

## ABOUT CRAIG WATCH WIND FARM

Craig Watch Wind Farm is a proposal for an 11-wind turbine project on the border of Moray and Aberdeenshire Councils, approximately 8km southeast of Dufftown.

	No. of Turbines	Max Blade Tip Heights	Expected Installed Capacity (MW)	Estimated Generation	Community Fund (per year)
<b>Craig Watch</b>	Up to <b>11</b>	Up to <b>200m</b>	<b>72.6</b> <small>(section 36 planning application)</small>	Approximately <b>86,000</b> <sup>(1)</sup>	<b>£363,000</b> <small>per year <sup>(2)</sup></small>

(1) Based on best available wind speed data, and Scottish average household consumption of 3,393 kWh pa.

(2) Based on 72.6MW installed capacity and £5,000 per MW installed. If consented, value of fund determined by actual installed capacity.

The project was submitted to the Scottish Government for scoping with an 18 turbine layout in November 2020.

A proposed 16 turbine layout was presented to the community at an online consultation event launched in March 2021, in line with Scottish Government guidance in relation to preventing the spread of Covid-19. The full report for our March consultation was circulated to local stakeholders and made available online on the project website.

A second consultation was held in November 2021, following a further design iteration from 16 to 11 turbines. This report details the finding of the second consultation period, which ran from 4-26 November 2021, including both online and in-person events.

## Background

Following the relaxation of Covid-19 travel restrictions and, at the time, a significant drop in the infection rate throughout Scotland, it became possible to offer in-person consultation events alongside a full online consultation. This provided an opportunity for feedback in-person, online, via freepost or via phone.

In-person events were risk assessed with mitigations put in place to minimise the possibility of transmission of Covid-19. These included:

- An appointment-based system to ensure the number of attendees in the hall stayed within the hall capacity;
- Track and Trace in operation, with contact details of all attendees provided to Statkraft;
- Members of the Statkraft team and consultants taking Lateral Flow Tests in advance of the exhibitions;
- Mask covering in operation and hand sanitiser available to attendees;
- A one-way system in place for the halls;
- Maintaining good ventilation of exhibition spaces; and
- Spacing out of information material.

## Second Exhibition Period

This report presents the findings of the feedback received during the consultation period 4-26 November 2021 via the virtual public exhibition, in-person events and non-digital sources such as phone enquiries and postal feedback forms. Responses submitted after 4 December have been evaluated and included up to the date of publication of this report.

The consultation was advertised throughout the local area, through a variety of ways:

- A direct mailing to all households and businesses (over 1,300) within approximately 10km of the site with an invitation and details to take part in the online consultation or in-person events, as well as feedback cards and freepost envelopes for those who preferred to write back rather than go online or attend an exhibition;
- Advertisements in the Press and Journal, the Northern Scot, the Huntly Express and the Banffshire Journal, Herald and Advertiser. An additional ad was placed in the Autumn edition of the Speirin's Magazine with general information before the event dates were finalised;
- Writing to the host and neighbouring Community Councils, Community Associations and Development Trusts and local ward members with information and copies of the adverts, should they wish to highlight the events on their own social media channels
- Details of all events and copies of the project brochure available on the Craig Watch project website.

## In-Person Exhibition

In-person events were held at:

- Mortlach Memorial Hall, Dufftown – 2-6pm, 16 November 2021
- Glass Community Hall, Haugh of Glass – 3-7pm, 17 November 2021

On display were information boards showing:

- Information about Statkraft;
- An overview of the development and the changes made since the first consultation;
- Photomontages from local viewpoints and the zone of theoretical visibility for the turbines;
- Information on community benefit, construction opportunities and shared ownership.

Copies of the online exhibition brochure were available for members of the public to take away, along with Statkraft's Low Emissions Scenario and promotional materials created as part of COP26.

We additionally provided software which enabled visitors to view a visualisation of the project from a location of their choosing on a screen. Visitors were able to select the locations by providing a postcode or pointing to a position on a map. Due to the specialised nature of this software, this was managed by exhibition staff from our environmental consultant.

Feedback forms were available to be filled out or taken away and returned via freepost.

The exhibition at Mortlach was attended by 15 people, with a further 11 visitors attending the exhibition at Glass Community Hall. Approximately 50% of visitors had booked in advance – capacity at the halls was sufficient that everyone who arrived was able to visit the exhibition without the need for queuing. Track and trace details were provided by all attendees.



1. A monitor displays the software for viewing wireframes alongside a map of the zone of theoretical visibility and wireframes and photomontages from locations around the site. Location: Mortlach Memorial Hall, Dufftown.



2. The exhibition at Glass Community Hall ahead of opening.

## Online Exhibition

The online exhibition was accessed via a link from the Project Page. It was designed to provide all the information available at a physical exhibition, while remaining easily accessible. Available information included:

- The Exhibition Brochure, providing information you would usually find on exhibition boards at a physical event;
- The Craig Watch Predicted Views booklet, showing the visibility of the turbines from a number of surrounding locations;
- A pre-recorded video introducing the project, some of the project team and key aspects of the project;

- An extensive FAQ section on the project to help inform residents when they arrive on the consultation website;
- Two live chat sessions, where the project team were available to answer questions live online;
- A 'ring back' service to allow members of the public to have a dedicated chat with our team at a date/time suitable to them;
- An opportunity to leave comments through online feedback forms.

## Summary of Consultation Responses

Reply cards were sent to 1,353 business and residential addresses. Of these, we received a response from 30 (2.2%). The consultation website received more than 300 unique visitors over the three week consultation period, with a further seven online reply forms completed. The majority of visitors to the website – 176 people – accessed the site directly. In total there were 51 interactions including call backs, online forms, feedback forms and emails.

From all completed response forms, on- and offline, 89% of respondents agreed that more energy needed to be generated from renewable sources, with 50% of respondents agreeing that onshore wind power was a good way to achieve this goal. Positive answers to both questions had increased since the first exhibition.

The community was split on the siting of the windfarm, with 51% of respondents agreeing that the Craig Watch site was acceptable or taking a neutral stance, an increase on the previous consultation.

There was support for the potential of the project to allow for local broadband connections to be upgraded, with 67% of respondents expressing an interest in access to faster internet connections. It was highlighted by respondents that improved broadband could benefit local businesses, while some exhibition visitors noted that they had poor connections at present and would be interested in better speeds.

34% of respondents expressed an interest in community ownership of the development, with a further 26% unsure. From this, we have identified it could be beneficial to invite a representative from Local Energy Scotland to provide more information on shared ownership, allowing the community to decide if this is an option that they wish to pursue. Feedback was received regarding potential uses for the community benefit fund, including supporting residents with heating and energy costs, helping to tackle fuel poverty in the area.

We have responded directly to all those who contacted us with their questions and comments. The majority of respondents wished to be kept informed and have been added to our project mailing list.

An additional question was presented to attendees of the in-person exhibitions and the website, seeking feedback on the content presented, with the majority of respondents satisfied or somewhat satisfied by the materials available. We will continue to refine and improve our consultation materials based on the provided feedback.

At the exhibition sessions, visitors were generally positive about the role of wind energy and renewable power as a form of generation. Visitors were keen to make sure that the project had a clear benefit for the community, with interest in community ownership and the potential additional benefits that it could bring.

When viewing the interactive software showing how the turbines would look in-situ, some visitors were surprised by the reduced appearance of the turbines due to natural screening such as established trees. Being able to use the software to see predicted views from a variety of viewpoints was also welcomed, allowing visitors to see how the turbines might look from familiar reference points, such as their home.

## Key Topics and Responses Raised from the Consultation

### ***There are too many wind farms in this area***

Moray Council's Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (2020) indicates that the location of the proposed Craig Watch Wind Farm may be appropriate, with some scope to accommodate large scale turbine developments. As part of our work towards a planning submission and as a result of previous feedback, we have reduced the number of turbines and moved some of them to reduce visual impact in the local area. We continue to develop the project with the aim to find the right balance between maximising the electricity output and carefully siting and designing the proposal to relate to the existing landscape, including other wind developments.

Less than 10% of land in Scotland is suitable for onshore wind farms. Our Head of Development, Richard Mardon, gave a webinar in June 2021 on how Statkraft finds suitable sites for new windfarms. [In it, he discusses the factors that we consider before every development](#), including proximity to housing, monuments and historic sites, wild land, and areas of ecological or scientific significance.

### ***Wind turbines should be offshore***

We need a mix of all types of renewable energy generation. New-build onshore wind is presently the most cost-effective way to generate new electricity, out of all forms of electricity.

### ***Wind turbines are bad for the environment [construction, peat disturbance, use more carbon than they save]***

All wind farm applications are required to report their "carbon payback period" in the Environmental Impact Assessment. This is determined using a Scottish Government calculator which takes into account emissions from the manufacture of the turbines, including any peat disturbance, as well as the construction and decommissioning phases. This figure is usually in the range of 1-2 years, and part of the work we do during the development phase is to get that number as low as possible.

We also strive to deliver a significant biodiversity net gain on our projects. We were finalists in two prestigious industry awards for our efforts at Berry Burn Extension in Moray in maximising habitat improvements, for example, rewetting peat and reducing the impact of future wildfires.

### ***What is the benefit to locals?***

There are several ways our projects can bring local benefits, and we are always open to discussing how this can be tailored to each area.

The construction phase provides a significant opportunity for local businesses to get involved – early indications show over £1.6m was retained in the local economy during construction of our Greener Grid Park at Keith, sourced through promotion of our Local Supplier Register.

The operation of a wind farm brings significant local investment. Statkraft commit to delivering a community benefit fund with all new wind farms at £5,000 per MW installed per year, as per Scottish Government guidance. The exact amount will depend on the number and type of turbines installed, but as a guide, is currently estimated at £363,000 per year over the operating period of the wind farm.

### ***What is the transport route for the turbines? Are the roads suitable for this construction and ongoing access?***

Our preferred option will see components transported from Dundee to the site via Huntly, then towards Dufftown via the A920. The site access would be from the A941 south of Dufftown. This will need agreement from Moray and Aberdeenshire Councils prior to construction commencing.

This is our preferred route as it avoids disruption in settlements and takes advantage of sections of road which have previously been upgraded to take large loads. We will leave roads in the same or better condition than at the start of construction.

## NEXT STEPS

As we move towards finalising our planning application we will continue to engage proactively with relevant stakeholders and the local community. As part of this, we are circulating this report to local stakeholders and representatives.

We look forward to meeting with local community groups and other interested parties to discuss the community benefit or shared ownership associated with the project, as well as meeting those who expressed an interest in improved broadband.

If you would like further information regarding our proposals, please do not hesitate to contact the project team on 0800 772 0668 or by using the Ask a Question form at [www.CraigWatch.co.uk](http://www.CraigWatch.co.uk).



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