community to deliver a fund that meets local needs.