



Douglas West Wind Farm

Revised Scheme

PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION REPORT

October 2017



Pre-Application Consultation Report

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report accompanies a planning application being submitted by Douglas West Wind Farm Ltd (the Applicant) to South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) which seeks consent under Section 42 of the *Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended)*, for the construction and operation of a revised wind energy development at the Douglas West Wind Farm (the Revised Development), comprising 13 wind turbines of up to 149.9 m in height, 11 km south west of Lanark, in rural South Lanarkshire.
- 1.2 The Revised Development brings together a number of proposed revisions to the Consented Development (ref. CL/15/0273 - comprising of 15, 3 MW turbines) at Douglas West to maximise energy production from the site, within acceptable limits, to ensure that the project is viable subsidy-free. Further details on the Revised Development are included within Chapter 3 of the accompanying Environmental Statement (ES).
- 1.3 A programme of pre-application community engagement has been undertaken by the Applicant and this Report gives details of the various meetings, correspondence, public exhibitions and other discussions which have taken place with the community. The Report also details the findings of that work and illustrates the ways in which community engagement has helped identify potential issues arising from the emerging proposal and, where appropriate, shape the final proposal which is now the subject of the planning application.
- 1.4 The Applicant is grateful to residents and local representatives for their input into the pre-application community engagement process and for their assistance in facilitating the meetings and consultation events.

2. Background

- 2.1 The site is in the ownership of Mitchell Energy Ltd and William Mitchell & Sons Ltd of Hazelside Farm, Glespin (hereafter referred to as 'the Landowner'), with the exception of part of the access road from the M74 motorway which is owned by Hargreaves Surface Mining Ltd.
- 2.2 The Landowner was approached by a number of wind farm developers in and around 2008/9 regarding the potential to develop a wind farm on their part of the former Dalquhandy Opencast Coal Site. In 2009 the Landowner agreed to enter into an Option Agreement with Community Windpower Limited (CWP) who initially proposed to develop a 17 turbine wind energy project on the site (previously referred to as Douglas West Community Wind Farm) and to work with the local communities in Coalburn and Douglas to develop a community benefit package for both villages.
- 2.3 A Scoping Report for a 15 turbine wind farm was issued by CWP in March 2012 and it is understood that initial discussions were held with the Local Authority, statutory and non-statutory consultees and both communities at that time. A Scoping Opinion was subsequently issued by SLC in June 2012. Further information on the scoping and consultation process is given in Chapter 4 of the Revised Development Environmental Statement (ES).
- 2.4 The project did not progress any further at that point due to protracted negotiations with Scottish Coal over the access road of which that company previously owned part. During the intervening period, the Landowner invested in a farm-scale renewable energy company, called 3R Energy Solutions Ltd, which specialises in farm-scale wind turbines, CHP and biomass boiler systems. In 2013, the Landowner acquired 3R Energy and relocated the business to Lanark Auction Market where 3R Energy is now based.

Building on the success of 3R Energy as a farm-scale business, the Landowner decided to develop the project at Douglas West independently and to work with the local communities in Douglas and Coalburn to deliver tangible benefits to the local area.

- 2.5 Upon taking control of the project in late 2014, 3R Energy undertook further consultation on the Consented Development with SLC, technical consultees and the local communities in Douglas and Coalburn. Previous engagement with local communities in relation to the Consented Development is covered within the PAC Report accompanying the 2015 Application (ref. CL/15/0273) and is not covered further within this Report. The pre-application consultation carried out by the Applicant during 2017 in relation to the Revised Development is the subject of this Report.

3. Proposal of Application Notice

- 3.1 A Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) was submitted to SLC, Douglas Community Council, Coalburn Community Council and local Elected Members by the Applicant on the 25 May 2017. The PAN (refer to Appendix 1) contains details of the public consultation events to be held by the Applicant, details of who has received a copy of the PAN, a description of the proposal, a location plan, a site plan, and a copy of the proposed newspaper advert for the consultation events. A copy of the explanatory letter to SLC accompanying the PAN is also included in Appendix 1.

4. Pre-Application Consultation

4.1 Who has been consulted?

- 4.1.1 The Applicant wrote to key stakeholders including local Councillors, Douglas Community Council, Coalburn Community Council and the constituency MP and MSP on 25 May 2017 to advise them formally of the emerging proposal and to inform them of the public consultation events which were held on 26 June 2017 in Douglas and the 27 June 2017 in Coalburn (these events are covered in more detail below).
- 4.1.2 The public events were advertised in the Lanark Gazette on 14 June 2017 (see Appendix 2). Supplementary publicity for both events comprised the placing of posters in local shops and public places in Douglas and Coalburn (refer to Appendix 3).
- 4.1.3 A number of other discussions have been held with local groups and neighbours closest to the site, to ensure that the local community is aware of the Revised Development. These further discussions are summarised within Section 6.

4.2 Public Exhibitions

- 4.2.1 As referred to above, as part of the planning process the Applicant has engaged with the local communities closest to the site via two public information exhibitions which were held on 26 June 2017 in the St. Bride's Centre, Douglas and on 27 June 2017 in the Coalburn Miners Welfare. Both venues are located within the communities closest to the site and were considered to be the most appropriate venues to hold such an event.
- 4.2.2 The exhibitions were an opportunity for local residents to view the emerging proposals and to discuss any issues or suggestions with representatives of the project team. Both events depicted the proposed amendments and key environmental issues on a series of exhibition boards. Copies of the exhibition boards are available in Appendix 4. Project staff were available to assist with interpretation of the

information on display and answer questions from visitors to the events from 2 pm until 8 pm both days.

- 4.2.3 Visitors to the public events, aside from asking a member of the project staff a question directly, were also able to fill in a comments sheet on the day of the event or take it away and forward it to the Applicant at a later date. Separate forms were also available for people to note interest in further information on supplier opportunities should the development proceed. Sample copies of the comments sheets and supplier forms are included in Appendix 5.
- 4.2.4 It was made clear by the Applicant that the purpose of the Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) exercise is not to replace the formal application consultation process in which representations can be made to SLC. This was explained verbally at the public events, on the comments forms and in the newspaper advert for the public exhibitions.



Plate 4.1 – Photograph of the Public Exhibition boards in St Bride's Centre, Douglas.

5. Public Exhibition Attendance, Feedback and Applicant Response

- 5.1 As noted above, two Public Exhibitions were held by the Applicant on 26 June 2017 in the St. Bride's Centre, Douglas, and on 27 June 2017 in the Coalburn Miners Welfare. Both events had an attendance register and all who entered the exhibitions were asked to sign in. A total of 7 people were recorded as attending the public event in Coalburn and 7 in Douglas. Both events were attended by a relatively diverse cross section of the local population.
- 5.2 Comments forms were available on both days, however, no forms were filled in over the two events. The types of forms available at the public exhibitions were (examples are provided in Appendix 5):
- General Comments Forms
 - Local Supplier Forms

5.3 Table 5.1 below summarises the main issues raised during discussions at the pre-application consultation events, along with the Applicant’s response as to how this feedback has been incorporated into the Revised Development.

Table 5.1 – Feedback from the Community at Public Exhibitions

Main Issues Raised	Applicant’s Response
<p>Community Benefit contributions should be managed locally to maximise the benefit from the Revised Development to the communities closest to the site.</p>	<p>The Applicant remains committed to providing Community Benefit funding of £5,000/MW of installed capacity. The main aim of this funding will be to support the delivery of strategic projects in Douglas, Coalburn and the immediate surrounding area over the next 25 years. The Applicant is currently exploring a range of options for use of the funding with the local community and SLC (refer to Chapter 13 of the ES). The final Community Benefit arrangements are to be agreed with the local community and SLC.</p>
<p>Further discussions need to be had on the Community Benefit options and how they would be structured before any final decisions are made.</p>	<p>Agreed. Discussions are ongoing with the local community and SLC about the best ways in which this funding can be used to maximise benefit to the local area.</p>
<p>Potential for part of the Community Benefit contribution from the Revised Development being used to contribute to the energy bills of each household in Douglas and Coalburn was met positively by most. Some issues were raised in respect of how such an arrangement would operate, particularly in terms of the area of benefit and circumstances around rented accommodation and social housing.</p>	<p>The Applicant acknowledges a general desire to explore this opportunity in more detail, and will prepare further details on the proposed operation of the scheme for discussion with SLC and the local community.</p>
<p>Both communities were understanding of the reasoning behind the revisions to the scheme in the context of the new financial climate for onshore wind in the UK.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Both communities commented positively on the Revised Development continuing to be progressed by a local company (now in partnership with Blue Energy) with a view to maximising benefits for the local area.</p>	<p>Noted, the Applicant is committed to maximising the local benefits from the Revised Development wherever possible.</p>
<p>Some concern was raised in respect of cumulative impact in relation to the number of wind turbines proposed in the wider area but it was acknowledged that</p>	<p>This point is noted, as is the recognition that the acceptability of wind turbines on this site has already been established through the Consented Development. A summary of potential cumulative impacts is provided within Chapter 16 of the ES.</p>

Main Issues Raised	Applicant's Response
the principle of having wind turbines on this site has already been accepted.	
One local resident raised a number of questions in respect of potential impact on his own property, primarily in respect of any noise or visual impact.	Noted. The Applicant is in direct contact with the local resident regarding the issues raised.
Strong desire from both communities to secure public access improvements, and safeguard the original Heritage Trail proposal for the benefit of both villages. Some detailed discussions were had about specific improvements/repairs that could be undertaken on land within the control of the Applicant.	The Applicant remains committed to the development of a Heritage Trail and formal footpath network linking Douglas and Coalburn through the site, with interpretation areas informed by community consultation. The Heritage Trail through the site and adjoining land also has the potential to become an interesting addition to the Clyde Walkway Extension which is currently being developed to link the Clyde Walkway at New Lanark with the end of the River Ayr Way at Glenbuck.
Confirmation was sought as to whether the Heritage Trail proposal remained part of the Revised Development.	As noted above, the Applicant remains committed to the development of a Heritage Trail and formal footpath network linking Douglas and Coalburn through the site.

5.4 In summary, feedback from the two closest communities (Douglas and Coalburn) to the Revised Development has been broadly neutral, with both communities recognising the change in financial circumstances for onshore wind projects in the UK since the application for the Consented Development was made. The Applicant considers that the Revised Development strikes an appropriate balance between increasing generation from the site to ensure economic viability, whilst ensuring environmental impacts remain within acceptable levels and Community Benefit contributions of £5,000/MW are protected. The pre-application consultation exhibitions have helped identify the issues that are important to the local community and, where appropriate, shape the final proposal which is now the subject of this planning application.

5.5 The Applicant confirms that the company will continue to liaise with the local community during the planning application process and during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Revised Development.

6. Other Forms of Consultation

6.1 Meeting with Douglas Community Council

6.1.1 The Applicant met with representatives of Douglas Community Council on 8 May 2017 to inform the Community Council of the Revised Development and to seek initial feedback from the community. The discussion centred on understating the impact of the revised scheme on views from Douglas and the proposed Community Benefit arrangements.

6.2 Teleconference with Coalburn Community Council

- 6.2.1 The Applicant had a teleconference with a representative of Coalburn Community Council on 11 May 2017 to inform the Community Council of the Revised Development and to seek initial feedback from the community. The discussion centred on public access issues and the proposed Community Benefit arrangements.

6.3 Other Meetings, Discussions etc.

- 6.3.1 Discussions have been held with the St.Brides Centre Douglas, the Coalburn Miners Welfare, and the Rural Development Trust about the potential to ring-fence a small proportion of the Community Benefit contribution to support the three local community groups who were previously exploring an equity stake in the Consented Development which is no longer possible following the UK Government's closure of the ROC scheme.
- 6.3.2 The Applicant has also held discussions with the Douglasdale Recreation Environment Access and Leisure (REAL) Group about public access issues and to confirm the Applicant's commitment to delivering the Heritage Trail as part of the Revised Development (refer to ES Appendix 3.1 for further information).
- 6.3.3 A number of other meetings and telephone discussions have been held with members of the local community and residents closest to the site to inform them of the emerging development proposal and to discuss any issues which they may have.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The Applicant has also undertaken a number of additional exercises to ensure that the two communities in closest proximity to the site (Douglas and Coalburn) are fully aware of the Revised Development proposal and to ensure that the Applicant is aware of the views of the local communities in order to best design the finalised scheme to mitigate any concerns wherever possible.
- 7.2 The Applicant has taken cognisance of all responses received and wherever possible has sought to adjust or amend the proposals to take on board the comments received, whilst ensuring that the Revised Development remains economically viable. The Applicant would like to reiterate their thanks to the local community for their input into the pre-application community engagement process and for their assistance in facilitating the meetings and consultation events.
- 7.3 The Applicant confirms that the company will continue to liaise with the local community during the planning application process and during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Revised Development.