

**Oliver Forest Wind Farm**  
**Public consultation Feedback Report**  
**June 2023**

**About Oliver Forest Wind Farm**

Oliver Forest Wind Farm is a proposal for up to 10 turbines, each up to a maximum of 250m to turbine blade tip height. The proposed wind farm is located at Tweedsmuir, approximately 12.5km south of Broughton and 19km north of Moffat. The table below highlights some key information about the proposal.

	No. of Turbines	Max Blade Tip Heights	Expected Installed Capacity (MW)	Estimated Generation (homes equivalent)	Community Fund (per year)
<b>Oliver Forest Wind Farm</b>	Up to <b>10</b>	Up to <b>250m</b>	Up to <b>66MW</b> <small>(Section 36 consent application)</small>	Just over <b>74,000</b> <small>Homes per year <sup>(1)</sup></small>	Minimum <b>£330,000</b> <small>per year <sup>(2)</sup></small>

(1) Based on 66MW Installed Capacity, wind resource assessment and average Scottish domestic consumption of 3,520kWh pa (BEIS Dec. 2021). Candidate turbine still tbc'd.  
(2) Community Benefit Fund based on 66MW x £5k per MW of installed capacity. If consented, value of fund determined by actual installed capacity. Candidate turbine still tbc'd.

A programme of community engagement and online consultation for the proposal began in December 2022 and is ongoing.

**Initial Consultation Period: Introducing the project**

Community engagement and feedback is very important to us as we develop and shape the Oliver Forest Wind Farm. In December 2022, when the project was first introduced into the public domain with a request for a Scoping Opinion from the Scottish Government, we launched a dedicated project website, providing the opportunity for interested parties to view and, importantly, comment on the proposals.

At the same time, we wrote to the host and neighbouring Community Councils\* and local political representatives to raise awareness of the proposal and offered an opportunity to meet to provide feedback on the consultation approach and the proposal. Members of the project team presented to Tweedsmuir Community Council in January 2023. The offer to present to each community council was made and we would be happy to take the opportunity to present at future meetings should community councils wish.

**Main Consultation Period**

This overview presents the findings of the feedback received during the first round of consultation. This was held between 21 February – 16 March 2023 and included online and in person consultation. Feedback was accepted until 31 March 2023. Replies to comments and queries raised were responded to, if permission was provided, in May 2023.

The consultation was publicised in various ways to ensure local residents were made aware of the event, including:

- Advertisements in the Southern Reporter (23/02/2023) and Peebleshire News (24/03/2023). This notice provided information on the project along with dates, times and locations of the events and how to provide feedback.
- Mailing to all households and businesses (over 600) in communities around the proposed site with an invitation to the in-person exhibitions, online consultation and how to provide feedback. Physical feedback cards along with a freepost envelope were included in the mailing for those who preferred to write back rather than go online or who couldn't make the in-person events.

\*Tweedsmuir (host), Upper Tweed, Manor, Stobo and Lyne, Ettrick and Yarrow Community Council.

- Writing to the host and neighbouring Community Councils and local and neighbouring Ward Councillors at the start of the consultation, with copies of adverts should they wish to highlight the events on their social media.
- Providing details of the consultation on the Oliver Forest project website.

### **In-Person Exhibitions 8 – 9 March 2023**

The In-Person Events were held:

- Wednesday 8 March, Tweedsmuir Village Hall, Tweedsmuir, 3pm – 8pm
- Thursday 9 March, Broughton Village Hall, Broughton, 3pm – 8pm

On display at each exhibition were a number of information boards, covering:

- Information about the developer;
- An overview of the proposed development, including the proposed layout;
- Details of key viewpoints;
- A zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) of the proposed development;
- Community benefit, construction/supplier register, supplier case studies and shared ownership;
- An area for children who may have visited the exhibition to learn more about renewables

Printed copies of the online exhibition brochure were available for members of the public to take away. Feedback forms were available at the event for members of the public to fill out or take away along with a freepost envelope.

An interactive computer model of the wind farm was available for attendees to request to view the wind farm from different locations in the local area, i.e. their home postcode providing an understanding of what the proposal may look like from their chosen locations.

The exhibitions had a total of 38 visitors over the two days. 21 visitors attended at Tweedsmuir and 17 visitors attended Broughton. Members from the host Community Council attended the event.

The attendees were very engaged with the project and asked the team a number of questions and queries which reflected the questions and queries submitted on the feedback forms. A summary of responses to the key questions can be found attached to this report.

### **Online exhibition 21 February – 16 March 2023**

The virtual exhibition, accessed via a link from the main project website, sought to replicate the type of information and materials at the physical exhibitions. This included:

- Exhibition Brochure Online – to provide the same detailed information available at the exhibition events an online booklet for the proposal was provided as a substitute for information that was presented on the boards at the physical events;
- Extensive FAQ section to inform the residents and other interested parties about the project;
- One live Q&A session with the project team was held on 16 March to provide an opportunity for local residents to ask questions 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; and
- An opportunity to leave comments through online feedback forms.

We will hold a second exhibition this Winter. It is expected we will submit an application to the Scottish Government expected in 2024.

\*Tweedsmuir (host), Upper Tweed, Manor, Stobo and Lyne, Ettrick and Yarrow Community Council.

## Summary of Consultation Responses

Of the 615 households and businesses surrounding the site contacted with the invitation and freepost feedback form and online, we received, 46 unique responses.

From the completed forms, 78% of those who responded to the questions agreed that that the country needs to generate more electricity from renewable sources, 13% didn't agree and the remaining 9% were unsure or did not answer. 65% of those who responded to the question agreed that onshore wind power is a good way to help achieve this aim, 22% didn't agree and 13% were unsure/didn't answer.

Of those who responded to the question: Do you think this site is an acceptable location for a wind farm? 37% agreed, 46% didn't think so and the 17% of the remaining respondents are unsure.

In terms of interest in Shared Ownership the feedback forms revealed that 24% are interested and 41% are unsure. We suggest hosting an information session with Local Energy Scotland to provide the community with more information on shared ownership more generally during the development stage.

Attendees at the exhibition events also had the opportunity to provide more details on what they would like to see the community benefit used for and what topics they would like to see covered in more detail at the next exhibition. It is important to note community benefit is not material in planning, and other than providing £5,000 per MW per annum no decision on how the fund will be split or administered have been taken. Details of the ways respondents would like to see the community benefit used will be passed across to community groups involved in this, which is expected to be much later in the development process.

At the next exhibition we will look to include more information about Landscape and visual amenity, noise, and ecology where this is available. As part of the application each of these topics will be fully examined within the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report. The EIA Report will be submitted as part of our application and is made available to the public to view and comment as part of the application.

We look forward to keeping in touch with interested parties who advised they would like to receive updates.

## Key topics from Consultation

During the consultation period, some questions and comments were frequently raised. When responding to feedback these questions and our responses to them were included and are appended to this report.

We would welcome discussion with the community on the various topics raised, all of which will be considered as the design and layout for the wind farm develops.

## Next Steps

We will continue to engage with communities and welcome the opportunity to meet with Community Councils to discuss our wind farm plans as they develop. We are aiming to host a second exhibition this Winter and it is our expectation that we will submit a Section 36 Application to the Energy Consents Unit before the Summer 2024.

Ahead of our submission the next steps for local engagement are:

- Send a copy of this summary report to host and neighbouring community Councils and elected representatives and welcome further discussions on the key areas and any other considerations for the project.
- We will hold a further public exhibition event this Winter; which will include information on how feedback has been incorporated into the design.
- Continue to receive feedback and respond to queries.
- Record and store all comments made regarding suggestions for community benefit funding
- Continue to update the project website.

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## Oliver Forest Wind Farm FAQs

During the first consultation (21 February – 16 March 2023), some questions and comments were frequently raised (the deadline for comments was 31 March). Below are our responses to these. May 2023.

### Why here/close to homes/too many wind farms in this area?

As part of our work towards the Section 36 application, we are continuing to undertake substantial analysis into the landscape and visual considerations of the proposed development. Viewpoints and Wirelines from several agreed viewpoints will be provided as well as an online computer model at the second exhibition to show how the project has changed following feedback and further studies.

The Viewpoint locations are still to be finalised with local authorities and NatureScot. Wirelines and photomontages will be produced for all of the agreed viewpoints should it be submitted to planning to provide the local community the opportunity to understand what the proposed development may look like should it be consented and constructed. Our aim is to develop a project that finds the right balance between maximising electricity output while carefully siting and designing the proposal to relate to the existing landscape, including settlements and other wind developments.

The Scottish Government has a target to achieve net zero by 2045. Onshore wind is expected to play a key role in achieving this aim. Our analysis shows that the area suitable for onshore wind development in Scotland is limited due to a range of factors. To find out more about what makes a site suitable for onshore wind, you are invited to watch this webinar '[Location, Location – the challenges to siting onshore wind farms in Scotland](#)' where our Vice President of UK Development explores the challenges faced in finding the best sites to maximise Scotland's wind resources.

### The turbines are too tall

As the wind industry has developed so has turbine technology, with taller turbines becoming the norm. Considering taller turbines, 180m plus, for onshore wind farms means that fewer turbines are required to produce the equivalent amount of energy within a site boundary. For instance, going from 150m to 180m tips can mean up to 5 less turbines for a typical Scottish site to achieve the same energy output. In addition, fewer turbines per site also means that the infrastructure footprint may also be less, minimising overall impact on the local environment.

### Wind farms are bad for the environment i.e. wildlife

We consult with NatureScot on the scope of the surveys and we have commissioned experienced technical consultants to undertake detailed environmental surveys of the habitat, ecology and ornithology, amongst others. This information is used to, establish the baseline information for habitats on site and to help inform the proposed layout of the project. We work closely with the consultants to minimise impacts as we work towards finalising our design. We commit to implementing a construction and environmental management plan throughout the construction phase to minimise any damage or disturbance. In addition, a habitat management plan and enhancement plan will be implemented for the lifetime of the project which will aim to deliver biodiversity enhancement on site, as is now required under the new National Planning Framework 4.

### Community Benefit, local electricity discounts, and Shared Ownership queries

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

Statkraft is committed to delivering a community benefit fund for all new wind farms in development at £5,000 per MW installed per year, as per Scottish Government best practice guidance. No decisions regarding how the fund will be managed have been made yet. The provision or otherwise of a Community Benefit Fund is not a material consideration in planning.

We received a number of suggestions during the consultation regarding how the fund could be used and we will pass any ideas or feedback gathered on to the local community and groups in the future who will consider how to take the fund forward. A number of respondents asked about a Local Energy Discount for residents. Statkraft Community Benefit Funds currently do not allow for direct payments to residents for money off electricity bills. We fully support funding to be used for activities that reduce energy bills over the long term, such as energy efficiency, education and small scale renewable schemes. We are keen for funds to meet local needs and are aware these needs change, so our funds may look different by the time the project could become operational.

\*Tweedsmuir (host), Upper Tweed, Manor, Stobo and Lyne, Ettrick and Yarrow Community Council.

There is some local interest in shared ownership and we are aiming to set up a session with Local Energy Scotland in 2023 to provide more details to the community about what this involves and may look like, as the project moves through the development process and should it become operational.

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