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Carn Fearna Wind Farm

**Pre-Application
Consultation Report**

April 2025



Statkraft



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1. Introduction

CARN FEARNA WIND FARM PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION REPORT

1.1 Carn Fearna Wind Farm Ltd ('the Applicant'), a subsidiary of Statkraft UK Ltd, together with Kane Partnership and Holyrood PR, have prepared this Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report to support an application to Scottish Ministers for Section 36 consent under the Electricity Act 1989 and deemed planning permission under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

1.2 This PAC Report details the consultation undertaken with the community, stakeholders, and statutory consultees regarding the Proposed Development. The Applicant has proactively engaged with local residents to ensure meaningful opportunities for participation in shaping the project.



2. Proposed Development

2.1 The Carn Fearná Wind Farm is proposed to be located approximately 1.5km north-east of Garve and 7km north-west of Strathpeffer in the Highland Region. The current proposal includes up to nine wind turbines, with four turbines reaching tip heights of 180m and five turbines reaching up to 200m. Other infrastructure includes:

- Foundations supporting each wind turbine
- On-site signage
- Passing places (number and locations to be confirmed as part of detailed design);
- Crane hardstandings and adjacent laydown areas
- Approximately 11.6 km of new access tracks
- Approximately 3.3 km of upgraded existing access track
- 11 new watercourse crossings and associated infrastructure
- A network of underground electrical cables
- A permanent substation and control building
- An Outline Nature Enhancement Management Plan (NEMP) for peat, biodiversity, forestry, and landscape.
- An off-site turning circle for Abnormal Indivisible Load (AIL) vehicles, located approximately 5 km north of the site at Inchbae Lodge.

2.2 Construction will also require temporary infrastructure, including borrow pit(s), a concrete batching area, and temporary construction compounds.

2.3 A small amount of tree felling (~1.2ha) will be required to facilitate the Proposed Development.



3. About the Applicant

3.1 The Applicant is a wholly owned subsidiary of Statkraft UK Ltd.

3.2 Statkraft is a leading company in hydropower internationally, and Europe's largest generator of renewable energy. The Group produces hydropower, wind power, solar power, and supplies district heating and is a global company in energy market operations. Statkraft has more than 7,000 employees over 20 countries.

3.3 Statkraft is at the heart of the UK's energy transition. Since 2006, Statkraft has gone from strength to strength in the UK, building experience across wind, solar, hydro, storage, grid stability, EV charging, green hydrogen and a thriving markets business. Statkraft has invested over £1.4 billion in the UK's renewable energy infrastructure and facilitated over 4GW of new-build renewable energy generation through Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs).

3.4 Across Statkraft's UK businesses there are over 550 employees in England, Scotland and Wales, playing a key role in helping the global business reach its goal of 2-2.5GW annual delivery rate for solar, onshore wind and battery storage from 2026 and onwards. Across Scotland, Statkraft owns or operates five onshore wind farms and has a further three wind farms consented. Statkraft is also at the forefront of innovative Greener Grid Parks, with operational projects in Keith and Liverpool, which facilitate more green energy onto the grid and offer grid stability services.

3.5 Over the past decade, Statkraft has invested over £200 million in renewable energy infrastructure in Scotland, placing it in the top five companies investing in the country. Over £4 million has been distributed to communities near their wind farms through local Community Benefit Funds.

4.1 Permission for the Proposed Development is being sought under Section 36 (S36) of the Electricity Act which does not carry a statutory requirement for public consultation or production of a Pre-Application Consultation Report (PAC Report).

4.2 However, as noted in Section 1 above, the Applicant prioritises community engagement and recognises the benefits of carrying out early and meaningful consultation during the planning process and follows best practice of producing a PAC Report.

4.3 Two documents which set out best practice for engaging with communities during development have been used as a framework to support the delivery of the Proposed Development's engagement programme. The Scottish Government Advice Note (PAN) 3/2010 – Community Engagement and the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit (ECU) best practice Guidance for Applications under Section 36 and 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 issued in February 2022 and updated in July 2022.



4. Public Consultation

TABLE 1 – AN OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – CONSULTATION STAGES
CONTINUED

Table 1 – An Overview of Community Engagement – Consultation Stages

Standard	PAN 3/2010 Standard	Activities Undertaken
1	Involvement: Identify and involve the people and organisations who have interest in the focus of the engagement.	<p>The host and neighbouring Community Councils, locally elected Ward Members for the host and neighbouring wards, MSP and MP for the Proposed Development were identified and contacted with information about the Proposed Development at the time of Scoping in June 2023, when the project <u>Proposed Development</u> first entered the public domain.</p> <p>Local stakeholders were offered the opportunity to meet with the Proposed Development team, virtually or in person.</p> <p>A dedicated website with contact details was launched when the <u>Proposed Development</u> project went into scoping.</p> <p>Two periods of public exhibitions were held in November 2023 and August 2024.</p> <p>Invites and feedback forms were sent to more than 1,700 residents and business surrounding the Proposed Development at the start of each of the consultation periods. Mailing lists were updated ahead of the second exhibition to take account of local population changes.</p> <p>Emails were sent to host and neighbouring community councils and the locally elected representatives. The project team regularly attended meetings of the Host Community Council to provide updates and address any issues.</p>
2	Support: Identify and overcome any barriers to involvement.	<p>Respondents could communicate with the Proposed Development team via the project website, email, letter, telephone or in-person.</p> <p>Accessible in-person exhibitions were held at a range of local venues with online exhibitions being held in parallel. Where a venue in Garve could not be secured due to the on-going reconstruction of the local hall, a nearby café was used instead to ensure that an exhibition was held as close to the host community as possible.</p>

4. Public Consultation

TABLE 1 – AN OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – CONSULTATION STAGES
CONTINUED

Standard	PAN 3/2010 Standard	Activities Undertaken
		<p>Exhibition timings reflecting residents commute times to work and were adapted at the request of the Host Community Council.</p> <p>The exhibitions were advertised in the Press and Journal and the Ross-shire Journal. Adverts were provided to Community Councils and Councillors to share on their social media.</p> <p>A direct mail invitation was sent to more than 1,700 households and business ahead of each of the consultation periods. The invitations included information about the Proposed Development, the location, the timings and what information would be made available, contact details and how to get involved. A feedback card and freepost envelope was included in the mailing to make it easy for local people to return their views on the proposal.</p> <p>The Applicant regularly attended meetings of the Host Community Council, as well as attending appropriate meetings of neighbouring community councils.</p>
3	Planning: Gather evidence of need and resources to agree purpose, scope and actions.	<p>The Applicant prioritises undertaking meaningful consultation with the local community and this was set out in correspondence with them.</p> <p>When contact was made with Community Councils and wider stakeholders the proposed approach was outlined and feedback was requested on the approach to ensure as many people as possible knew about the <u>Proposed Development</u>.</p>
4	Methods: Agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose.	<p>Information presented on the Proposed Development website was accessible to interested parties throughout the development period.</p> <p>The website provides the opportunity to find out the latest information about the Proposed Development and ask the team questions.</p> <p>The Applicant held two exhibitions, providing residents and interested groups an opportunity to meet and interact with the team, allowing discussion and feedback. Both exhibitions were held in-person and online.</p>

4. Public Consultation

**TABLE 1 – AN OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT – CONSULTATION STAGES**
CONTINUED

Standard	PAN 3/2010 Standard	Activities Undertaken
		<p>At the in-person exhibitions an interactive model was available for residents to understand what the <u>Proposed Development</u> would look like from various points within the local environment i.e. their home, key local locations, in addition to the viewpoints.</p> <p><u>The Applicant</u> offered to meet with Community Councils and Ward Members several times during the Development period.</p>
5	Working Together: Agree and use clear procedures that enable participants to work together effectively and efficiently.	<p>Pre-Application Consultation enabled the Applicant to listen and take on board comments from interested parties and used responses to influence design from the point of scoping.</p> <p><u>The Applicant</u> encouraged use of meetings, feedback forms and contact details provided at public exhibitions to receive input.</p> <p>Contact information was provided on all public documentation and included a dedicated website.</p> <p>Physical exhibitions <u>were</u> held.</p> <p>An interactive model and viewpoints provided at both exhibitions to enable attendees to understand what the Proposed Development would look like within the environment.</p> <p><u>The Applicant</u> offered to meet with <u>the</u> Community Councils.</p> <p><u>The Applicant</u> sought engagement and involvement from the community to suggest potential uses for Community Benefit funds at the exhibitions.</p>
6	Sharing Information: Ensure necessary information is communicated between the participants.	<p>Interaction at Online and Physical Exhibition and follow up on any questions and provided further information.</p> <p>An exhibition brochure, Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and viewpoints were made available online and in person. An interactive model was available at the in-person exhibitions to help attendees understand what the Proposed Development may look like.</p> <p>The Applicant provided Consultation Reports for Community Councils, key community groups and</p>

4. Public Consultation

TABLE 1 – AN OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – CONSULTATION STAGES
CONTINUED

Standard	PAN 3/2010 Standard	Activities Undertaken
		<p>public following feedback from community engagement events.</p> <p>Regularly attending Community Council Meetings and to keep key stakeholder groups informed following submission of the application.</p>
7	Working with Others: Work effectively with others with an interest.	<p>Interaction and comment from residents and Community Councils <u>was sought</u>.</p> <p>Feedback provided at the consultation sessions has been considered as the <u>Proposed Development</u> project has been developed, particularly on height, local/visibility of several turbines and accessibility of the site.</p> <p>A dedicated workshop was facilitated by Planning Aid Scotland to gather feedback from the local community on how the project site could be made more accessible and attractive for leisure use following construction.</p>
8	Improvement: Develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of the participants.	<p>Experienced team members (including the Project Manager and the <u>Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)</u> Consultant Team) attended the public exhibition events to provide information requested by visitors and answer questions.</p> <p><u>The Applicant</u> provided visitors at the exhibitions the opportunity to view a representation of the Proposed Development from different viewpoints.</p>
9	Feedback: Feedback results to the wider community and agencies affected.	<p><u>The Applicant provided</u> responses to feedback forms received during the public consultation (where GDPR allowed).</p> <p><u>The Applicant undertook</u> dialogue with individuals regarding specific queries posed before or during the consultation process, with responses to queries followed up.</p> <p><u>The Applicant</u> provided a 'Frequently Asked Questions' (<u>FAQ</u>) document of the key questions asked during each consultation period.</p> <p><u>The Applicant</u> provided Consultation Reports for Community Councils and public (published on</p>

4. Public Consultation

TABLE 1 – AN OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT – CONSULTATION STAGES
CONTINUED

Standard	PAN 3/2010 Standard	Activities Undertaken
		website) following feedback from each exhibition and consultation period. Consultation Reports sent to stakeholders are also published on project specific website.
10	Monitoring and Evaluation: Monitor and evaluate whether engagement achieves its purpose and meets the national standards of community engagement.	The Applicant followed best practice as set out in this PAC Report.

4. Public Consultation

TABLE 2 - GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE FOR APPLICATIONS UNDER SECTION 36 AND 37 OF THE ELECTRICITY ACT 1989 REQUIREMENTS
CONTINUED

Activity	Minimum Expectation	Activities Undertaken
Pre-application consultation events	<p>The Applicant is expected to hold at least two public consultation events prior to submitting the application. The final public event should be held at least 14 days after the first public event.</p> <p>The public events are to give members of the public the opportunity to make comments to the Applicant as regards the Proposed Development.</p> <p>At the final public event, the Applicant should provide feedback to members of the public in respect of comments received by the Applicant as regards the Proposed Development.</p>	<p>Two periods of public exhibitions were held in November 2023 and August 2024.</p> <p>Invites and feedback forms were sent to more than 1,700 residents and business surrounding the Proposed Development at the start of each of the consultation periods. Mailing lists were updated ahead of the second exhibition to take account of local population changes.</p> <p>The iterative designs for the Proposed Development were communicated throughout the process, including comparisons of the scoping, intermediate and final layouts.</p>
Notice of the Pre-application consultation events	<p>At least seven days before holding a public event, the applicant should publish on the applicants website and in a local newspaper circulating in the locality in which the proposed development is situated a notice containing:</p> <p>A description of, and the location of, the Proposed Development;</p> <p>Details as to where further information may be obtained concerning the Proposed Development;</p> <p>The date and place of the public event;</p> <p>A statement explaining how, and by when, persons wishing to make comments to the applicant relating to the proposal may do so; and</p> <p>A statement that comments made to the Applicant are not representations to the Scottish Ministers and if the Applicant submits an application there will be an opportunity to</p>	<p>The exhibitions were advertised in the Press and Journal and the Ross-shire Journal two weeks ahead of each round of exhibitions.</p> <p>Adverts were provided to Community Councils and Councillors to share on their social media.</p> <p>The exhibitions were published on the project website.</p> <p>The details set out opposite were published as required.</p>

4. Public Consultation

TABLE 2 - GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE FOR APPLICATIONS UNDER SECTION 36 AND 37 OF THE ELECTRICITY ACT 1989 REQUIREMENTS
CONTINUED

Activity	Minimum Expectation	Activities Undertaken
	make representation on that application to the Scottish Ministers.	
Content of public event and pre-application consultation report	<p>The Applicant is expected to prepare a pre-application consultation report ("PAC Report") setting out what has been done to accord with the guidance set out above. The PAC Report should be submitted with the application.</p> <p>The PAC report should contain the following information:</p> <p>The dates on which and places where public events are held;</p> <p>A description of any additional steps taken by the applicant to consult with members of the public regarding the <u>Proposed Development</u>;</p> <p>A list of bodies, groups and organisations who were consulted by the Applicant and a description of how they were consulted;</p> <p>A description of any materials sent to consultees and materials provided to those attending public events.</p> <p>Copies of any visual presentation shown or displayed at a public event, and photographs of any display boards or models at public events;</p> <p>Confirmation as to whether consultees and attendees at public events were informed that pre-application consultation does not remove the right or the potential need to comment on the final application once it is made to the Scottish Ministers;</p> <p>A summary of the written responses to consultations and views raised at public events, including an indication of the number of written responses received and the number of persons who attended the public events;</p> <p>An explanation of how the Applicant took account of views raised during the pre-application consultation process; and</p>	<p>All the details required are presented within this PAC Report and Appendices.</p> <p>The Applicant confirms that attendees of both in-person and online exhibitions were advised that they are able to comment on the final application once it is made to Scottish Ministers.</p>

TABLE 2 - GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE FOR APPLICATIONS UNDER SECTION 36 AND 37 OF THE ELECTRICITY ACT 1989 REQUIREMENTS
CONTINUED

Activity	Minimum Expectation	Activities Undertaken
	an explanation of how members of the public were given feedback on the Applicant's consideration of the views raised during the pre-application consultation process.	

5. Pre-Application Consultation

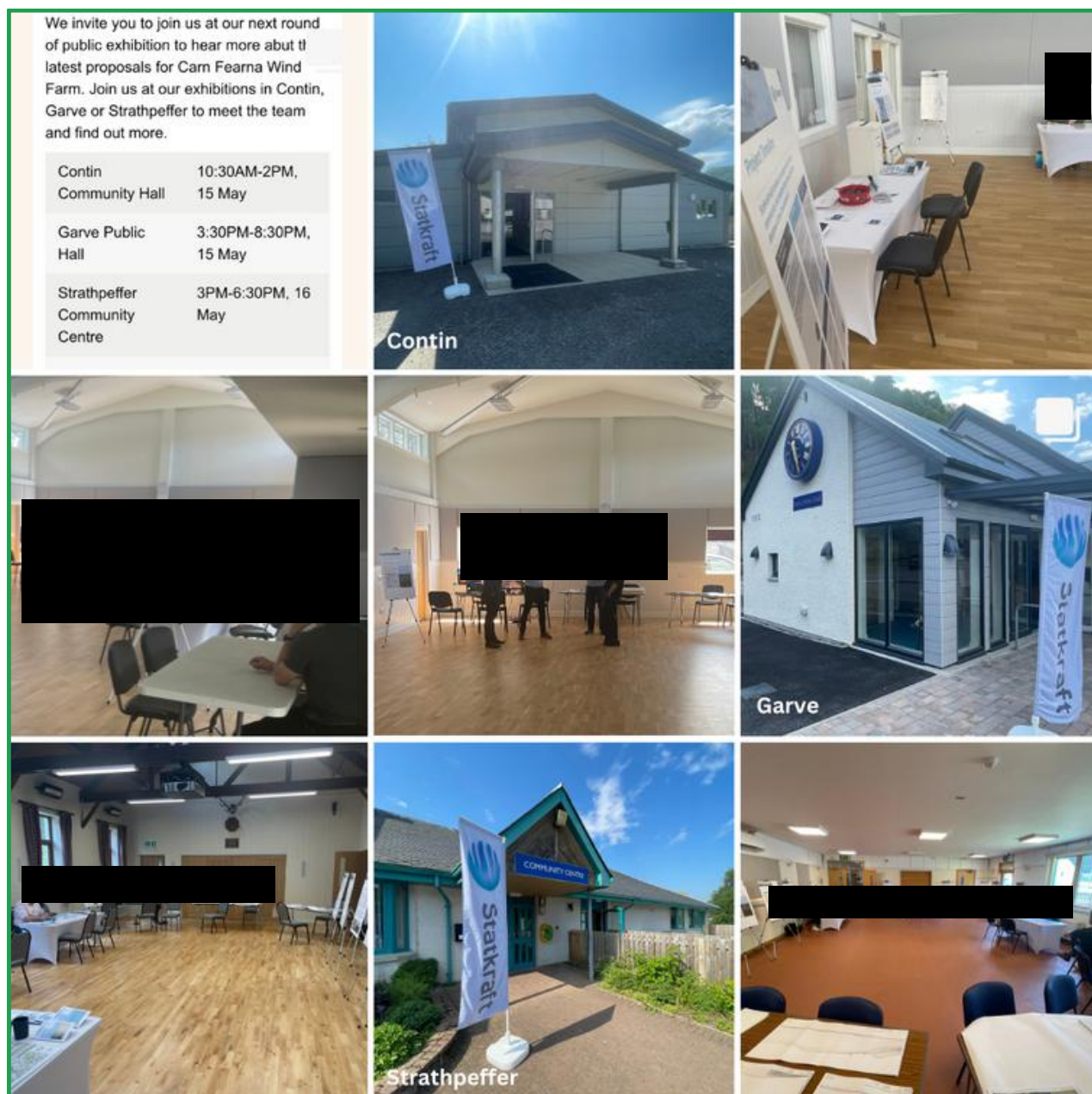
CARN FEARNA WIND FARM PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION REPORT

5.1 The Consultation Process

This section of the PAC Report outlines the engagement with Community Councils and other community stakeholders following Scoping.

5.2 Pre-Application Consultation

The Applicant has carried out an extensive public consultation process to engage with the local community and gather feedback on the project. This included two rounds of public exhibitions and multiple stakeholder engagements, involving community councils, local businesses, and elected representatives.



6. Scoping

6.1 A Scoping Report for the Proposed Development was submitted to the ECU on 29 June 2023. A Scoping Opinion was requested under the terms of regulation 12 of the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulation 2017, as amended ('the EIA regulations').

6.2 The Scoping Report went live on the ECU website on 3 July 2023 with Statutory and Non-Statutory consultees consulted as part of the formal scoping process.



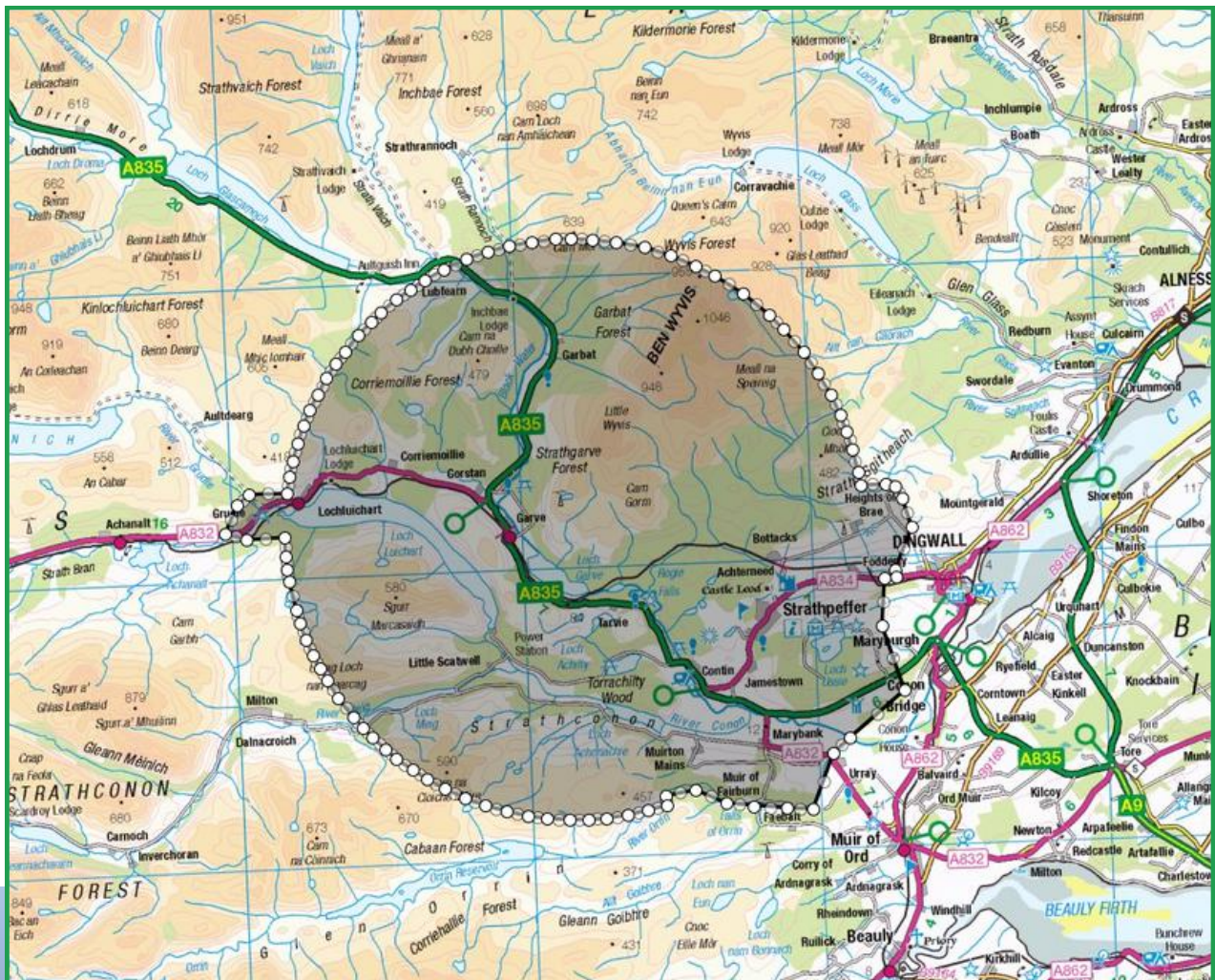
7. Consultation Zone

CARN FEARNA WIND FARM PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION REPORT

7.1 Prior to the submission of the Scoping Report, the Applicant agreed a geographical 'Consultation Zone'. This took into account a number of factors including the local communities, Community Council areas, possible transport routes and the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV).

7.2 Following consultation with THC's Planning Officer, the Consultation Zone was extended to include all properties within a 10km radius of the turbines (based on the 14-turbine layout at the time) where these areas were not already covered.

7.3 This provided the project with a Consultation Zone boundary containing approximately 1,700 household and business addresses, in which the correct Community Councils and elected representatives could be identified.



8.1 The communities surrounding the site host active Community Councils, as well as organisations involved in development of their local areas. Care was taken to engage with these organisations early in the process and to remain engaged with them throughout the planning process.

8.2 The following Community Councils were identified as stakeholders in relation to the Proposed Development during Scoping:

- Garve Community Council (Host)
- Contin Community Council
- Strathpeffer Community Council

8.3 The Applicant wrote to these Community Councils (CC) on 31st July 2023, with an introduction to the project and an example newsletter to provide an insight into some of Statkraft's working approach. Other Community Councils contacted, included:

8.4 Of these Community Councils Garve Community Council requested a meeting to discuss the Proposed Development prior to the first exhibition. This took place on 30th August 2023 as a virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams.

8.5 Engagement with the Host Community Council led to a number of changes through the design process, including the removal of a turbine from the proposed design prior to the first exhibition, reducing the impact on the village of Garve.

8.6 The Applicant has also arranged for specialists from the wider project team and contractors to attend Community Council meetings to provide greater understanding on key issues. This helps to meet requests from Community Councils within the Highlands to receive suitable training to allow them to better understand the process and issues around renewables development. This increase in understanding helps to ensure that the community council can make an informed decision when considering the application.



9. Elected Representatives

WARD COUNCILLORS, MSP, MP

9.1 TThe Applicant also wrote to elected representatives on 31st July 2023, with an introduction to the project and the example newsletter to provide an insight into some of Statkraft's working approach. Cllrs Kraft, Birt, Campbell and Logue; Maree Todd MSP; and Ian Blackford MP, were all contacted.



10.1 The project website has served the as key focus for the Applicant to provide information and updated on the project. The website consists of a dedicated project page reachable by navigating to www.carn-ferna.co.uk or <https://projects.statkraft.co.uk/Carn-Fearna/>.

10.2 The website was set up ahead of submission of the Scoping Report, allowing it to go live at the same time as the document was published on the ECU website and sent to consultees.

10.3 The content on the Proposed Development website included a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section, project maps, a timeline of the Proposed Development, and project contact details.

10.4 During the consultation periods, a dedicated sub-page was created providing the information that was available at the in-person exhibitions. Following the exhibitions, all information has been retained in the website to ensure that a clear record of the consultation exists.



11.1 The first consultation introduced the project to the community, providing an initial opportunity to present information on the proposal, answer questions, and gather feedback. The project layout at this stage consisted of 11 turbines with a maximum tip height of 200m.

11.2 Promotion for the first public exhibitions included:

- Project website updates
- Mailer distribution to 1,700 properties
- Advertisements in the Ross-shire Journal and Press & Journal
- Posters in public locations
- Emails to local groups and elected representatives.

11.3 A virtual exhibition was hosted online from 14 November to 5 December 2023, allowing residents to access project materials remotely. In-person exhibitions were held at:

- Contin Community Hall (21 November)
- Tarvie Café (21 November)
- Strathpeffer Community Centre (22 November)
- Ross County FC, Dingwall (23 November)

11.4 Attendees were encouraged to provide feedback via reply cards, online forms, or direct discussions with project representatives. The exhibition was widely publicised through newspaper advertisements and direct mail to 1,700 households.

11.5 In total, 59 people attended the in-person exhibitions across the four separate events. This included the attendance of several community councillors. The number of attendees is based on those who signed in at the welcome desk of the exhibition (which was optional).

11.6 Of the 1,700 freepost reply cards posted to homes and available at consultation events, only 105 reply cards were completed, either by post, completed in person at the exhibitions or completed online. Of those 105 individuals, 61% (63 respondents) agreed more renewable energy was required.

11.7 Only 30% (32 respondents) agreed that this should take the form of onshore wind, with 19% (20 respondents) agreeing that the proposed site was a suitable location for a wind farm.

11.8 Comments on the reply cards dealt with a range of issues. The three most commonly identified issues were:

- The visual impact of the development on the landscape
- The number of wind farms in Scotland
- Community benefit and community ownership issues

11.9 Comments recognised the potential benefits of the wind farm to the local area, including tree planting on the surrounding land, the community benefit fund and generation of green energy.

11.10 A number of comments were also received regarding unrelated grid strengthening projects being developed by Scottish and Southern Network (SSEN) Transmission. We were unable to take this feedback into consideration for our proposals but noted there were consultation activities in place where interested residents could contribute their feedback directly to the developer.

11.11 In addition to the common topics identified above from reply cards, key themes of discussion with visitors to the exhibitions included:

- The transmission route for energy from the Proposed Development
- The environmental impact of the Proposed Development
- The transport route for components
- Noise and visual impact on specific properties or settlements
- The changes to the planning policy framework which make the Proposed Development feasible.

11.12 Feedback from both the exhibition and reply cards fed into revisions to the design of the Proposed Development and has also informed the locations of additional or amended visuals and surveys.

11.13 All feedback and comments submitted through the consultation period were acknowledged and responded to. If a member of the public had not received a response from us and was expecting one, this may have been prevented due to a GDPR requirement, or email containment issues. We encouraged them to contact us by phone to ensure that we could provide them with a response.

11.14 A First Exhibition Consultation Report was produced by the Applicant and sent to the host Community Council, elected representatives, and published on the project website in a downloadable format, containing a summary of the consultation findings.

12.1 The second round of consultation, held in May 2024, featured a refined design with fewer turbines, incorporating adjustments based on community feedback. The updated layout reduced the number of turbines to nine, with four having tip heights of 180m and five at 200m.

12.2 The exhibition was hosted both online and in-person at the following locations:

- Contin Community Hall (15 May)
- Garve Public Hall (15 May)
- Strathpeffer Community Centre (16 May)

12.3 The change in venues for the consultation reflected the reopening of the Garve Public Hall, which has been undergoing redevelopment, and the low attendance numbers at the Dingwall venue.

12.4 During these sessions, residents engaged with project representatives and discussed key concerns, including visual impact, local economic benefits, and biodiversity considerations.

12.5 In total, 22 people attended the in-person exhibitions across the three separate events. This included the attendance of some community councillors. The number of attendees is based on those who signed in at the welcome desk of the exhibition (which was optional).

12.6 Attendees were invited to complete a Feedback Form and to take an information brochure upon exit. Where required, visitors to the exhibitions were offered further information to be sent to them in follow-up meetings and, if required, home visits.

12.7 Of the 1,777 freepost reply cards posted to homes and available at consultation events, only a small number of replies were received with 74 reply cards being completed and returned, either by post, in person at the or online. These represent 4% of the potential responses.

12.8 Of those 74 individuals, 37 (50% of respondents) agreed more renewable energy was required.

12.9 27 respondents agreed that this should take the form of onshore wind (36% of respondents).

12.10 Additionally, 21 respondents (28% of total respondents or just over 1% of the total potential responses) agreed that the proposed site was a suitable location for a wind farm. This represents an increase of 10% from the consultation undertaken in November 2023, despite overall support for renewable energy and support for onshore wind declining between the two consultations.

12.11 Comments were received on a wide range of issues, both relating specifically to the Proposed Development and wider policy concerns. Relating directly to the Proposed Development, comment themes included:

12.12 Support for the principle of renewable energy

- Concern about cumulative impact in relation to other nearby proposed developments and overhead pylons
- The benefits of shared ownership
- Impact on flora and fauna within the project site
- The visual impact of the Proposed Development on the surrounding area, including Ben Wyvis
- The benefits of a potential community benefit fund
- Potential areas which could benefit from the community benefit fund

12.13 Wider themes relating to the energy industry included:

- The levels of energy bills in the north of Scotland
- The lack of wind farms being built in the UK outside of Scotland
- The power of local representatives within the planning system
- The need for a holistic approach to energy planning
- Use of profits from energy developments

12.14 Over the lifetime of the project a number of comments were received by the Applicant regarding the unrelated grid strengthening projects being developed by Scottish and Southern Network (SSEN) Transmission. The Applicants' position remained throughout that they were unable to take such comments and feedback into consideration for the Proposed Development but noted consultation activities in place in the area where interested residents could contribute their feedback directly to SSEN.

12.15 In addition to the common topics identified above from reply cards, key themes of discussion with visitors to the exhibitions included:

- Changes which the Applicant has made to the project, such as reducing the number of turbines and making the Proposed Development less visible
- The transmission route for energy from the Proposed Development
- The environmental impact of the Proposed Development
- The transport route for components
- Noise and visual impact on specific properties or settlements
- The changes to the planning policy framework which make the Proposed Development feasible

12.16 Feedback from both the exhibition and reply cards has previously fed into significant project changes.

12.17 All feedback and comments submitted through the consultation period were acknowledged and responded to.

12.18 The Applicant produced a Second Exhibition Consultation Report which was sent to the host Community Council, elected representatives, and also published on the project website in a downloadable format, as with the First Exhibition Consultation Report.

13.1 Additional Activities

The Applicant took proactive measures to go beyond the requirements laid out planning guidance when engaging with the local community. This resulted in bespoke engagement with local residents on a number of occasions.

13.2 Engagement with individual residents

The Applicant identified, through the Host Community Council, a small number of local residents with whose properties were more likely to be affected by the visual impact of the Proposed Development. Over the course of the Pre-Application Consultation, the Applicant engaged with these residents to identify specific concerns and to seek design mitigations where appropriate and possible. This included creating bespoke visual montages from key locations, including the house of one resident.

13.3 This engagement represents a new level of best practice in terms of giving residents an understanding of the impact of the Proposed Development project on their property, while also providing the project team with a greater understanding of the impact of the Proposed Development during the design process.

13.4 Community-centered Amenity Design

To maximise value for the local community, the Applicant sought to incorporate amenity improvement within the project site to ensure that it continued to serve leisure users following construction, while also attracting new visitors who may not have previously accessed the site. To do this, Planning Aid Scotland (PAS) were commissioned to design and facilitate a community workshop and develop a range of options for inclusion within the application.

13.5 Planning Aid Scotland sought to ascertain what biodiversity, access and other improvements to the site local residents would like to see if the Proposed Development went ahead. The research was deliberately collected in a manner so that useful data could be gathered and used by the community in the event that the Proposed Development did not proceed.

13.6 The workshop was held in Garve Hall on 27 February 2025, having been advertised widely on local social media with the assistance of the Host Community Council, the Garve & District Development Trust and other local stakeholders. Nine individuals attended to provide thoughts and feedback, while a further 16 people provided feedback via an online survey.

13.7 Highland Mountain Expertise

The Applicant commissioned Highland Mountain Guide Expert - Anna Danby - to provide insights and guidance on safety and accessibility; access for walkers; signage, interpretation, and pedestrian paths; as well as bike-friendly access and facilities such as seating and EV charging infrastructure to enhance accessibility and sustainability.

13.8 The results of this research as presented in the EIA Report as Technical Appendix 14.2.

The Applicant notes that participation in the research carried out by PAS does not represent support for the Proposed Development. The Applicant thanks the various individuals and groups who provided feedback on the process and how it was carried out and will incorporate this feedback when seeking to replicate this research in the future.

13.9 Information Day

The Applicant intends to hold an Information Day in Garve following submission of the application. This will provide the local community with an opportunity to discuss the final application with the project team, ask any questions regarding the application and to understand the stages of the planning process following submission.

14. Key Consultation Outcomes

14.1 The proposed number of turbines has been reduced by over 35%, from 14 to 9. Engagement and consultation was valuable, with feedback and information from the community and stakeholders leading to significant changes in the design of the Proposed Development.

14.2 Interest in the Proposed Development appeared to decline with fewer numbers attending the Public Exhibitions in the second round of engagement.

14.3 The project team continues to engage with Garve & District Community Council in particular; as well as neighbouring community councils; community stakeholders; elected representatives; and local residents. It is through these efforts to date that we have arrived at the much-reduced Proposed Development, with its improved design.

14.4 The project will remain open for feedback, questions and comments via the website, 0800 number, mail and email.

14.5 We also continue to arrange presentations and sharing of information in liaison with stakeholders, including a specialist presentation on how wind farm noise is measured, and in turn, mitigated.

14.6 A further specialist presentation for Garve & District Community Council on aviation lighting was presented on 4 March 2025.

15.1 Feedback from the community played a critical role in shaping the final design of the Carn Fearna Wind Farm. Below is a summary of key concerns raised and the project adjustments made in response.

15.2 Key Themes and Concerns over both rounds of public exhibitions

- Concerns about landscape and visual impact, particularly from key viewpoints.
- Impact on local wildlife, including birds of prey and peatland habitats.
- Tourism-related concerns, especially in relation to the North Coast 500 route.
- Desire for more community benefits, including potential broadband improvements.
- Support for renewable energy but requests for clearer community benefit distribution.

15.3 Project Adjustments Relative to Feedback

- Reduction in the number of turbines from 11 to 9 to reduce visual impact.
- Lowering the height of four turbines from 200m to 180m to address visibility concerns.
- Enhanced biodiversity measures, including habitat preservation commitments.
- Increased community benefit discussions, with options for shared ownership and local funding opportunities.

15.4 Conclusion

The Applicant remains committed to ongoing engagement with the community and key stakeholders. The Proposed Development has evolved significantly based on local feedback, balancing renewable energy generation with community and environmental considerations. The Applicant looks forward to working with local residents as the project progresses.

16.1 Community Benefit Fund

As well as contributions to the generation of low carbon electricity and the resulting offsetting of carbon emissions, the Proposed Development also provides the opportunity for local communities to benefit financially from its operation through regular annual payments of £36,000 per turbine per year from a Community Benefit Fund (based on 7.2 MW turbines) and £5,000 per MW as recommended by the Scottish Government.

16.2 Broadband Feasibility

The Applicant will require reliable broadband to operate the Proposed Development. A broadband feasibility study has been undertaken which suggested that communities near the Proposed Development could benefit from super-fast fibre or microwave broadband. As such, there is the opportunity for the provision of improved internet connection for commercial and residential properties, partially or fully funded by the Community Benefit Fund associated with the Proposed Development.

16.3 Community Ownership

The Applicant recognises the opportunities and benefits that arise from community ownership in energy projects. The Applicant is committed to working with communities around the Proposed Development to create suitable community ownership schemes if there is interest in taking such a scheme forward.

KP.

Carn Fearna Wind Farm

**Pre-Application
Consultation Report**

April 2025



Statkraft

