

TORFICHEN WIND FARM

Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report



CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	2
1.1 THE PROJECT	2
1.2 THIS REPORT	2
1.3 APPROACH TO PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION.....	2
2. EARLY ENGAGEMENT - SCOPING (JANUARY 2023)	4
2.1 PREPARATION - KEY STAKEHOLDER MAPPING	4
2.2 INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO KEY STAKEHOLDERS.....	4
2.3 FOLLOW-UP WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY COUNCILS	4
2.4 GENERAL ENQUIRIES	5
3. PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS AND CONSULTATION - SCOPING (FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2023).....	6
3.1 PREPARATION - ADDITIONAL STAKEHOLDER CONTACTS.....	6
3.2 ADVERTISING THE EVENTS.....	6
3.3 FOLLOW-UP WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY COUNCILS	7
3.4 PUBLIC EXHIBITION EVENTS - FORMAT	7
3.5 CONSULTATION FEEDBACK - OVERVIEW (MARCH 2023 PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS).....	8
4. FURTHER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS	9
4.1 GENERAL ENQUIRIES	9
4.2 RESIDENT VISIT.....	9
4.3 MOORFOOT COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING.....	9
4.4 PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES	9
5. PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS AND CONSULTATION - FINAL DESIGN (SEPTEMBER 2023)	10
5.1 ADVERTISING THE EVENTS.....	10
5.2 PUBLIC EXHIBITION EVENTS - FORMAT	10
5.3 CONSULTATION FEEDBACK - OVERVIEW (SEPTEMBER 2023 PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS)	12
6. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK	13
6.1 COMMENTS FORMS AND ANALYSIS OF ANSWERS - MARCH 2023 PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS	13
6.2 COMMENTS FORMS AND ANALYSIS OF ANSWERS - SEPTEMBER 2023 PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS	16
7. OUTCOMES AND RESPONSES.....	17
7.1 SUMMARY OF TOPICAL COMMENTS RECEIVED AND APPLICANT RESPONSE.....	17
7.1.2 TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF TOPICS, KEY THEMES, AND APPLICANT RESPONSE.....	17
7.2 EVALUATION OF CONSULTATION PROCESS.....	23
7.2.2 TABLE 2: NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVALUATION	23
8. SUMMARY.....	25
8.1 KEY POINTS	25
8.2 APPENDICES	26
Appendix 1: Introductory letter to Key Stakeholders - January 2023	
Appendix 2: Newspaper adverts - February 2023	
Appendix 3: Update letter to Key Stakeholders with exhibition details - February 2023	
Appendix 4: Newsletter 1 - February 2023	
Appendix 5: Exhibition information boards (x16) - March 2023	
Appendix 6: Comments form for consultation feedback - March 2023	
Appendix 7: Newspaper adverts- August 2023	
Appendix 8: Update letter to Key Stakeholders with exhibition details - August 2023	
Appendix 9: Newsletter 2 - August 2023	
Appendix 10: Exhibition information boards (x19) - September 2023	
Appendix 11: Comments form for consultation feedback - September 2023	
Appendix 12: Report on Feedback from March 2023 consultation - September 2023	

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The project

- 1.1.1 Renewable Energy Systems (RES), herein referred to as 'The Applicant', has submitted an application to the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit (ECU) for consent under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 for the construction of a wind farm in Midlothian.
- 1.1.2 Torfichen Wind Farm, herein referred to as the 'Proposed Development', is located near Torfichen Hill, south of Gorebridge in Midlothian, Scotland.
- 1.1.3 If consented, the Proposed Development would have an installed capacity of approximately 108MW and comprise 18 turbines with a maximum height of up to 180m to the highest point of the blade tip. It is also proposed to construct a network of site tracks, electrical connection works, a control building and substation, a battery storage facility, associated temporary construction infrastructure and associated ancillary and engineering works.

1.2 This report

- 1.2.1 Whilst there is no statutory requirement for Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) in relation to Section 36 applications, the Applicant has undertaken pre-application consultation for the Proposed Development and gone over and above the minimum best practice activity expected as set out in the Electricity Act 1989 - Section 36: applications guidance (Section 3. Pre-Application)¹.
- 1.2.2 This PAC Report details and reports on the pre-application consultation undertaken by the Applicant with the local community, general public, and locally elected representatives - herein referred to collectively as 'Key Stakeholders'. This Report does not capture the Scoping Report and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) consultation with EIA consultees - this is captured separately in the EIA Report which accompanies the Section 36 application.
- 1.2.3 The project website (www.torfichen-windfarm.co.uk) will be updated with a copy of the Section 36 planning documents, including this PAC Report, once the planning application has been validated - as well as a link to the Scottish Government's planning portal where the planning documents can be viewed and formal consultation comments submitted.

1.3 Approach to pre-application consultation

- 1.3.1 As explained in the section above, pre-application consultation in relation to Section 36 applications is voluntary.
- 1.3.2 The Applicant has considerable experience in onshore wind farms and believes in the importance of early, meaningful, and proportionate pre-application consultation in order to identify issues and concerns as well as benefits and opportunities, which can be considered when developing and designing a project.
- 1.3.3 Pre-application consultation can ultimately help to improve the development and design of the Proposed Development from the perspective of both the Applicant and the community.

¹ Available online: [Electricity Act 1989 - sections 36 and 37: applications guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot) (last accessed 30/10/2023)

- 1.3.4 In undertaking pre-application consultation for the Proposed Development, the Applicant has gone above and beyond the minimum best practice activity expected as set out in the Electricity Act 1989 - Section 36: applications guidance (Section 3. Pre-Application)².
- 1.3.5 The Applicant has also referred to, and sought to achieve, the best practice pre-application principles outlined in the National Standards for Community Engagement as set out in the Scottish Government's Planning Advice Note 3/2010: Community Engagement PAN 3/2010³.
- 1.3.6 At all stages of the consultation process the Applicant set out clearly the purpose of consultation and emphasised that comments made were not representations to the planning authority and that there would be an opportunity for representations to be made to the planning authority once the application had been submitted.

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/good-practice-guidance-applications-under-sections-36-37-electricity-act-1989/pages/3/>

³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/pan-3-2010-community-engagement/>

2. EARLY ENGAGEMENT - SCOPING (January 2023)

2.1 Preparation - key stakeholder mapping

2.1.1. Prior to undertaking formal consultation, the Applicant carried out desk-based research to identify Key Stakeholders to inform about the Proposed Development and engage with.

2.1.2. 'Host' Community Council

In line with best practice the Applicant identified the following Community Council whose area was within the land on which the Proposed Development was situated:

- Moorfoot Community Council

2.1.3. Nearby Community Council

In addition to the 'host' Community Council, the Applicant identified the following Community Council as being the next closest to the Proposed Development:

- Heriot Community Council

2.1.4. Ward Councillors

The Applicant also identified the following council wards (and their representatives) as being likely to have an interest in the Proposed Development:

- Midlothian South ward (Midlothian Council)
- Galashiels and District ward (Scottish Borders Council)

2.1.5. Constituency MSP and MP

Furthermore, the Applicant identified the MSP for Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale constituency, as well as the MP for the Midlothian constituency as being likely to have an interest in the Proposed Development.

2.2 Introductory letter to Key Stakeholders

2.2.1 On 16 January, the Applicant wrote to Key Stakeholders [Appendix 1], as well as 17 properties within 2km of the turbine development area, in January 2023 to inform them that the Applicant was in the early stages of exploring a potential wind farm and energy storage proposal at Torfichen.

2.2.2 The letter confirmed that the early design comprised 19-turbines with a maximum tip height of 180m. The letter also explained that, following initial site feasibility work, a Scoping Report had been submitted that week to the Scottish Government seeking feedback on the proposed scope of environmental assessment work; a link to a digital copy of the Report on the Applicant's project website at www.torfichen-windfarm.co.uk was included. The letter also provided some information about onshore wind, community benefit, and next steps - including the fact that the Applicant was planning public exhibition events in the next couple of months.

2.2.3 In the letter to the 'host' and nearby Community Councils, the Applicant advised it would be happy to organise an introductory phone-call or video-call to discuss the project and answer any initial questions that the Community Councils may have had at that stage, with the view to attending a formal Community Council meeting around (or after) the public exhibition events when more information will be available on the Proposed Development.

2.3 Follow-up with local Community Councils

2.3.1 Whilst contact was made by both the 'host' and nearby Community Councils in response to the introductory letters, the offer of a follow-up call regarding the Proposed Development

was not taken up, with requests instead made for a face to face meeting with the Applicant or suggestion to attend a Community Council meeting at a later date.

2.3.2 The Applicant also corresponded further by email with both the 'host' and nearby Community Councils regarding potential venues for the upcoming public exhibitions.

2.4 General enquiries

2.4.1 One enquiry was received by a direct neighbour to the Proposed Development, requesting a map of the scheme and asking about potential benefits. The Applicant responded by providing a link to the site layout drawings that formed part of the Scoping Report which was submitted to Scottish Government. The Applicant also explained that more information on the developing design will be available at the upcoming public exhibitions and how input will be sought from the local community not just on the initial project design, but also how the Proposed Development could support the local area and help to secure long-term economic, social and environmental benefits to deliver a tailored community benefits package that is aligned with the local communities' priorities.

3. PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS AND CONSULTATION - SCOPING (February and March 2023)

3.1 Preparation - additional stakeholder contacts

3.1.1 Prior to advertising the public exhibition events, the Applicant carried out further desk-based research to identify Key Stakeholders a little further afield to inform about the Proposed Development and engage with.

3.1.2 Additional nearby Community Councils

In addition to the Key Stakeholders listed at Section 2.1 of this PAC Report, the Applicant identified the following Community Councils identified as being nearby (and the next closest) to the Proposed Development:

- Gorebridge Community Council
- Tynewater Community Council

3.2 Advertising the events

3.2.1 The Applicant placed an advert [Appendix 2] in the local Midlothian Advertiser newspaper on 23 February and Peeblesshire News⁴ on 24 February (more than seven days ahead of the public exhibitions) to confirm details of the public exhibition events.

3.2.2 The Applicant decided to go over and above best practice guidance (of placing one notice in a public newspaper) to help raise greater awareness of the Proposed Development and upcoming public exhibition events.

3.2.3 A press release was also issued to a number of wider media outlets on 28 February, including the publications above, providing details about the Proposed Development and upcoming public exhibition events.

3.2.4 Update letters [Appendix 3] were issued to Key Stakeholders on 20 February providing details of the upcoming exhibition events and consultation period. Digital copies of the advert and newsletter were also included (for social media purposes).

3.2.5 The Applicant also updated the project website (www.torfichen-windfarm.co.uk) on 20 February with details of the public exhibition events, including a copy of the advert and newsletter.

3.2.6 In the interests of raising as much awareness as possible of the Proposed Development and upcoming public exhibition events and consultation, the Applicant also issued a 2-page A4 project newsletter [Appendix 4] to over 1,100 properties in the local area (located within approximately 5km of the turbine development area) which arrived with households during w/c 20 February - providing just under two weeks' notice of the events.

3.2.7 In addition to providing details of the public exhibition events, the advert, press release, update letters, website update, and project newsletter all described the Proposed Development and its location and explained that further information could be found on the project website or by contacting the Applicant (contact details were provided). These communications also including information about how people could provide feedback to the Applicant on the proposal and confirmed that the closing date for comments was Tuesday 4 April 2023; they also all included a statement that any representations submitted to the Applicant were not representations to the determining authority and that there would be an

⁴ Feedback from the March 2023 public exhibitions identified the Southern Reporter as a more suitable newspaper to advertise in for the next set of public exhibition events. See Section 5 of this PAC Report.

opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority should an application be made.

3.2.8 The above communications far exceeded the minimum expectations for best practice and help demonstrate the Applicant's commitment to the consultation process.

3.3 Follow-up with local Community Councils

3.3.1 On Friday 3 March 2023, the Applicant met with the Chair of Heriot Community Council to discuss the Proposed Development.

3.4 Public exhibition events - format

3.4.1 The Applicant held two public exhibition events in March 2023, one in the 'host' Moorfoot Community Council area, and the other in the adjacent Heriot Community Council area, to achieve a good geographical spread of venues around the site (within reasonable travelling distance of each other) and help facilitate accessibility. The public exhibition events were carefully organised around hall availability to provide a range of times for people to attend (daytimes and evenings) to make the events as accessible as practicable. Both venues also provided disabled access. Details of the events held are as follows:

- Monday 6 March: Middleton Village Community Hall from 1pm-6pm (54 Borthwick Castle Terrace, North Middleton EH23 4QU)
- Tuesday 7 March: Macfie Hall from 3pm-8pm (Heriot EH38 5YE)

3.4.2 The events were supported by a team of five representatives on each day from a core team including at least two Development Project Managers, a member of the Communications Team, a Project Engineer, and a Technical Analyst.

3.4.3 A range of information boards [Appendix 5] were provided at the events which included a description of the Proposed Development and associated maps and plans, as well as visualisations (wirelines and photomontages) to help give an indication of what the Proposed Development may look like from a selection of viewpoints that were considered the most relevant to people in the local area. Also available was information on a tailored community benefits package and supply chain opportunities; and next steps including how to comment on the proposal. Hard copies of the information boards were also available for anyone who requested this.

3.4.4 The exhibition team endeavoured to speak to as many people as possible and encourage them to complete a comments form [Appendix 6] to help gather comments and views on the Proposed Development early in the design process. The comments form included a mix of multiple-choice questions and space for free text to leave further feedback and provide thoughts on potential uses of the community benefits package such as RES' Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS). It was made clear that the comments forms could either be handed in at the public exhibition events, posted to the Applicant (address details were provided on the form), or filled in online on the project website at www.torfichen-windfarm.co.uk.

3.4.5 The exhibition information boards and visualisations, as well as an online version of the comments form, was made available by the Applicant on the project website, from the morning of the first event (Monday 6 March) so that people who may not have been able to attend the events, or who wished to take more time to review the information, could view it online during the consultation period and submit comments. The information remained on the project website throughout the consultation period (and until September 2023).

3.4.6 The process for submitting comments to the Applicant - including the closing date for comments of 4 April 2023 - was confirmed at the events on the exhibition board welcoming people to the public exhibitions as well as on the comments forms and newsletters available at the event and as part of the online exhibition information on the project website. In addition, a statement was included on these communications that any representations

submitted to the Applicant at that stage of the Proposed Development were not representations to the determining authority and that there'd be an opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority should an application be made.



Day 1: Middleton Village Community Hall



Day 2: Macfie Hall

3.5 Consultation feedback - overview (March 2023 public exhibitions)

3.5.1 The exhibition events were well attended, attracting 74 people across the two events, with the breakdown of venue attendance as follows:

- Middleton Village Community Hall - 46 people (62%)
- Macfie Hall - 28 people (38%)

3.5.2 28 comments forms were received during the consultation period (6 March until 4 April) including feedback on the following themes:

- Landscape and visual (turbine height, site location)
- Energy (onshore wind, other technologies)
- Exhibition (format, staff, communications)
- Acoustics (predicted sound levels)
- Construction (route to site, impact on private water supplies)
- Community benefit

3.5.3 The Applicant included a multiple-choice question on the comments form that asked what people thought about the turbine and infrastructure layout if the Proposed Development went ahead as currently designed (scoping layout). The breakdown of responses was as follows: 36% responded that they had concerns about the proposed layout; 36% responded that they were neutral to the proposed layout; 24% responded that they were happy with the proposed layout; and 4% responded that they didn't like wind farms in general.

3.5.4 Further detail on the comments received is contained in [Section 6](#) of this PAC Report together with an explanation of how the Applicant has taken these comments into account [and Appendix 12].

4. FURTHER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 General enquiries

4.1.1 A number of enquiries were received from local residents and Key Stakeholders following the March 2023 public exhibition events and consultation. The Applicant responded by providing answers to questions wherever possible and making people aware of the project newsletter mailing list which they could be added to if they wished to be kept up to date with the Proposed Development and informed about the next set of public exhibition events.

4.2 Resident visit

4.2.1 In response to a specific request from the owner of a nearby residential property, the Applicant visited the property and entered into regular dialogue with the resident, which remains ongoing. The resident's concerns relating to visual impact and noise disturbance from the Proposed Development have been discussed and assessed further. RES is committed to continuing dialogue with the resident and providing additional planting in their garden if required to provide further screening. The EIA Report includes a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) and acoustic assessment which consider impacts on nearby residential properties.

4.3 Moorfoot Community Council meeting

4.3.1 Representatives from RES attended a Moorfoot Community Council meeting on 7 June 2023 to provide a summary of the feedback received from the public exhibition events, and an update on the design process and application timescales.

4.3.2 There were further discussions around the proposed community benefit fund, including the Applicant's LEDS scheme, and how it could be administered. Ideas for local projects and initiatives were also discussed, along with potential opportunities for RES to provide sponsorship.

4.3.3 The Community Council also made the Applicant aware of local views on the Proposed Development, which were largely in line with the feedback received at the public events.

4.4 Private Water Supplies

4.4.1 A number of attendees at the public event in North Middleton raised concerns over the potential impact of construction traffic on a cast-iron private water main located along the B7007, which is the main access route for the Proposed Development.

4.4.2 The EIA Report contains a full assessment of potential impacts on private water supplies in the locality of the Proposed Development. Notwithstanding, RES carried out further investigations with local landowners to establish the location, nature and extent of the water main in question. Dialogue has continued with residents who raised the issue, and RES is committed to assisting where necessary with any mitigation measures required.

5. PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS AND CONSULTATION - FINAL DESIGN (September 2023)

5.1 Advertising the events

5.1.1 Again, the Applicant decided to go over and above best practice guidance (of placing one notice in a public newspaper) with regard to advertising and placed an advert [Appendix 7] to confirm details of the September public exhibition events in the Midlothian Advertiser newspaper on 24 August (more than seven days ahead of the public exhibitions) and then again in the Southern Reporter on 31 August.

5.1.2 Update letters [Appendix 8] were issued to Key Stakeholders on 24 August providing details of the upcoming exhibition events and consultation period. Digital copies of the advert and newsletter were also included (for social media purposes).

5.1.3 The Applicant also updated the project website (www.torfichen-windfarm.co.uk) on 24 August with details of the public exhibition events, including a copy of the advert and newsletter.

5.1.4 A second edition of the project newsletter [Appendix 9] was issued to over 1,100 properties during w/c 21 August (by post to local households as well as by email to those people who had asked to be kept up to date with the Proposed Development) - providing just under two weeks' notice of the events.

5.1.5 In addition to providing details of the public exhibition events and explaining that these events would present the updated design for the Proposed Development - the advert, update letters, website update, and project newsletter all explained that further information could be found on the project website or by contacting the Applicant (contact details were provided). These communications also included information about how people could provide feedback to the Applicant on the proposal and confirmed that the closing date for comments was Thursday 21 September 2023; they also included a statement that any representations submitted to the Applicant were not representations to the determining authority and that there'd be an opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority should an application be made.

5.1.6 Once again, the above communications far exceeded the minimum expectations for best practice and help demonstrate the Applicant's commitment to the consultation process.

5.2 Public exhibition events - format

5.2.1 The Applicant held two more public exhibition events in the local area in September 2023; once more in the 'host' Moorfoot Community Council area, and the adjacent Heriot Community Council area. The timings of both events were adjusted to run from 3pm-8pm in response to feedback.

5.2.2 The public exhibition events were carefully organised around hall availability to provide a range of times for people to attend to make the events as accessible as practicable. Both venues included disabled access. Details of the events held are as follows:

- Wednesday 6 September: Middleton Village Community Hall from 3pm-8pm (54 Borthwick Castle Terrace, North Middleton EH23 4QU)
- Thursday 7 September: Macfie Hall from 3pm-8pm (Heriot, EH38 5YE)

5.2.3 The events were supported by a team of five representatives on each day from a core team including two Development Project Managers, two Project Managers, two Landscape

Architects, a member of the Communications Team, one Grid Engineer and a Technical Analyst.

5.2.4 A range of information boards [Appendix 10] were presented including visualisations (wirelines and photomontages) to help give an indication of what the updated design may look like from different viewpoints in the local area. The Applicant also provided wireline visualisation software to help give an impression of what the Proposed Development may look like from different locations. Hard copies of the information boards were available upon request.

5.2.5 The exhibition team endeavoured to speak to as many people as possible and encourage them to complete a comments form [Appendix 11] with their views on the updated design. The comments forms could be handed in at the events, posted to the Applicant (address details were provided on the form), or filled in online on the project website at www.torfichen-windfarm.co.uk.

5.2.6 A detailed ‘Report on Feedback’ [Appendix 12] summarised the feedback received from the March 2023 public exhibitions and consultation and highlighted any changes that the Applicant had made to the Proposed Development in responses to the feedback.

5.2.7 The exhibition information boards and visualisations, ‘Report on Feedback’, and online version of the comments form were also available on the project website, from the morning of the first event (Wednesday 6 September) so that people who may not have been able to attend the events, or who wished to take more time to review the information, could view the information online and submit comments during the consultation period. The exhibition information remained on the project website throughout the consultation period (and will continue to remain there until the Section 36 planning application is submitted).

5.2.8 The process for contacting and submitting comments to the Applicant was also confirmed on the exhibition materials and project website. It was also made clear that any representations submitted to the Applicant at that stage of the Proposed Development were not representations to the determining authority and that there would be an opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority should an application be made.



Day 1: Middleton Village Community Hall



Day 2: Macfie Hall

5.3 Consultation feedback - overview (September 2023 public exhibitions)

5.3.1 The September 2023 exhibition events were less attended than the first set of events in March 2023, attracting 30 people across the two events, with the breakdown of venue attendance as follows:

- Middleton Village Community Hall - 22 people (73%)
- Macfie Hall - 8 people (27%)

5.3.2 Less feedback was received during this second consultation period (6 September until 21 September) with 8 comments forms submitted including feedback on the following themes:

- Visual impact (view of turbines, interest in grid connection S37 application, pleased with reduction in number of turbines and movement aware from nearest properties)
- Construction (private water supplies, limit amount of trees felled)
- Socioeconomics (community benefit ideas)

5.3.3 The Applicant included a multiple-choice question on the comments form that asked what people thought about the updated turbine and infrastructure layout if the project went ahead. The breakdown of responses was as follows: 75% responded that they were happy with the proposed layout and 25% responded that they had concerns about the proposed layout.

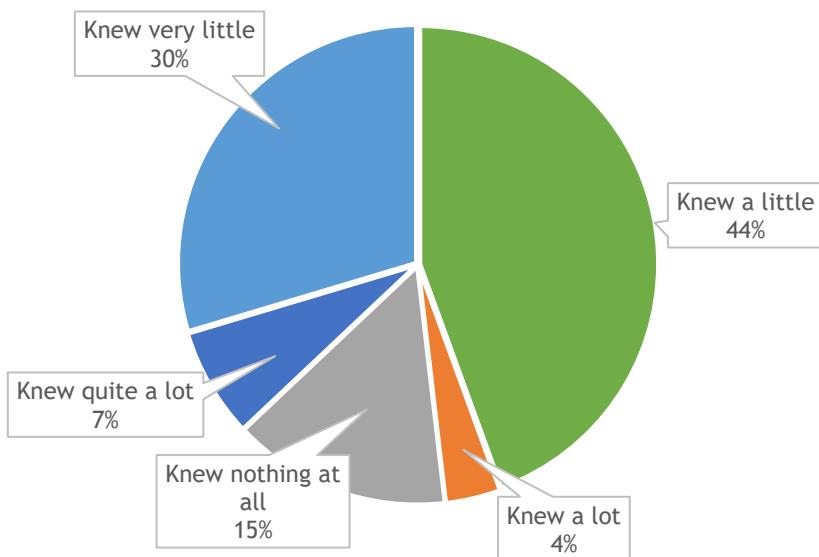
5.3.4 Further detail on the feedback received is contained in [Section 6](#) and [Section 7](#) of this PAC Report which includes an explanation of how the Applicant has taken these comments into account [and Appendix 12].

6. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

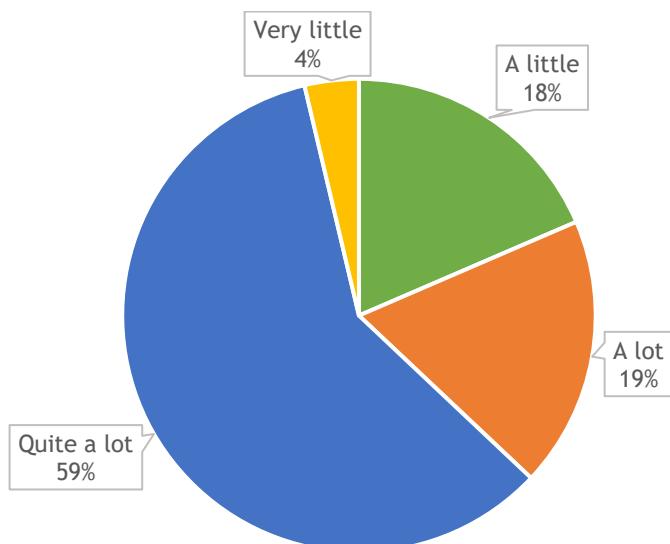
6.1 Comments forms and analysis of answers - March 2023 public exhibitions

6.1.1 The responses to the project and industry-specific multiple-choice questions on the comments form have been analysed as follows:

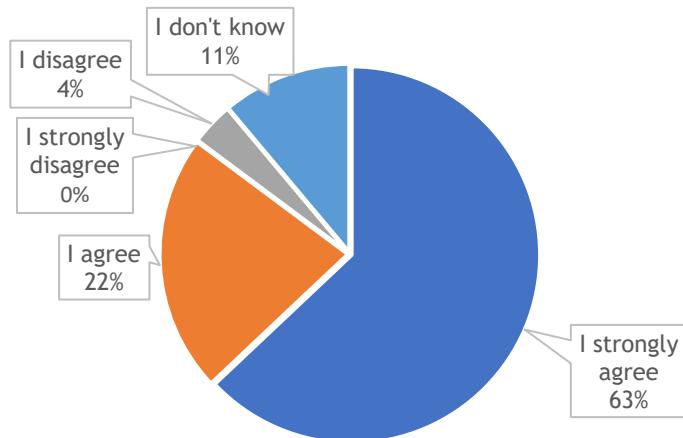
6.1.2 Question 1.4 - *Before visiting the exhibition how would you describe your knowledge of the Torfichen Wind Farm proposal?*



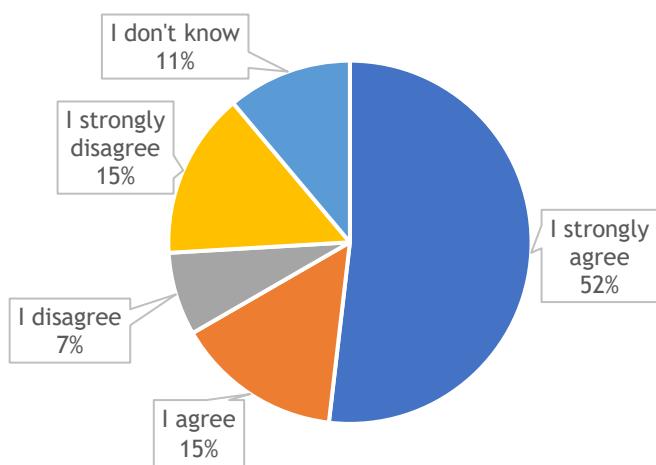
6.1.3 Question 1.5 - *Having visited the exhibition, to what extent do you feel you have increased your knowledge of the Torfichen Wind Farm proposal?*



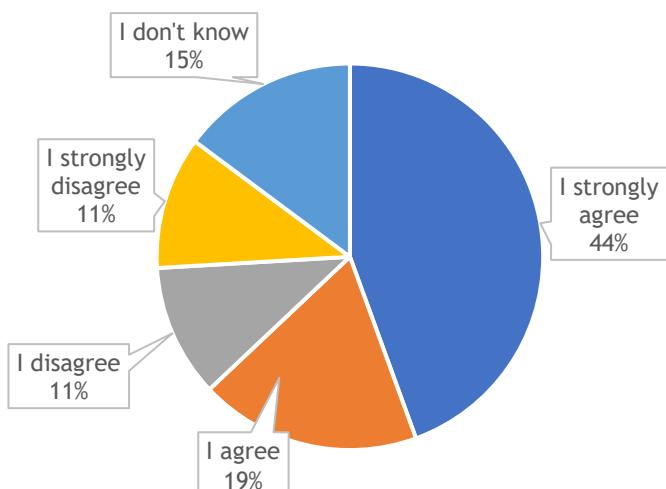
6.1.4 Question 2.1 - Do you agree that generating electricity from renewable sources, and reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, can help towards tackling the issue of climate change?



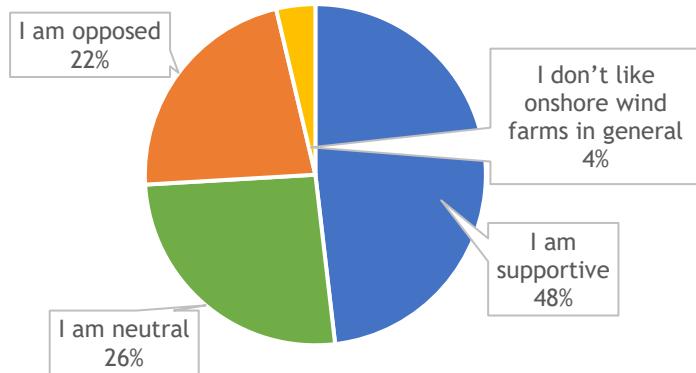
6.1.5 Question 2.2 - Do you agree that we need to develop onshore wind farms to support greater energy independence and security of supply for the UK?



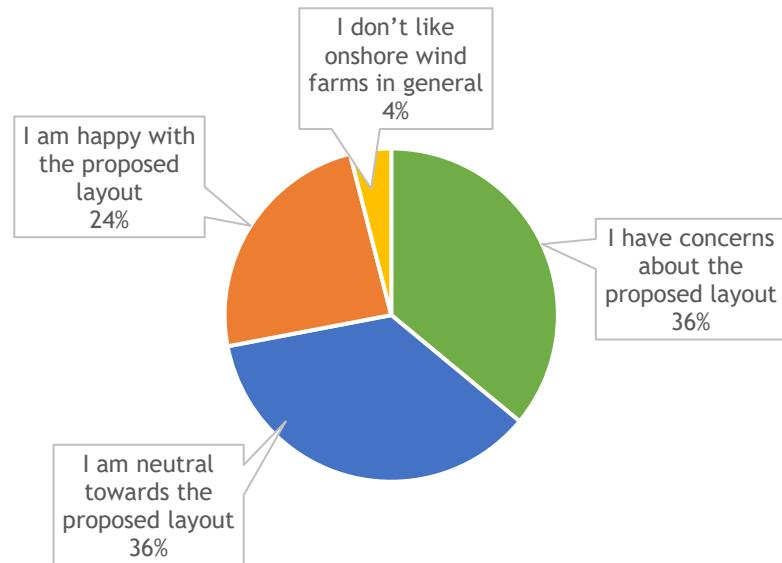
6.1.6 Question 2.3 - Do you agree that we need to develop onshore wind farms to help reduce energy bills?



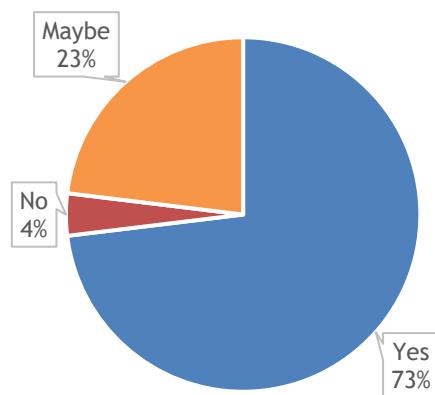
6.1.7 Question 3.1 - *What's your attitude to the proposal for a wind farm at Torfichen?*



6.1.8 Question 3.2 - *If the wind farm went ahead, as currently designed, what do you think about the turbine and infrastructure layout?*



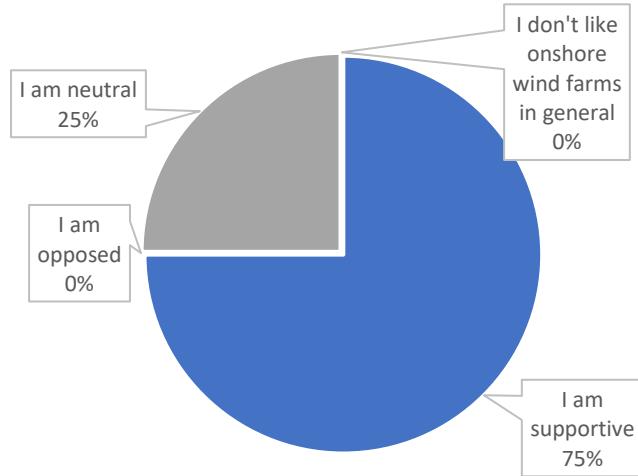
6.1.9 Question 4.4 - *Is [LEDS] something you think should form part of the tailored community benefits package for Torfichen Wind Farm?*



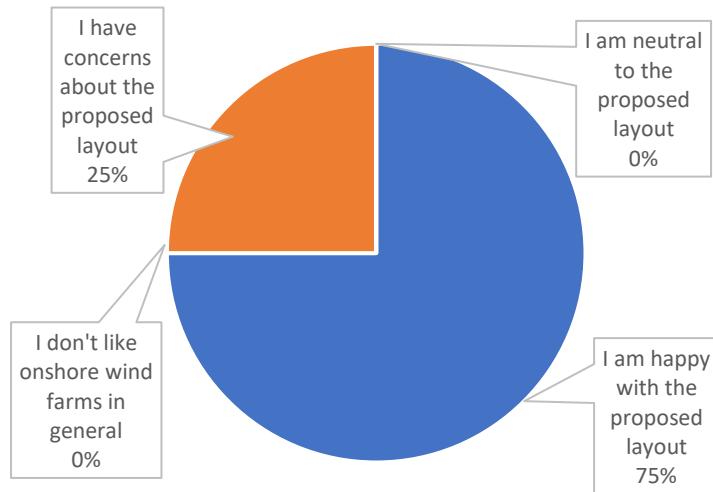
6.2 Comments forms and analysis of answers - September 2023 public exhibitions

6.2.1 The responses to the multiple choice questions on the comments form relating to the updated design of the Proposed Development have been analysed as follows:

6.2.2 Question 2.1 - *What's your attitude to the updated proposal for Torfichen Wind Farm?*



6.2.3 Question 2.2 - *If the project went ahead what do you think about the updated turbine/infrastructure layout?*



7. OUTCOMES and RESPONSES

7.1 Summary of topical comments received and Applicant response

7.1.1 The topical comments received from the March 2023 and September 2023 public exhibition events have been categorised into key topics and summarised in Table 1, together with the Applicant's response and a reference to the relevant Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) chapter where applicable.

7.1.2 Table 1: Summary of topics, key themes, and Applicant response

Summary of comments received	The Applicant's response
<p>Cumulative Impact</p> <p>“Cumulative visual effects are too much. We have enough wind farms in our area.”</p>	<p>The Scottish Government is committed to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 at the latest and have also set two interim targets to reduce emissions by 75% by 2030 and by 90% by 2040.</p> <p>The transition to net zero means that our demand for green electricity will increase substantially over the course of the next decade. This means that a consistently higher rate of onshore wind, and other renewables capacity, will be required year on year.</p> <p>We appreciate not everyone is in favour of wind farms, however, we are seeing strong support for onshore wind in Scotland, including reforming the planning system to enable more wind farms to be built, particularly in the face of the climate change and energy security challenges that we face today.</p> <p>Cumulative impact with other wind farms in the area has been assessed and the Proposed Development designed in a way that minimises any adverse cumulative effects. Further information can be found in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report.</p>
<p>Landscape and Visual Impact</p> <p>“I don't consider this a suitable site for a wind farm as it would be extremely visually intrusive.”</p> <p>“Have more photos of the turbines from a wide range of areas around the wind farm.”</p> <p>“Torfichen Hill and this face of the Moorfoots is an unspoilt area of abandoned beauty. Driving or cycling up the Granites and over Broad Law</p>	<p>Having considered the feedback from key consultees and the local community, and undertaken further landscape and visual assessments, the Applicant has reduced turbine numbers from 19 to 18. Furthermore, each turbine location has moved to varying degrees to refine the design and minimise visual impacts wherever possible.</p> <p>Wind turbine technology has advanced considerably in recent years, meaning that wind turbines are now taller and more efficient which enables them to generate a significantly greater amount of electricity per wind turbine.</p> <p>Modern taller wind turbines provide more electricity, which helps address the climate emergency, cost of living crisis, and security of energy supply. The 220m tall wind turbines proposed would allow for far greater</p>

Corner then gradually descending eastwards give one of the most satisfying views over post-industrial Midlothian to the Edinburgh skyline. This will be ruined by the proposal.”

“It is too close to Gladhouse [Reservoir] and will ruin the Moorfoot scarp which Midlothian Council has protected so far.”

benefits in terms of renewable electricity generation per wind turbine than smaller turbines would.

A full Landscape and Visual Assessment has been undertaken to help assess the design and wind turbine layout. This includes photomontages illustrating the potential appearance of the Proposed Development from a range of viewpoints agreed with NatureScot, Midlothian Council and Scottish Borders Council. The final location of the wind turbines has taken account of the local topography and views of the site from the surrounding area. From the studies we have undertaken and the professional advice we have received, we believe that the current wind turbine locations and heights proposed are appropriate for a wind farm at this location.

Noise

“Wind noise survey for the cottages please at South Middleton.”

“The noise is objectionable.”

“If they are constantly visible it will be very annoying and I'm not sure how noisy they will be.”

Wind farm noise in many circumstances may be inaudible or effectively ‘masked’ by the background noise already present in the surrounding environment. We take care to ensure noise levels from wind turbines are within recommended limits and comply with planning policy.

A detailed assessment has been carried out to consider the potential effects of noise associated with the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. The noise assessment also takes into account potential cumulative noise effects from the other operational wind farms as well as wind farms in planning.

Further information can be found in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

Need for Renewables

“Strongly agree with need, but has to be designed, location and constructed with great sensitivity to locality, environment and local people.”

“All new wind farms should be placed offshore. Tidal underwater generation is the future and much less visually intrusive.”

“When the wind doesn't blow, no power generated, so unless storage or battery re-charge is possible, onshore wind farms are not the only solution.”

We are in a climate emergency, cost of living crisis and also seeking to enhance the security of our energy supply. Onshore wind can address all of these. This is recognised by the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) which was published in February 2023 and provides the national spatial strategy for Scotland. Policy 11 asserts support for onshore wind farms outside of National Parks and National Scenic Areas. The Proposed Development is outwith such national landscape designations.

The 2022 report from the IPCC has stated that many of the impacts of climate change are now simply irreversible. However, the report also says that there remains a small window of opportunity to act to avoid some of the worst impacts predicted.

The rapid deployment of onshore wind and other renewables will be central to achieving the Scottish Government's net zero commitments.

Wind is a free and inexhaustible resource which has an important role to play as part of a balanced energy mix. Wind energy enables us to generate our own

<p>“I don't have enough information on the carbon footprint of wind turbine construction.”</p> <p>“Expensive, inefficient, nonsense. Will be minus 13 degrees tonight. No wind, no wind power.”</p>	<p>electricity reducing reliance on imports and is not subject to sudden price fluctuations or the uncertainty of global markets.</p> <p>Onshore wind, alongside other renewable technologies, can generate the cheapest form of new electricity generation which means that onshore wind developments are not only beneficial for the environment but also for the consumer.</p> <p>All renewable technologies have their merits in relation to cost, efficiency, environmental or social benefits. For example, onshore wind can be constructed in 12-14 months (quicker than offshore). Typically, wind farms pay back the carbon within 1-3 years and operate carbon free thereafter. The Proposed Development also includes a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS).</p> <p>Our analysis of comments received from our public exhibitions in March 2023, showed 85% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that generating electricity from renewable sources and reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, can help towards tackling the issue of climate change.</p> <p>Scotland currently has almost 9GW of operational onshore wind capacity. In response to the climate emergency the focus on developing more onshore wind within Scotland has only strengthened - with national targets now set for installing 20GW of onshore wind across Scotland by 2030 to help towards meeting Net Zero carbon emissions by 2045.</p> <p>Onshore wind is Scotland's biggest renewables employer and RenewableUK's Onshore Wind Prospectus⁵ suggests that approximately 17,000 jobs and the equivalent of £27.8bn in GVA could be achieved in Scotland if we are able to deploy an additional 12GW by 2030.</p> <p>Further information regarding energy policy considerations, and a carbon balance assessment, can be found in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report.</p>
---	--

Ecology and Ornithology

<p>“Affect on wildlife surrounding area.”</p> <p>“The fact that ospreys rest in or around Gladhouse Reservoir concerns me.”</p>	<p>Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) are a compulsory part of the planning and consenting process for wind farms. The purpose of an EIA is to investigate and mitigate any potential effects of a development on the natural, physical and human environment. Protecting and minimising any potential direct or indirect impacts on local wildlife and their habitats is of utmost importance and we take this responsibility seriously. We look to mitigate any potential effects of the development during construction and operation on</p>
---	--

⁵ https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.renewableuk.com/resource/resmgr/media/onshore_wind_prospectus_fina.pdf

	<p>the habitats and protected species that are found to be present or active within the site.</p> <p>We have undertaken a number of detailed site environmental surveys including ecology, hydrology, hydrogeology, geology, and gathered extensive information on the site including two years of ornithological data (vantage points, nesting and breeding bird surveys).</p> <p>A full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken to determine the likelihood of any potential impacts on the environment and the results of this are described in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report. An outline Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan (BEMP) has also been produced and included in the application.</p>
--	---

Private Water Supplies

<p>“We...have a private/shared water supply coming from the hills. We would like confirmation that this wouldn't be affected.”</p> <p>“Concern regarding heavy lorries running along B7007 where the residents have a 100m cast iron private water main, which gets constantly damaged by heavy goods lorries.”</p>	<p>RES has collected Private Water Supply (PWS) data from Midlothian Council to establish the PWS source locations and source types in order to inform the PWS assessment that is included in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report. The findings of the assessment will inform what further work would be required, if any, which may include baseline monitoring of relevant PWS, before, during and after construction. Any work associated with PWS post consent will be enforced through planning condition and subject to agreement with Midlothian Council. RES has also committed to maintaining dialogue with residents and assisting with any proposed mitigation required in order to protect the private water main along the B7007.</p>
---	---

Grid

<p>“Concern would be raised on the potential location of the connecting cables for the grid connections. It would have been helpful to have seen where these would be located. The concern would be aesthetically on visibility of these lines as well as potential health impacts of magnetic fields.”</p> <p>“Chief concern is to do with linkages into the grid and visual impact on the view from our home. Team informed us of Section 37 regulations and we are keen to keep up to date on these planning applications.”</p>	<p>We have been advised by the Transmission Owner (TO) that the proposed wind farm will connect to the National Grid via a 132kV connection into Gala North, a new substation near Galashiels.</p> <p>The grid network operators are currently upgrading the grid infrastructure in the country and the Applicant will be required to pay transmission connection charges to National Grid during operation of the wind farm for the grid connection.</p> <p>We have accepted a grid offer from the TO, in this case Scottish Power Transmission (SPT). SPT, as the TO, is responsible for maintaining and investing in the grid in the south of Scotland. This includes designing connections for transmission grid applications, such as that for the Proposed Development, and submitting the planning applications for these connections. As such, the grid route is subject to a separate planning application which will be submitted by the TO under Section 37 of the Electricity Act once they have finalised their design.</p> <p>Once the planning application for the grid route is submitted, there will be a consultation period undertaken by the TO during which details of the grid</p>
--	--

	route and method will be available for the public to provide comment to the TO as part of the planning process. Indicative details of the grid connection for the proposal have been included within the Project Description chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report.
--	---

Access

<p>“Access to the site - currently it's proposed to access the site (construction lorries etc) via "The Granite Road" which is acceptable. However I am strongly opposed to construction traffic using the Temple village to Yorkston Farm to Gladhouse Reservoir as this is entirely unsuitable.”</p> <p>“Damage to B roads during delivery and construction.”</p>	<p>We have undertaken a detailed swept path analysis of the wind turbine delivery route to ensure wind turbine components can be delivered safely to site. The wind turbine components for the Proposed Development are likely to arrive at the King George V dock in Glasgow before transportation to the site via M8, A720, A67, B6458 and A7 and approaching the site entrance through the B7007.</p> <p>We are also in consultation with Midlothian Council's roads department as well as the emergency services and other relevant consultees. Should the proposal be consented, a detailed Traffic Management Plan would be developed to mitigate potential impacts on road users and ensure road safety.</p> <p>With any project of this nature there will be a temporary increase in traffic in order to facilitate the construction process; this increase will be minimised where possible during peak commuting periods, and any impacts kept to a minimum, through appropriate traffic management measures such as careful timing of deliveries.</p> <p>Wherever reasonably practicable we will use materials available on site and source construction materials locally, to minimise traffic movements. Further information can be found in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report.</p>
---	---

Local Benefits

<p>“Cheaper electricity would be great!”</p> <p>“It would be a good thing to benefit the local community council.”</p> <p>“The community council is probably best placed to propose how such benefits best utilised.”</p> <p>“Planting trees. Encouraging wildlife.”</p> <p>“Agree to benefit those closest on views disrupted most.”</p>	<p>As we transition to a net-zero future, reducing the impacts of climate change both locally and globally, our priority is to deliver clean, green electricity at the lowest cost for consumers.</p> <p>The construction of the Proposed Development, if consented, is expected to generate approximately £10 million Gross Value Added (GVA) in Midlothian in the form of jobs, employment, and use of local services during the development, construction and first year of operation. This will provide a vital economic boost, creating skilled, sustainable jobs and helping to drive a cleaner and more resilient economy.</p> <p>Furthermore, if consented, we estimate the Proposed Development would deliver around £1.1 million in business rates every year during operation, supporting vital local services for local residents.</p> <p>We propose to create additional benefit from the scheme through a community benefit package. We will continue to work with the local community to gain</p>
---	--

“Support for local services”

“As Heriot already gets quite a lot of wind farm money, I would be quite happy for the communities that are further away to get some of the money.”

“Help for public transport improvements.”

“Provision of cheaper/subsidised energy for the locality.”

“The community council is probably best placed to propose how such benefits best utilised.”

“Support to heat pumps installed in the local area.”

“Local Electricity Discount Scheme sounds good.”

“I would like funding the closely affected homes being given funding for solar panels and I like the idea of funding for homes to have electric car power points.”

feedback on their priorities and deliver projects that will help to secure long-term economic, social and environmental benefits.

This approach will deliver a tailored package of benefits that are aligned with the local communities' priorities. We are proposing that the package of additional benefits will be worth £5,000 per MW (or equivalent) of installed capacity per annum. This package could include RES' unique Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS), which seeks to deliver direct and tangible benefits to people living and working closest to RES' operational wind farms, something that has received significant interest from the community.

Our unique Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS) was developed in response to research and feedback from local communities around RES' operational wind farms. LEDS offers an annual discount to the electricity bills of those properties closest to a participating wind farm and there is no need to change energy provider. The scheme would be open to all residential, business and community buildings with an electricity meter (including schools, places of worship and village halls) within the eligible area.

It is important to note that voluntary community benefits are not a material planning consideration and are unable to be used to support any activity that is the statutory obligation of Government, local authorities and agencies thereof.

7.2 Evaluation of consultation process

7.2.1 Best practice encourages Applicants to evaluate the pre-application consultation process. As such, Table 2 evaluates the Applicant's consultation process using the 10 National Standards for Community Engagement as set out in PAN 3/2010⁶. Examples have been included within the table below to demonstrate how the Applicant has achieved the standard.

7.2.2 Table 2: National Standards for Community Engagement Evaluation

THE STANDARD	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
INVOLVEMENT	Identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the focus of engagement.	The Applicant identified, early in the process, the people and organisations who may have an interest in the Proposed Development and with whom to engage and keep up to date. In the early scoping stage of the Proposed Development this included 'host' Community Councils, nearby Community Councils, local ward Councillors, constituency MSP and MP, and properties within 2km of the Proposed Development. As the project developed this list naturally evolved to include, for example, 1,110 local properties (within approximately 5km of the turbine development area as well as anyone else who asked to be kept up to date with the proposal).
SUPPORT	Identify and overcome any barriers to involvement.	Throughout the consultation process the Applicant understood the need to help all individuals and groups engage, for example, the Applicant ensured that public exhibitions took place in two different venues surrounding the site and within reasonable travelling distance from one another to ensure that they were accessible to everyone in the community as far as practicable. The events took place across a range of dates and times to suit as many people as possible - and both the March and September 2023 public exhibitions were deliberately arranged to avoid the school holidays. Hard copies of the exhibition information boards were also available by the Applicant upon request.
PLANNING	Gather evidence of need and resources to agree purpose, scope and actions.	Engagement and consultation took place over many months as the Proposed Development progressed. The Applicant clearly set out in communications the purpose and scope of consultation. Consultation events were carefully planned and held at times in the project programme when the most value could be provided, for example, the March 2023 public exhibitions were held early in the design development process when people's feedback could potentially have greatest influence on the Proposed Development - and the September 2023 public exhibitions were held at final design stage when the Applicant could demonstrate the changes made and be clear about the final proposal which would be submitted into planning. Also, the scope of the information presented at each of the two sets of public exhibitions was carefully considered and reflected the areas of interest raised by stakeholders - particularly at the September 2023 final design public exhibitions, for example, greater detail than usual was provided regarding the grid connection and private water supplies in response to concerns raised - and wireline visualisation software was made available in response to community feedback regarding interest in alternative viewpoints to those that were on display. The

⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/pan-3-2010-community-engagement/>

THE STANDARD	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
		Applicant also ensured that the public exhibitions were widely advertised, through a variety of methods, to reach as many people as possible.
METHODS	Agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose.	The Applicant used a variety of methods to engage. These methods included, for example, letters, phone-calls, emails, face-to-face meetings, public exhibitions (exhibition information was also made available online via the project website, including an online version of the comments form), newsletters, adverts, and posters. Within the public exhibition consultation events the Applicant used a variety of materials and communication methods including information boards, visualisations, interactive wireline software and verbal discussion.
WORKING TOGETHER	Agree and use clear procedures that enable participants to work together effectively and efficiently.	Contact details for the Applicant were made publicly available and provided on all project communications for people to get in touch if they needed to. The Applicant has responded to all public enquiries and organised meetings with residents and Key Stakeholders to discuss concerns face-to-face, as required. Timescales and procedures were clearly set out in relation to the Applicant's consultation process; for example, how to comment to the Applicant on the Proposed Development and the closing date for comments, the expected timings for the next set of public exhibitions and how to find further information. The Applicant also clearly set out more information regarding the Section 36 decision-making process within its exhibition information at the September 2023 final design public exhibitions.
SHARING INFORMATION	Ensure necessary information is communicated between the participants.	The Applicant endeavoured to use language appropriate for the demographic, social and economic landscape of the community, and literacy levels. A variety of communication methods were used too, as outlined in Sections 2-5 above, to communicate information about the Proposed Development and consultation process. Regular updates were sent at key milestones to Key Stakeholders, local households, and all those who asked to be kept up to date with the Proposed Development to keep them informed and appraised of progress.
WORKING WITH OTHERS	Work effectively with others with an interest.	The Applicant engaged early in the design process with local Community Councils to discuss the Proposed Development and proposed consultation. The Applicant also engaged with local residents, local Councillors, local MP and MSP.
IMPROVEMENT	Develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of the participants.	The Applicant's representatives, who undertook the consultation and engagement activity, have extensive experience in community engagement and consultation.
FEEDBACK	Feed results back to the wider community and agencies affected.	Using both the Report on Feedback, and PAC Report, the Applicant has ensured that the consultation comments and findings of the consultation process have been summarised and fed back.
MONITORING AND EVALUATION	Monitor and evaluate whether engagement achieves its purpose and meets the national standards for community engagement.	The Applicant has continued to review and monitor the consultation process. The Applicant has also evaluated the consultation process using the 10 National Standards for Community Engagement as set out in PAN 3/2010.

8. SUMMARY

8.1 Key points

- 8.1.1 In accordance with best practice, the Applicant has fulfilled and exceeded the minimum pre-application consultation activity expected for this Proposed Development, including documenting and reporting on the consultation activities undertaken.
- 8.1.2 Furthermore, the Applicant has also endeavoured to undertake consultation in line with the best practice ‘National Standards for Community Engagement’ as set out in PAN 3/2010 and has evaluated the consultation undertaken against these best practice standards.
- 8.1.3 The Applicant identified and engaged early with Key Stakeholders and the local community, to facilitate a constructive consultation process; this has helped us understand and address concerns, where possible, as the project has developed.
- 8.1.4 The Applicant responded directly to any enquiries received throughout the project’s development and offered to meet with local residents or Key Stakeholders who had questions or concerns about the Proposed Development.
- 8.1.5 The Applicant continued to keep Key Stakeholders, the local community, and anyone else who asked to be kept informed about the Proposed Development up to date.
- 8.1.6 Both the March 2023 (scoping) and September 2023 (final design) public exhibition events were prominently publicised and the Applicant is grateful to everyone who took the time to attend and provide feedback on the Proposed Development during the respective consultation periods. The feedback received has been carefully logged, analysed, and summarised within this PAC Report. In addition, a summary of the feedback received during the May 2023 consultation and the Applicant’s response to key themes raised was included in the ‘Report on Feedback’ [Appendix 12] which was made available at the September 2023 public exhibitions and online.
- 8.1.7 Analysis from the comments forms has shown that those who attended the first set of public exhibitions in March 2023 felt better informed about the proposals further to their attendance of the respective events. 78% of respondents felt they had increased their understanding of the Proposed Development either ‘a lot’ or ‘quite a lot’ following attendance of the first exhibition.
- 8.1.8 As an experienced wind farm developer, the Applicant has listened to the feedback from the local community and considered this in relation to the design of the Proposed Development.
- 8.1.9 The Applicant made key changes to the design of the Proposed Development with consideration of consultation feedback as outlined, primarily, in [Section 6](#) of this PAC Report.
- 8.1.10 Throughout the consultation process, the Applicant has helped the community understand the benefits and impacts of the proposed wind farm and added value and improved the quality of the proposal through meaningful and productive consultation.
- 8.1.11 RES is committed to being a good neighbour and will build on this pre-application consultation. The company has an ‘open door’ policy which means that anyone can contact the company about the Proposed Development at any stage and RES will respond in a timely manner. The Development Project Manager’s and Community Relations Team’s contact details have been made available for this purpose via exchange of information at the public exhibitions, the project newsletters and the project website (www.torfichen-windfarm.co.uk).

8.1.12 The project website will be updated regularly to enable people to keep up to date with the latest news about the Proposed Development as it progresses.

8.1.13 Once the planning application and Environmental Impact Assessment report have been validated by the ECU, the Applicant will write to political representatives, community organisations and members of the public who have requested to be kept informed, to provide them with the planning reference number and how they can submit a formal representation, should they wish to do so.

8.2 Appendices

8.2.1 The following is a list of Appendices contained within this PAC Report:

- **Appendix 1:** Introductory letter to Key Stakeholders - January 2023
- **Appendix 2:** Newspaper adverts - February 2023
- **Appendix 3:** Update letter to Key Stakeholders with exhibition details - February 2023
- **Appendix 4:** Newsletter 1 - February 2023
- **Appendix 5:** Exhibition information boards (x16) - March 2023
- **Appendix 6:** Comments form for consultation feedback - March 2023
- **Appendix 7:** Newspaper adverts- August 2023
- **Appendix 8:** Update letter to Key Stakeholders with exhibition details - August 2023
- **Appendix 9:** Newsletter 2 - August 2023
- **Appendix 10:** Exhibition information boards (x19) - September 2023
- **Appendix 11:** Comments form for consultation feedback - September 2023
- **Appendix 12:** Report on Feedback from March 2023 consultation - September 2023