



Tom na Clach Wind Farm Extension

INFINERGY

harnessing the power of nature

Statement of Community Consultation

March 2022



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Executive Summary

In line with both The Highland Council's advice, 'Pre-Application Consultation: A Guide for Communities', 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 an initial round of consultation for its Tom na Clach Wind Farm Extension proposal ('the Proposed Development'). Infinergy expects consultation activity to continue throughout the planning application process.

Consultation activity so far has included:

- distribution of newsletters to local residents and businesses;
- a dedicated project website with online consultation tool (www.tomnaclachwindfarm.co.uk);
- Live online 'chat' sessions on 2nd and 3rd November 2021;
- social media activity on Infinergy's Facebook page;
- a Freephone telephone number; and
- community open days held on 27th and 28th October 2021 at village halls in Tomatin and Carrbridge.

Local residents and other interested parties were invited to attend the open days. These were publicised through the newsletter sent out to all households (843) within a 10km radius of the project and editorial coverage in the Strathspey and Badenoch Herald and Inverness Courier, as well as on social media.

At the Community Open Days (CODs) members of the development team were on hand to explain the proposals, discuss the wider issue around onshore wind development and demonstrate landscape and visual impact via photomontages. Those attending had the opportunity to complete feedback questionnaires to give their views. Local residents also had the opportunity to air their views via the project website, social media sites and Freephone telephone number.

A total of 26 people attended the exhibitions, 3 opinion forms were received either on the day or later by freepost.

Of those who responded to the public consultation programme asking how they felt about the Proposed Development, two thirds stated they were very supportive or supportive of the Proposed Development with one third being opposed.

Infinergy has written to all local residents who raised questions or concerns via the various feedback mechanisms. Consultation is on-going and will continue post submission.

1. 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, Tom na Clach Wind Farm Extension

Infinergy's public consultation plans for the Proposed Development were influenced by the Highland Council's Statutory Advice, 'Pre-Application Consultation: A Guide for Communities' alongside PAN 3/2010 which includes the National Standards for Community Engagement and Planning Aid for Scotland's SP=EED framework (**Appendix 10**).

Both documents 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 Events (at least one).

During this period, Scottish Government Guidance relating to public consultation during the Covid-19 pandemic was in place (**Appendix 11**), and consultation activity was adjusted accordingly whilst still aiming to reach as many people as possible.

3. Infinergy's approach to community involvement

Infinergy'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 and circulation of printed information material for local residents;
- Information and dialogue via social media platforms; and
- Hosting of community open days prior to submission of the planning application, when the development is at draft design stage.

4. Consultation

Consultation that has taken place so far in this pre-application stage has enabled Infinergy to take forward its commitment to continuing a constructive relationship with residents and local representatives within the local community which started with the Operational Scheme over 10 years ago.

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

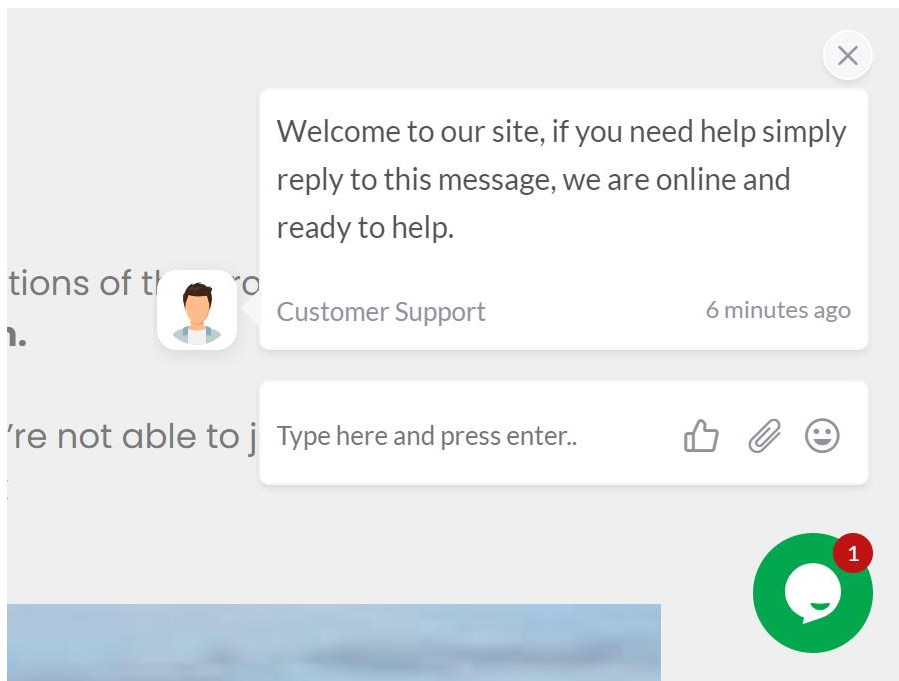
4.1 Online Consultation Website

In 2020 Infinergy launched a new project website www.tomnclachwindfarm.co.uk to provide information for residents and their representatives about the proposal for an extension to the operational wind farm on Cawdor Estate and allow them to give feedback by completing an online questionnaire or asking specific questions via info@tomnaclachwindfarm.co.uk - the dedicated email facility.

The dedicated project consultation page (**Appendix 3**) provided:

- introduction to the consultation;
- information panels (**Appendix 4**);
- link to feedback form;
- details of dedicated email address; and
- details of live 'chat' sessions (including link when live, Figure 1, below).

Figure 1: Live Chat Icon



4.2 Freephone

The Freephone telephone number launched at that time for specific enquiries relating to the proposal continues to be in use (0800 980 4299), enabling residents to speak to members of the project team and receive additional information.

4.3 Newsletter

In early October 2021, Infinergy distributed 843 newsletters (**Appendix 1**) to the local community within a 10km radius of the project. The newsletters were posted via Royal Mail (1st class), using a specifically sourced database to reduce the risk of non-delivery. The newsletter provided an invitation to the in-person CODs as well as details of the online consultation page, overview/update of the project including site suitability and information promoting other contact methods.

4.4 Social Media

At the same time, Infinergy used its Facebook and Twitter pages (**Appendix 2**) to promote the upcoming CODs/virtual consultation, and the same promotion was posted on the Strathdearn Community Facebook page.

4.5 In-person Community Open Days

Two in-person CODs outlining the draft proposal were held on 27th and 28th October 2021 at village halls in Tomatin and Carrbridge between 2 and 7pm and between 1 and 5.30pm respectively. Copies of the exhibition information panels can be found in **Appendix 4** and photographs taken at the exhibition in **Appendix 5**.

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 development team were able to offer to provide specific landscape and visual impact by utilising a 3D computer modeling programme that is able to generate views from any given view point, allowing residents to see just how the development of turbines will look from their own homes. 3 requests were made and provided by email.

Both in-person open days complied with Scottish Government Guidance relating to Covid-19 as it was at the time.

Publicity

Invitations to the public exhibitions were sent as part of the newsletter, to all households within a 10km radius of the project, see **Appendix 1**.

In order to publicise the exhibition to the wider community, adverts were placed on the Infinergy social media sites and shared with other relevant stakeholders, including the local Community Councils. See **Appendix 2**.

Media

Press coverage of the open days was promoted in the local papers (**see Appendix 6**):

- Strathspey and Badenoch Herald
- Inverness Courier

Attendance

Based on the open day register, 26 people attended the CODs over the two days, where they had the opportunity to inspect the draft proposal, discuss issues with the project team and complete a questionnaire (**Appendix 7**) and/or enquiry request form (**Appendix 8**) for return on the day or via FREEPOST.

5. Consultation Feedback

Throughout the community consultation programme we have received qualitative and quantitative feedback and listed below is a summary of the key findings obtained thus far.

5.1 Newsletter

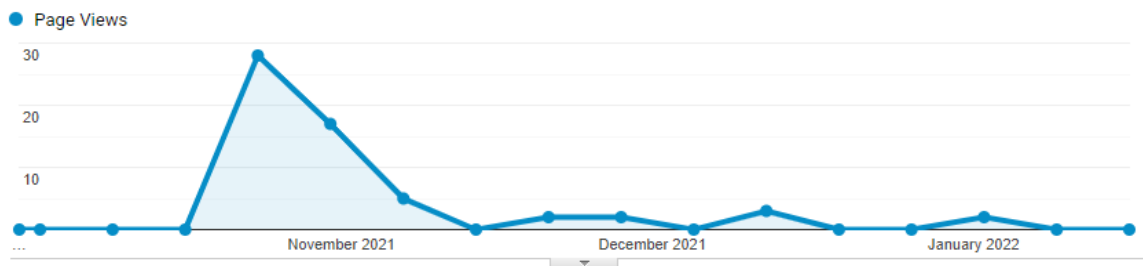
The newsletter directed recipients to the dedicated consultation page on the project website and also provided a range of contact methods including Freepost, Freephone and email address.

The newsletter did not generate any enquiries prior to the Community Open Day events or the launch of the dedicated consultation page.

5.2 Online Consultation Website

The Tom na Clach Wind Farm Extension online consultation page has been live since Wednesday 20th October. Data shows that the dedicated consultation page has had 59 page views during up until the end of November 2021. During the three months, November to January, the site itself had a total of 139 page views. A summary of the activity can be seen in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2 – Project website page views



During that period, there were a number of opportunities for visitors to chat 'live' directly with the project team at the following times:

- Tuesday 2nd November: 2–4pm and 5–7pm
- Wednesday 3rd November: 2–4pm and 5–7pm

During these periods there were no visitors who used the dedicated chat functionality and no questions asked.

5.3 Community Open Days

Open day opinion forms were completed by 3 attendees, all of whom live within 10km of the project.

One of opinion forms was completed at the events, and the remaining two sent in their questionnaire to our freepost address Freepost Infinergy Ltd after the events. These questionnaires are taken into account in the overall results of the public consultation exercise. Copies of all returned open day questionnaires can be found in **Appendix 9**.

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

| | | |
|-----------------|----------|---------------|
| Very supportive | 1 | (33.3%) |
| Supportive | 1 | (33.3%) |
| Undecided | 0 | (0%) |
| Opposed | 1 | (33.3%) |
| Very opposed | 0 | (0%) |
| No comment | 0 | (0%) |
| Total | 3 | (100%) |

5.4 Issues

Feedback questionnaires asked respondents if they had any specific issues or concerns about the proposal and a list of possible issues was provided.

Open day questionnaires

In question 5a respondents of the open day questionnaire were informed that Infinergy had conducted a range of surveys that assess the current situation on site and the potential impact of the Proposed Development. Respondents were asked to indicate which of the following elements of the proposal they were interested in and would like to be kept updated about (note: total responses rather than individual respondees):

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| How the wind farm might look | 0 |
| Local wildlife | 2 |
| Potential noise | 0 |
| Tourism | 0 |
| Electricity output | 0 |
| Site traffic during construction | 0 |
| CO ₂ savings | 1 |
| Local archaeology | 0 |
| Potential economic benefits | 1 |
| Other | 0 |

5.5 Summary of Feedback

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

Proposed Development Overall Results

| | Website | Exhibitions | Total | |
|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Very Supportive | 0 | 1 | 1 | 33.3% |
| Supportive | 0 | 1 | 1 | 33.3% |
| Undecided | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| Opposed | 0 | 1 | 1 | 33.3% |
| Very Opposed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| No Comment | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 0 | 3 | 3 | 100% |

6. Community Benefit

Infinergy wants to help the communities surrounding its renewable energy projects benefit from it in as many ways as possible. Infinergy has committed to uphold the Scottish Government's guideline figure of £5000 per MW of installed capacity for the Proposed Development.

The Operational Scheme is delivering the same level of benefits to the following communities surround the development:

- Cawdor and West Nairnshire
- Strathdearn
- Carrbridge
- Dulnain Bridge
- Dava Moor
- East Nairnshire

It is proposed to continue with the same division of funds as agreed by these communities for the operational wind farm.

6.1 Community Liaison Group

During the development process for the Operational Scheme, Infinergy brought a group of people together who represented local interests, including representatives from local Community Councils, and The Highland Council to form a Liaison Group to ensure good communications were in place during the construction period. Infinergy plans to reinstate this group should the Tom na Clach Wind Farm Extension be consented.

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:

Letters

Following the open days, individual letters were 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.

Web/email

Everyone who submits a question or query either via the website questionnaire or by email direct will also responded to electronically.

8. Future Consultation

Next Steps – Pre and Post Submission

Infinergy is committed to the continued involvement of and consultation with the local community 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. Infinergy 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.

Newsletters

Following the newsletter distributed in October 2021, a further newsletter encouraging feedback and directing comments to the appropriate planning body will be distributed following submission of the application has been submitted.

Stakeholder/Interest group briefings

Members of the Highland Council as well as a number of the surrounding Community Councils attended the open days.

Media relations

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

Ongoing response to queries

Infinergy will continue to respond to queries that are received via the various consultation channels i.e. Freephone telephone number, freepost address, dedicated email address, website and newsletter.

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