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Executive Summary

In line with North Lanarkshire Council's online Pre-application advice¹, alongside Planning Advice Note 3/2010 which includes the National Standards for Community Engagement, and Planning Aid for Scotland's SP=EED framework, Infinergy Limited ('Infinergy') has undertaken two rounds of consultation for its Torrance Wind Farm Extension 2 proposal ('the Proposed Development') on behalf of GreenGridPower3 Ltd ('the Applicant'). The site is located in a commercial forestry plantation situated directly north of the village of Harthill and the eastbound BP Harthill services station on the M8 motorway in North Lanarkshire and approximately 2km south of Blackridge, West Lothian.

In March 2022, a Pre-Application Consultation request was submitted to North Lanarkshire Council (**Appendix 1**). A first round of consultation was undertaken in August 2022, with a follow up round of consultation undertaken in November 2022.

Infinergy expect consultation activity to continue throughout the planning application process.

Consultation activity so far has included:

- a dedicated project website with online consultation (www.torrancewindfarmextension2.co.uk);
- attendance at local Community Council meetings; and
- In person Community Open Days.

Local residents and other interested parties were initially invited to an early round of Community Open Days (CODs) held in both Harthill and Blackridge. In consultation with the local Community Councils, this round of public consultation was publicised through social media and posters placed locally in both villages.

The dedicated consultation page on the project website also provided all the information on the proposal along with visualisations and a zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) as displayed at the CODs.

A total of 17 people attended the first round of CODs with 3 responding to this round of public consultation.

¹ <https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-applications/major-developments/proposal-application-notice-pan>

The second round of consultation saw two more in-person community open days. These, along with the online consultation were advertised once again using the local social media channels and advertising in the local newspaper.

In addition to a school visit of 45 children and 5 staff, an additional 23 people attended the second round of CODs with 2 responding to this round of public consultation.

At both rounds of Community Open Days (CODs) members of the project development team were on hand to explain the proposals, discuss the wider issues around onshore wind development and present landscape and visual impact via a number of local viewpoint visualisations as well as a specialised modelling tool for bespoke views from residential properties and other important local viewpoints. Those attending had the opportunity to complete feedback questionnaires to give their views. Local residents and other interested parties also had the opportunity to air their views via the project website.

The Applicant has now replied to all those who raised questions or concerns via the various feedback mechanisms. Consultation is on-going and will continue post submission.

1. Introduction

Infinergy embraces community consultation; it is at the heart of its approach to development. This statement provides detailed information regarding the Proposed Development community consultation.

2. Framework for pre-application consultation

The public consultation plans for the Proposed Development were influenced by North Lanarkshire Council's online Pre-application advice, alongside PAN 3/2010 which includes the National Standards for Community Engagement and Planning Aid for Scotland's SP=EED framework (**Appendix 10**).

Both 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 developer the opportunity to incorporate them into the proposals before making a formal application, as was the case with the Proposed Development.

The Guide outlines the consultation and involvement activities:

- Community Council consultation;
- Adverts and press releases in local media; and
- Public consultation activity.

3. Approach to community involvement

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

- Consultations with community councils and interested community groups;
- Establishment of a dedicated project website;
- Production of information material for local residents;
- Hosting of community open days prior to submission of the planning application, when the development is at draft design stage alongside an online public consultation, prior to submission of the application.

4. Consultation

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

To consult on the proposal with the local community, the Applicant undertook the following activities:

4.1 Key Stakeholder Engagement

In the summer of 2022, the Applicant began dialogue with the local Community Councils and Community Benefit Funding Body Chairs to introduce the project, outline the plans for public consultation, and seek feedback.

That feedback was extremely helpful in understanding the history of the area in terms of wind farm development as well as challenges faced locally around the distribution of community benefits.

4.2 Project Website

A project website www.torrancewindfarmextension2.co.uk was launched in Summer 2022 with information regarding the proposed project, including the Scoping Request documentation. The website was developed to provide information for residents and their representatives about the proposed development and allow them to give initial feedback via the dedicated email facility info@torrancewindfarmextension2.co.uk, then followed by the online consultation process (**Appendix 2**) which included an online feedback form.

The website also lists all relevant project documents as submitted during the planning process and promotes consultation events.

4.3 Advertising

Following consultation with the local Community Councils, advertising of the initial round of CODs was undertaken via social media pages (Facebook and Twitter, **Appendix 3a**), making use of the extremely well followed Harthill Community Pages as well as through the distribution of posters to both locations.

The second round of CODs were promoted as per the North Lanarkshire Council PAC response in the West Lothian Courier (**Appendix 3b**) as well as via social media pages, again making use of the extremely well followed Harthill Community Pages as well as through the distribution of posters to both locations and promotion via attendance at both local Community Council meetings.

4.4 Public Consultation

Round 1:

In August 2022, two Community Open Days (CODs) were held in both Harthill and Blackridge. In addition, a dedicated consultation page on the project website was developed to deliver a 'virtual' online public consultation, providing all the information available at the in-person event for those unable to attend in person.

The CODs presented:

- introduction to the project;
- information panels (**Appendix 4a and 4b**);
- photomontage panels (**Appendix 4a and 4b**);
- a feedback form (**Appendix 4c**);

In order to publicise the exhibition to the wider community, adverts were placed on local social media shared with other relevant stakeholders, including the local Community Councils and posted as posters on local notice boards. See **Appendix 5**.

Media

Advertising of the first round of open days was undertaken on the following social media pages (**Appendix 3a**):

- Facebook – Harthill Community
- Facebook – Harthill Community Help
- Facebook – Infinergy
- Twitter - Infinergy

Attendance

A total of 17 people attended the in-person Community Open Days as follows:

- Harthill – 10
- Blackridge – 7

Round 2:

A second round of public consultation was arranged for November 2022 in consultation with the local Community Councils, which took the form of individual in-person Community Open Days alongside an updated online consultation page on the project website.

At the Blackridge Community Council meeting on 18 October 2022, the local primary school Head asked if it would be possible to bring several classes (P5/P6) to visit the Blackridge COD. It was arranged that the classes would visit half an hour before opening to the general public.

Media

Press advertising of the second round of open days was promoted on the local social media sites (as above) and in line with the PAC Response in the local paper (**Appendix 3b**) as follows:

- West Lothian Courier

Attendance

In addition to the 45 school children and 5 staff, an additional 23 people attended the in-person Community Open Days as follows:

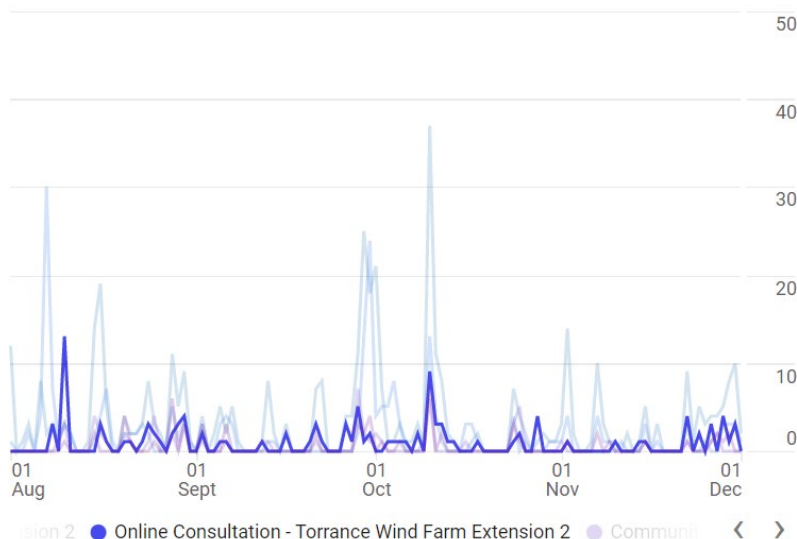
- Harthill – 18
- Blackridge – 5

Copies of the exhibition information panels can be found in **Appendix 4a and 4b** and photographs taken at the exhibition in **Appendix 6**.

As well as being able to discuss the Proposed Development (and plans for constructing the Proposed Development), alongside the wider issue of climate change, energy security etc., members of the project development team were able to offer to provide bespoke views from residential properties by utilising a 3D computer modelling programme that is able to generate bare-earth wireline views from any given view point, allowing residents to see just how the development of turbines might look from their own homes.

Online consultation

Based on the website statistics recorded, from August 2022 to the end of November 2022, 292 people visited the project website generating over 1000 views and an average engagement time of 1m 53s. 57 of those unique visitors viewed the virtual public exhibition twice on average during the period (as shown below), where they had the opportunity to inspect the draft proposal and provide feedback either via the feedback form or directly by email. Website statistics can be seen in **Appendix 7**.



5. Consultation Feedback

Throughout the community consultation programme, a small amount of feedback has been received (**Appendix 8**). The first round of public consultation saw 3 feedback forms returned and the second round saw two returned. In addition, two attendees have been in contact with the Project Manager directly by email. Listed below is a summary of the key topics addressed thus far:

- Concern about various types of impact, primarily visual, noise and construction traffic;
- Concern about cumulative impact locally;
- The effect wind farms have on the environment, especially during the construction phase; and
- How the Community Benefit will be distributed and managed.

5.1 Social Media

A small number of comments were posted on each of the social media channels. Comments can be seen in Appendix 3a.

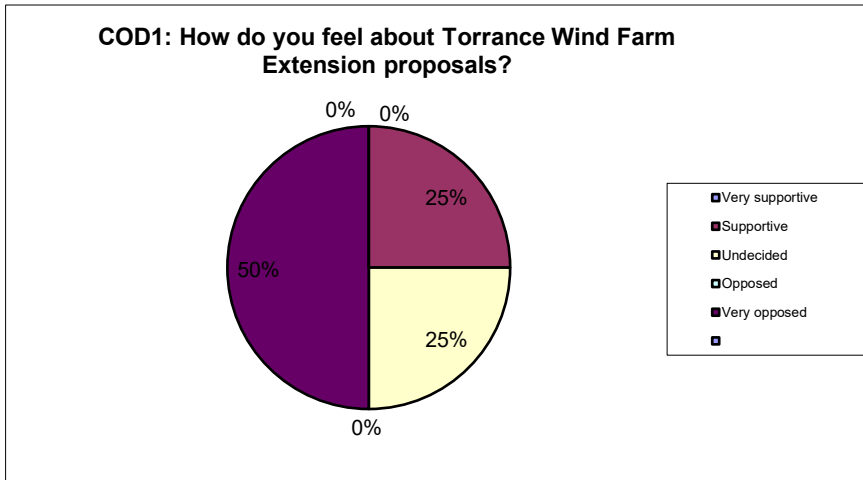
5.2 Community Open Day – August 2022

Responses were received from 4 individuals who attended the open days in person, all of whom live within 5km of the project using the feedback form. No responses were received online.

Copies of all redacted feedback forms can be found in **Appendix 8**.

All of the consultation provided the following results on whether or not respondents support the Proposed Development:

Supportive	1	(25%)
Undecided	1	(25%)
Opposed	2	(50%)
Total	4	(100%)



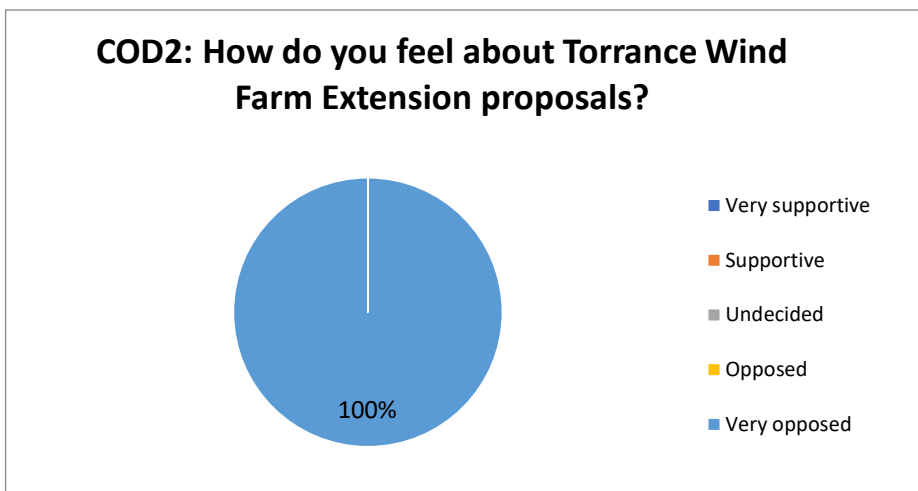
5.3 Community Open Days – November 2022

Open day feedback forms were completed by 2 attendees, both of whom live within 1.5km of the project.

No further forms were submitted using the online feedback form on the dedicated online consultation page. Copies of all redacted open day questionnaires can be found in **Appendix 8**.

All of the completed forms provided the following results on whether or not respondents support the Proposed Development:

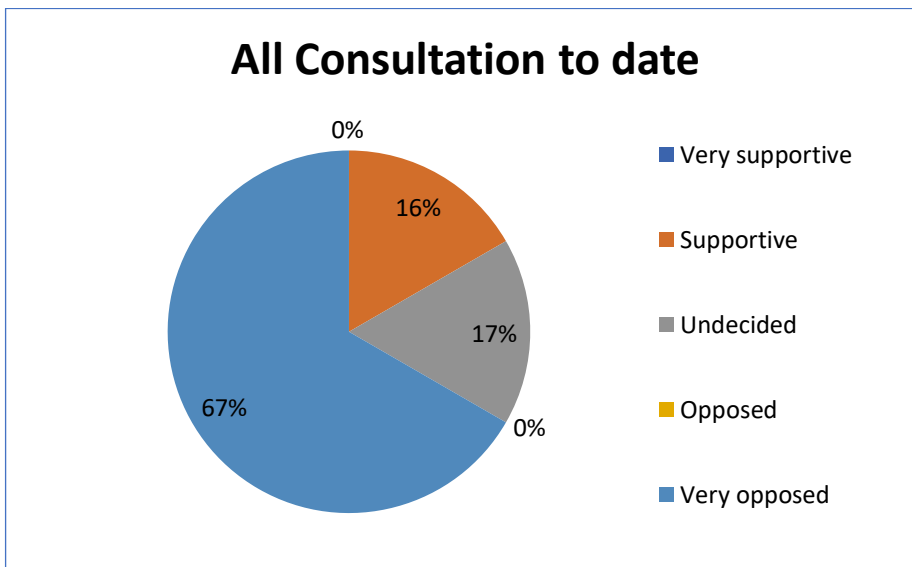
Supportive	0	(0%)
Undecided	0	(0%)
Opposed	2	(100%)
Total	2	(100%)



5.4 Summary of Feedback

Overall feedback for the Proposed Development, taking into account all consultation methods, can be summarised as follows:

- Concern for residents and ecological habitats around the wind farm;
- Concern for residents located enroute and around the wind farm;
- The need for a fully competent Environmental Impact Assessment; and
- Interest in the benefits associated with the wind farm.



6. Community Benefit

The Applicant wants to help the communities surrounding its renewable energy projects benefit from it in as many ways as possible. The Applicant has committed to uphold the Scottish Government's guideline figure of £5,000 per MW of installed capacity through a workable and targeted package for the Proposed Development.

6.1 Shared Ownership

The Applicant is also committed to the concept of shared ownership for communities near our wind farms. The Applicant is keen to consult the community around a shared ownership opportunity with this wind farm. Further information can be found in the Scottish Government's Shared Ownership Good Practice Guidance document. It is recommended that local communities who are interested in the shared ownership opportunity should seek advice and guidance from Local Energy Scotland.

6.2 Community Liaison Group

Should the Proposed Development be consented, the Applicant will bring a group of people together who represent local interests, including representatives from local Community Councils and both North Lanarkshire and West Lothian Councils, to form a Liaison Group to ensure good communications are in place during the construction period.

6.3 Local Supply Chain Opportunities

The Applicant also wants to help the business sector surrounding its renewable energy projects and encourages local companies to register their interest in supply chain opportunities via the project website.

7. Response to Consultation Feedback

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:

Correspondence

Following the CODs, individual correspondence has now been sent to those who raised issues or questions via the exhibition, online feedback forms or by email directly and this will continue throughout the planning process. Everyone who submits a question or query either via the website questionnaire or by email direct will also be responded to electronically.

8. Future Consultation

Next Steps – Pre and Post Submission

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

Even though the pre-application consultation has been completed, this does not mean that the consultation will end. The Applicant is committed to further consultation during the planning determination period, ensuring that local residents and stakeholders continue to be involved in the process and are kept informed of the proposal's progress. The Applicant will continue to respond to queries that are received via the various consultation channels.

Adverts

Advertising outlining where application documents can be viewed, encouraging feedback and directing comments to the appropriate planning body will be posted and distributed following submission of the application.

Stakeholder/Interest group briefings

The key stakeholder groups including local Community Councils and Members of both North Lanarkshire and West Lothian Councils will be kept updated as the application progresses.