



**Shepherds' Rig Wind Farm**

**INFINERGY**

harnessing the power of nature

## **Statement of Community Consultation**

November 2018



*Cover image for illustrative purpose only*



## Statement of Community Consultation

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## Statement of Community Consultation

### 1.1 Executive Summary

- 1.1.1 In line with Planning Advice Note 3/2010 which includes the National Standards for Community Engagement, and Planning Aid for Scotland's SP=EED framework, Infinergy Limited has undertaken two rounds of consultation for its proposed Shepherds' Rig Wind Farm (hereafter referred as the 'Proposed Development'). The first to introduce the project and seek feedback and the second to present revised plans, incorporating both the initial feedback and subsequent study data.
- 1.1.2 The applicant is 'SETT Wind Development Limited' which is a company formed by Infinergy Limited and Boralex LLP. Infinergy is a UK based renewable energy company and Boralex LLP is a Canadian based independent power provider.
- 1.1.3 Consultation activity included:
- distribution of newsletters to local residents;
  - a dedicated project website [www.shepherdsrigwindfarm.co.uk](http://www.shepherdsrigwindfarm.co.uk);
  - a Freephone telephone number and dedicated email address;
  - attending meetings of the Carsphairn Community Council; and
  - Community Open Days held on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> July 2013 and 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018.
- 1.1.4 Local residents, councillors and other interested parties including Dumfries and Galloway Council's Ward Members were invited to attend the Community Open Days (CODs). These were publicised through the newsletter, sent out to households within a 15km radius of the project, and advertised in two local newspapers. At each of the CODs members of the development team were on hand to explain the proposals, discuss the wider issues of climate change and energy security as well as demonstrate landscape impact via photomontages and a 3D computer modelling programme. Those attending had the opportunity to complete feedback questionnaires. The local residents also had the opportunity to air their views via the newsletter feedback slips, which could be returned free of charge to Infinergy's Freepost address, as well as the project website, project email address and Freephone telephone number.
- 1.1.5 The CODs addressed all three of Infinergy's proposed developments in the area in 2013, which reduced to two projects in 2018.

- 1.1.6 A total of 120 people attended the three CODs in 2013 with 30 attending in Carsphairn, the closest settlement to the proposed development. In 2018, a total of 55 people attended both CODs, with 29 attending in Carsphairn. With regard to the Proposed Development, in 2013 28 questionnaires were received either on the day of the COD or later by Freepost. In 2018, 16 were received either on the day of the COD or later by Freepost. 45 newsletter feedback slips were returned in 2013 and 42 second newsletter feedback slips were returned in 2018. Again, the newsletters covered all of the Infinergy proposals in the local area.
- 1.1.7 In total we have received 131 official responses from the general public to the Proposed Development consultation.
- 1.1.8 Of those who responded to the full public consultation programme asking how they felt about the Proposed Development, 13% stated they were very supportive or supportive of the Proposed Development, with 80% either opposed or very opposed. The remaining 7% are, as yet, undecided.
- 1.1.9 The Applicant has written to all local residents who raised questions or concerns via the various feedback mechanisms. Consultation is on-going and will continue post submission

## **1.2 Introduction**

- 1.2.1 This Statement of Community Consultation accompanies the Environmental Impact Assessment Report in relation to the Proposed Development.
- 1.2.2 The Applicant embraces community consultation; it is at the heart of its approach to development. This report provides detailed information regarding the Proposed Development community consultation.

### **1.3 Framework for pre-application consultation, Shepherds' Rig Wind Farm**

1.3.1 The Applicant's public consultation plans for the Proposed Development were influenced by PAN 3/2010 which includes the National Standards for Community Engagement and Planning Aid for Scotland's SP=EED framework (**Appendix 1**).

1.3.2 These outline how applicants of major infrastructure projects should undertake pre-application consultation with the community. The aim of this procedure is to make sure that communities are made aware of, and have an opportunity to comment on these types of development proposals before a formal application is made. This allows community views to be reflected early in the process and gives the Applicant the opportunity to incorporate them into the proposals where possible before making a formal application, as has been the case for the Proposed Development.

1.3.3 The guidance outlines the following relevant consultation and involvement activities:

- Community Council consultation;
- Adverts and press releases in local media; and
- Public Events (at least one).

## 1.4 The approach to community involvement

1.4.1 The Applicant's general approach to community involvement in projects includes the following:

- Consultation with community councils and interested community groups;
- A dedicated project website;
- Production and circulation of printed information material for local residents; and
- Hosting of advertised community days prior to submission of the planning application, when the development is at draft design stage.

## 1.5 Consultation

### *Introduction*

1.5.1 Consultation that has taken place so far in the pre-application stage has enabled the Applicant to take forward its commitment to establish a constructive relationship with residents and local representatives within the local community.

1.5.2 To consult on the proposals with the local community, the Applicant undertook the following activity, outlined further below:

- **Dedicated website;**
- **Freephone provision;**
- **Newsletter distribution;**
- **Community Liaison; and**
- **Community Open Days**

### *Website*

1.5.3 The website [www.shepherdsrigwindfarm.co.uk](http://www.shepherdsrigwindfarm.co.uk) was set up to provide information for residents and their representatives about the proposal and was updated as the proposal developed. It also allowed for questions to be asked via [info@shepherdsrigwindfarm.co.uk](mailto:info@shepherdsrigwindfarm.co.uk) - the dedicated email facility for the project.

### *Freephone*

1.5.4 In addition, there is a Freephone telephone number (0800 980 4299) for specific enquiries relating to the proposal, enabling residents to receive additional information and speak to members of the project team.



### ***Newsletters***

- 1.5.5 In both June 2013 and August 2018 the Applicant distributed over 1770 newsletters (**Appendix 2**) to local residents and businesses in the area surrounding the proposed development as well as the local Community Council.
- 1.5.6 The initial newsletters were posted via Royal Mail (1<sup>st</sup> class) using a specifically sourced address based database. The newsletters provided an invitation to the Community Open Days (CODs), overview/update of the project including site suitability, explanation of the plans, an introduction to the Applicant and a Freepost comment slip.

### ***Community Council***

- 1.5.7 The Applicant began a dialogue with the Carsphairn Community Council in 2013 when Shepherds' Rig Wind Farm was first proposed. The community council was advised of the reasons for putting the proposed development on hold in 2014 and contacted again in 2018 when it was decided to take the proposed development forward once again. The Community Council has been fundamental to the dialogue between the Applicant and the local community, actively assisting in the dissemination of information regarding the consultation process. In addition the Applicant has kept neighbouring Community Councils informed of the proposed scheme.

### ***Community Open Days***

- 1.5.8 Three CODs were held on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> July 2013 in Carsphairn, Moniaive and Corsock and again on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018 in Carsphairn and Moniaive. Copies of the COD information panels can be found in **Appendix 3** and photographs taken at the CODs in **Appendix 4**.
- 1.5.9 As well as being able to discuss the proposed development alongside the wider issues of climate change, energy security, government support etc, members of the development team were able to demonstrate landscape impact via photomontages and by utilising a 3D computer modelling programme able to generate views from any given viewpoint, allowing residents to see just how the development would look from their own homes or other places of interest, for example recreational areas.

### **Publicity**

- 1.5.10 In 2018 invitations to the CODs were included as part of the newsletter sent to over 1770 households locally, see **Appendix 2**.

- 1.5.11 Advertisements were placed in the Dumfries & Galloway Standard, Tuesday 28 August and Tuesday 4 September, The Galloway News, Thursday 30 August, and The Galloway News, Thursday 6 September. See **Appendix 5** for a copy of the advertisements.

#### Media

- 1.5.12 A press release was uploaded onto the website and issued to the local press prior to each event. (**Appendix 6**).

#### Attendance

- 1.5.13 Based on the CODs register, 120 people attended the first open days, where they had the opportunity to inspect the draft proposal for Shepherds Rig and two other nearby projects being proposed by Infinergy, discuss issues with the project team and complete a questionnaire (**Appendix 7**) and/or enquiry request form (**Appendix 8**) for return on the day or via Freepost.
- 1.5.14 55 people attended the second CODs in 2018 in Carsphairn and Moniaive where they had the chance to view and discuss the revised plans for the Proposed Development and one other nearby proposal.

## **1.6 Consultation Feedback**

### ***Newsletter***

- 1.6.1 A tear-off feedback slip was included as part of each newsletter (**Appendix 2**) and sent out in advance of both sets of CODs (Freepost details were supplied). Of the newsletters delivered directly on each occasion, 45 were returned following the first mailing (approx. 2.5%) and 42 returned following the second mailing (approx. 2.4%). 4 households responded to both rounds of consultation.
- 1.6.2 The feedback slip provided the opportunity for specific questions or comments to be directed to the Applicant, a selection of which is listed below:

### ***In Support***

*"Go for it!"*

*"The money from benefits could be used for flood control projects on the River Cairn"*

### ***Objection***

*"There are too many windfarms both proposed and existing."*

*"Disgusted with the continued development of wind farms in rural Scotland. They are unsightly, unnecessary and a blot on the landscape. Inefficient, costly to consumers and damaging to birds."*

1.6.3 The completed feedback slips provided the following results on whether or not respondents supported the Proposed Development: there were 87 responses to the Proposed Development in total, 7 of which were either supportive or very supportive, 75 opposed or very opposed and 5 as yet undecided.

1.6.4 Copies of the returned newsletter feedback slips can be found in **Appendix 9**. All personal details have been removed in accordance with legislation.

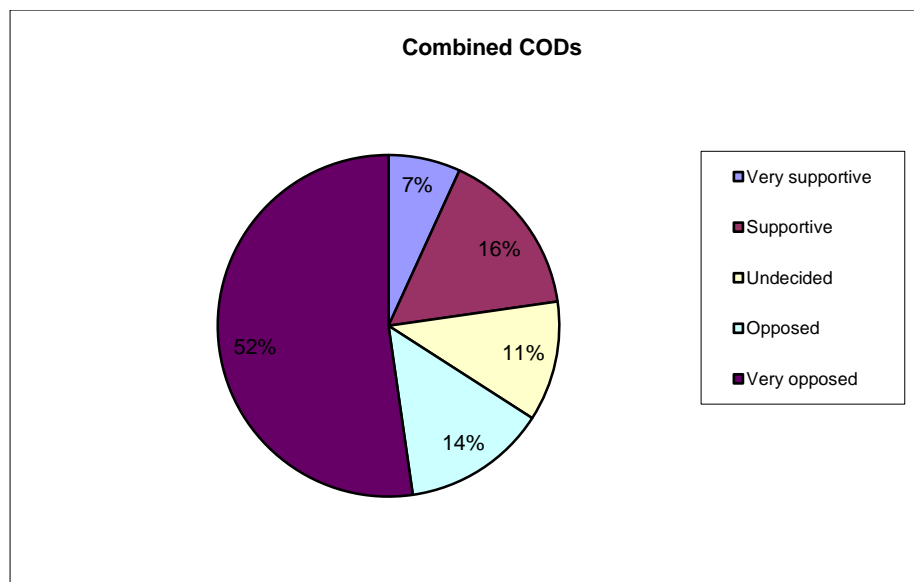
**Community Open Days (CODs)**

1.6.5 CODs opinion forms were completed by 8 attendees in Carsphairn on both occasions, many of whom live within 5km of the Proposed Development.

1.6.6 The majority of opinion forms were completed at the events, but a small number of visitors sent in their questionnaire to the freepost address *Freepost Infinergy Ltd* after the events. These questionnaires are taken into account in the overall results of the public consultation exercise. Copies of all returned CODs questionnaires can be found in **Appendix 10**.

1.6.7 As can be seen in Figure 1, the majority of people who returned opinion forms at the CODs were not supportive:

Very supportive	3
Supportive	7
Undecided	5
Opposed	6
Very opposed	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>



**Figure 1: Combined CODs responses**

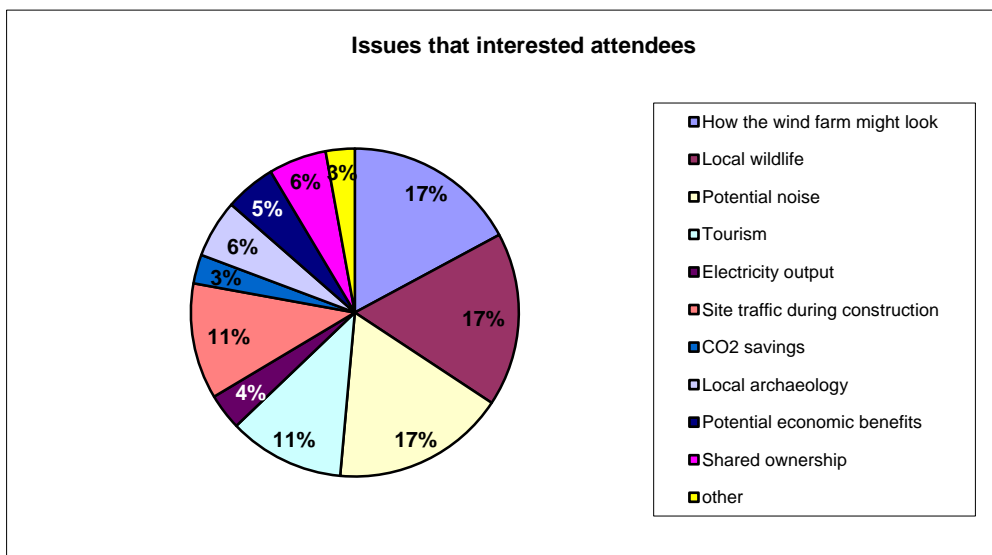
**Issues**

- 1.6.8 The feedback questionnaires asked respondents if they had any specific issues or concerns about the proposal and a list of possible issues was provided.
- 1.6.9 The first round of CODs provided feedback in relation to a number of issues including visual impact and impact on the ecology of the area, particularly in relation to local bird populations.

Community Open Day questionnaires

1.6.10 In question 5a respondents were asked to indicate which of the following elements of the proposal they were interested in and would like to be kept updated about (note: figures based on total responses rather than individual respondees):

How the Wind Farm might look	24
Local wildlife	24
Potential noise	24
Tourism	16
Electricity output	5
Site traffic during construction	16
CO <sub>2</sub> savings	4
Local archaeology	8
Potential economic benefits	7
Shared ownership	8
Other (grid connection, cumulative impact, peat, shadow flicker)	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>



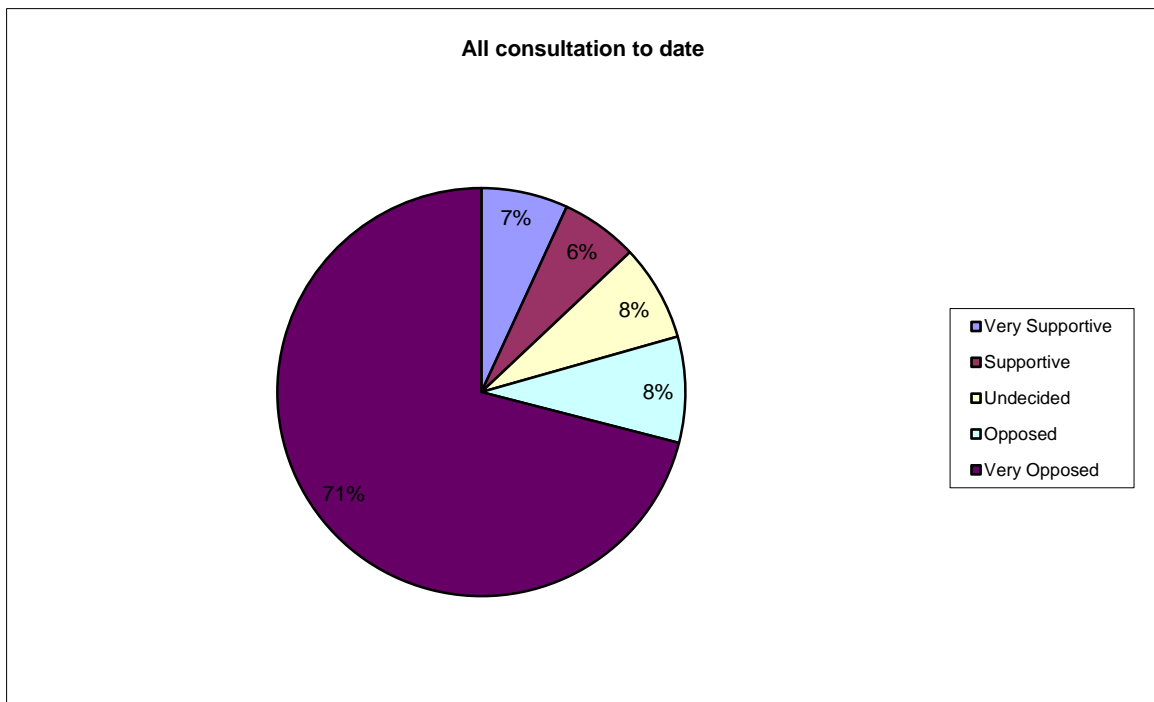
**Figure 2: Issues of interest**

*Summary of Feedback*

1.6.11 Taking into account all consultation methods, overall feedback for the Proposed Development to date, shown in Figure 3, is as follows:

**Shepherds' Rig Wind Farm Overall Results**

	<b>Newsletter</b>	<b>CODs</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Very Supportive	6	3	9	7
Supportive	1	7	8	6
Undecided	5	5	10	8
Opposed	5	6	11	8
Very Opposed	70	23	93	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Figure 3: All public consultation**

## 1.7 Community Benefits

### ***Community benefit***

1.7.1 The Applicant wants to help the communities closest to its renewable energy projects benefit from it in as many ways as possible. The Applicant has committed to the industry standard community benefit amount of £5,000 per MW of installed capacity. This amount is set out in the Scottish Government's "Good Practice Principles for Community Benefits from Onshore Renewable Energy Developments".

### ***Community Fund***

1.7.2 Operational Schemes in the area have given rise to the local Development Trust, Carsphairn Renewable Energy Fund Ltd (CREFL) and has subsequently seen the development of a Community Development Company. The mechanism for distribution of community benefit funds is well established in this area.

1.7.3 Via the CODs opinion forms and website, local residents have been encouraged to give suggestions both to the Applicant and to their own Community bodies as to what they would like to see such funds used for. Suggestions so far have included funding for energy efficiency measures such as double glazing in local homes.

### ***Shared Ownership***

1.7.4 The Proposed Development will be open to investment from community organisations and social enterprises up to a maximum of 10% of the project most likely via a 'shared revenue' model, one of the options proposed in the "Good Practice Principles". Potential returns over the lifetime of the wind farm into the local third sector economy would help those organisations involved to ensure their development plans have a secure source of funding over the life of the wind farm.

1.7.5 Returns are dependent on a range of inputs which include (but are by no means inclusive of) energy price, turbine pricing, inflation, ability of a project to attract a support mechanism, cost of debt financing, which are all subject to regular and market changes in the run up to operation. Infinergy would seek to de-risk the investment proposal as much as possible in order to safeguard community funds, seeking financial investment at point of operation.

## 1.8 Response to Consultation Feedback

1.8.1 Further to the consultation process outlined in this statement, a number of activities have or are being undertaken in order to respond to feedback received. These are detailed as follows:

### ***Letters***

1.8.2 Following the initial CODs, everyone who completed a feedback form received a follow up letter (**Appendix 11**) from the Applicant, thanking them for their attendance and confirming the Applicant's commitment to further consultation throughout the planning process.

1.8.3 Further individual letters were sent to those who raised issues or questions via the CODs or online feedback forms or newsletter comment cards and this will continue throughout the planning process.

### ***Email***

1.8.4 Everyone who submits a question or query by email direct will be responded to electronically.

## 1.9 Future Consultation

### ***Next Steps – Pre and Post Submission***

1.9.1 The Applicant is committed to the continued involvement of and consultation with the local community and other stakeholders throughout the planning process.

1.9.2 While the pre-application consultation has been completed, the Applicant is committed to further consultation during the application determination period, ensuring that local residents and stakeholders continue to be involved in the process and be kept informed of the proposal's progress. These updates will be undertaken at both the Community Councils and at other local community group meetings as requested.

1.9.3 In addition, visits to residential properties within a 2km radius have been undertaken in order to conduct residential amenity assessments and will continue following a request by the Community Council.

***Stakeholder/Interest group briefings***

- 1.9.4 Members of the local Development Trust (CREFL) attended the CODs.
- 1.9.5 The Applicant will continue to update the local interest groups about the proposed development's journey through the planning process and will keep all channels for feedback and questions open.

***Media relations***

- 1.9.6 Media relations activity will be ongoing. Once the application has been submitted, a news release detailing the submitted proposal will be issued to the media. The Applicant will respond to media enquiries and requests for information throughout the determination time period.

***Ongoing response to queries***

- 1.9.7 The Applicant will continue to respond to queries that are received via the various consultation channels i.e. Freephone telephone number, freepost address, website/email and newsletter.