

23 April 2024

Loch na Cathrach Pumped Storage Hydro – Engagement Report 12-13 March 2024



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report outlines the Loch na Cathrach public engagement activities which took place between 12 and 13 March 2024.
- 1.2. Loch na Cathrach (formerly Red John) pumped storage hydro project is located around 14km south-west of Inverness and was developed by Intelligent Land Investments (ILI) Group. The project was consented in June 2021 and acquired by Statkraft in December 2023.
- 1.3. Communication with key stakeholders commenced immediately after the acquisition by Statkraft, and it was noted that a series of open public engagement events would be appreciated by local residents and business owners to provide the opportunity to be introduced to Statkraft and the project team.

2. ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY

- 2.1. Upon acquisition of the project, a database of community representatives and residents was developed using existing contacts shared by ILI Group and a desk-based research to identify key elected representatives, the host and surrounding community councils, local organisations and businesses with an interest in the project. Key local issues were also identified as part of this exercise.
- 2.2. Open dialogue with key stakeholders commenced within days of the acquisition with an initial round of introductory meetings with local business leaders and community representatives. This culminated in a meeting held on 18th December in Inverness, attended by 50 people, to introduce Statkraft as the new owners of the project.
- 2.3. From this early dialogue it was clear that there was a need for Statkraft to host public engagement events to allow all those interested in the project to have an opportunity to hear about Statkraft's plans and meet the project team.
- 2.4. The events were promoted via:
 - An invitation to Drop-In Sessions posted to over 780 properties and 35 businesses, exceeding the 5km radius area required (appendix 1 & 2) to include users of the designated construction route (B851)
 - Advertisements in the Press and Journal and Inverness Courier (appendix 4)
 - Posters sent to a variety of public locations, including community notice boards
 - Emails to the host and neighbouring community councils, elected representatives and community groups
 - Project website

3. COMMUNITY DROP-IN SESSIONS

Date	Location	Attendees
12 March 2024, 14:00 – 17:00	Farr Community Hall	51
12 March 2024, 19:30 – 21:00	Dores Village Hall	38

- 3.1. The project team were initially guided by consultation venues used by ILI Group for their pre-submission consultation activity. However, following introductory meetings, it was suggested that an additional event at a location convenient to residents on the construction transport route be added, and Farr Community Hall was identified as a suitable venue.
- 3.2. Statkraft had a team of 12 staff with a range of professional expertise to discuss the project, including a geological consultant who could provide details about upcoming geotechnical surveys. The team also included the Project Director and the Head of Statkraft in Scotland.
- 3.3. A welcome desk allowed the welcoming team to establish specific areas of interest so attendees could be introduced to the most relevant Statkraft representative.
- 3.4. In total, 89 people attended across the two sessions including several Community Councillors. The number of attendees is based on those who completed the optional sign-in sheet at the welcome desk.
- 3.5. Attendees were invited to complete a feedback form and project flyers were available to take away.



Image 1 Farr Community Hall



Image 2 Farr Community Hall



Image 3 Dores Community Hall



Image 4 Dores Community Hall

4. BUSINESS EVENT

Date	Location	Attendees
13 March 2024, 16:00 – 18:00	Inverness Town House	36

- 4.1. An invitation-only event to focus on the Highlands business community was held to communicate the timeline of the project and the need for local goods and services.
- 4.2. Guest speakers included Inverness Chamber of Commerce and Highland Renewables CIC.
- 4.3. A desk was set up at the back of the venue for local suppliers to discuss opportunities with the project team and enter details in the suppliers register.



Image 5 Inverness Town Hall



Image 6 Inverness Town Hall



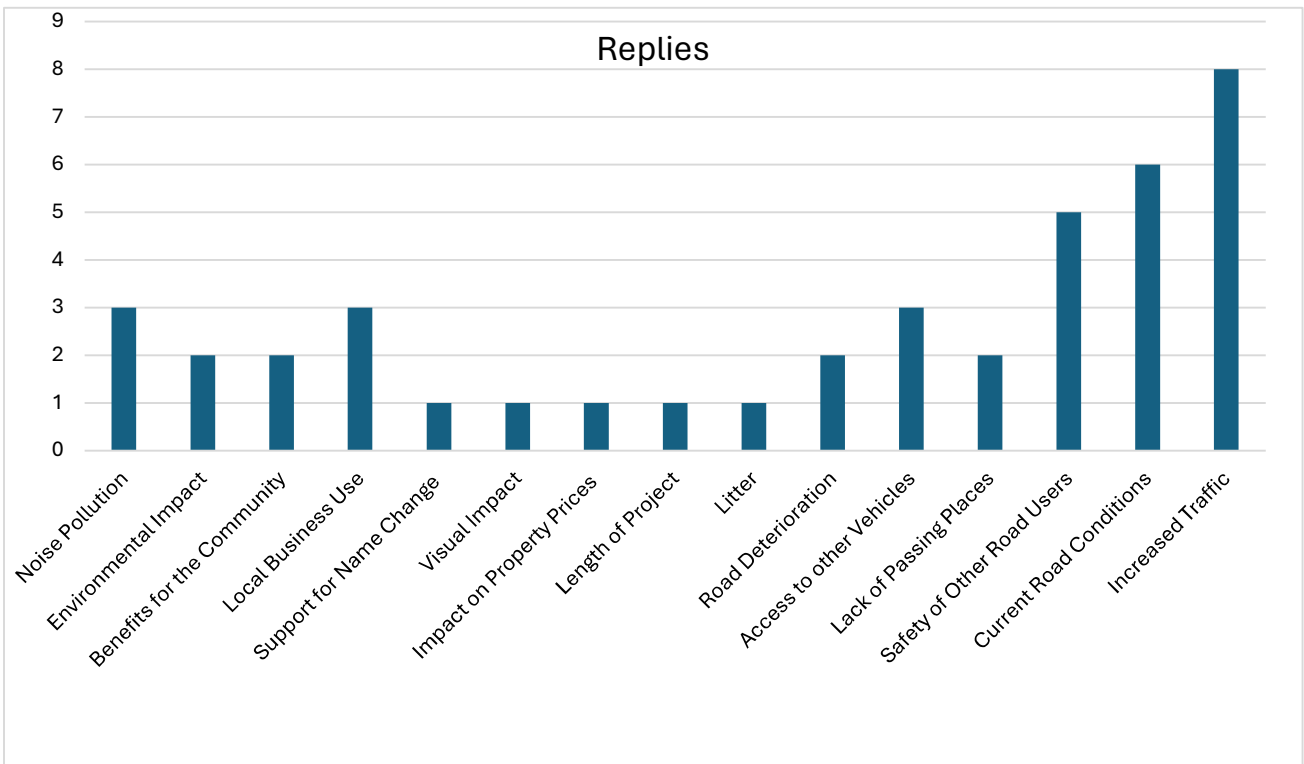
Image 7 Inverness Town Hall



Image 8 Inverness Town Hall

5. FEEDBACK

5.1. Of the 787 freepost reply cards posted to homes, 41 reply cards were returned either by post, at the exhibitions or online via the project website. A range of written comments were received, mainly focused on construction impacts. The chart below provides a breakdown of the range of issues commented on in written responses, and reflects the verbal feedback received at face to face events.



5.2. A number of comments were also received regarding unrelated development of other hydro projects. We are unable to discuss those proposals but note there are opportunities for interested residents to contribute their feedback directly to the relevant developer.

5.3. All feedback and comments submitted are in the process of being acknowledged and responded to. If a member of the public does not receive a response from us by the end of April and was expecting one, this may have been prevented due to a GDPR requirement. We encourage them to contact us by phone to ensure that we can provide them with a response.

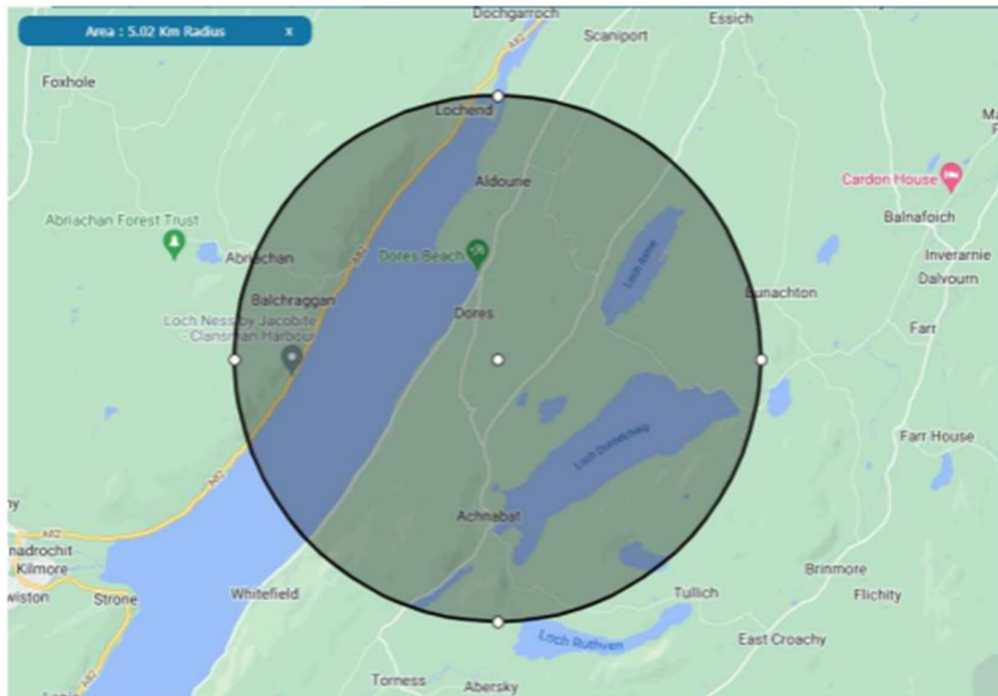
6. WEBSITE

- 6.1. Ownership of the existing project website www.redjohnpsh.co.uk was transferred to Statkraft, creating a seamless point of online information for the public.
- 6.2. The project website contains information about the site location, planning application documents and the opportunity for local suppliers to register their interest. Importantly, it provides visitors with the opportunity to submit questions and feedback.
- 6.3. Upon the project being renamed Loch na Cathrach, a dedicated project website address www.loch-na-cathrach.co.uk was established which directs people to the same website location. This website address will be used in future communications but the original website address www.redjohnpsh.co.uk will continue to be active and forward to the new website for at least one year.
- 6.4. From the launch of the new project website to 15 March 2024, there were 107 visits to the project website. The most popular sections of the website were:
 - Planning Application documents, with 359 page views. The highest number of views were on 14 March, with 291 views.
 - Local Suppliers page, with 42 views
 - Project updates page, with 36 views.

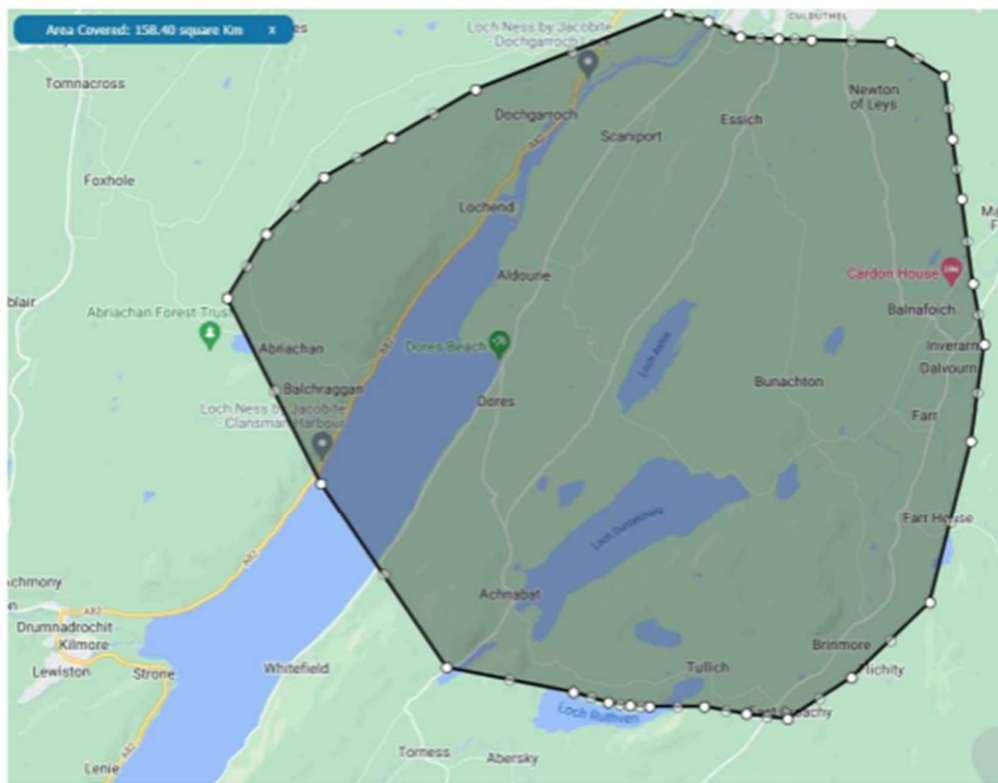
7. NEXT STEPS

- 7.1. Copies of the exhibition boards and a copy of the presentation from the Inverness Townhouse event were shared with Community Councils and Ward Councillors.
- 7.2. The project team will acknowledge responses to all written feedback received by the end of April.
- 7.3. Establish a Community Liaison Group as outlined in conditions from Highland Council.
- 7.4. The project team will continue to engage with the host and neighbouring Community Council, community stakeholders, elected representatives and local residents.
- 7.5. Following an invitation from Kate Forbes MSP to attend a roundtable discussion with local community councils, other developers and local stakeholders regarding traffic on the B851 and B862, the project team will participate in a proposed “Super Community Liaison Group”, which will bring together the relevant parties on an on-going basis with a focus on transport. The project team will also participate in other initiatives that may be brought forward by this group and continue to share relevant information with other developers.
- 7.6. The project team will remain easily contactable for questions and comments via the website, 0800 number, email and post.

APPENDIX 2 Mailing Area



Required Mailing Area - 5km radius of site
232 households, 11 businesses



Proposed Mailing Area – 5km radius extended to include transport route
787 households, 35 businesses

06:00, 13 MARCH 2024

Press Release

Statkraft and UHI join forces for skills report to deliver major Loch Ness hydropower project

Statkraft, Europe's largest generator of renewable energy, has announced it will provide support to the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) to allow it to gain early insight into the education and skills requirements for training up a local workforce to help build a consented pumped storage hydro project in the Highlands.

The project, originally known as Red John, and recently renamed Loch na Cathrach, to better reflect the history of the area, will capture excess renewable energy, and store it until needed, providing security of supply as Great Britain's electricity network shifts away from fossil fuels.

The 450MW scheme, first conceived in 2015, was granted consent by Scottish Government ministers in June 2021.

Funding from Statkraft will enable UHI to develop an accurate picture of the numbers and types of roles required to construct the project. It is intended that this report will benefit everyone who lives and works in the region and will help to inform senior pupils and UHI students, as they look to the future and decide their career pathways. It will also provide those already in employment with a picture of where the upskilling and reskilling opportunities exist.

It is hoped that the report will allow existing local businesses to gain visibility of the construction pipeline and help those who might see an opportunity to expand, or start new businesses, to meet the increased demand a significant project like this will bring.

The study will also inform education delivery across the region. By evaluating the current scale and composition of the local student population, UHI can begin to map education provision across the board, relevant to the project's timings and the required skills and qualifications needed to fill core roles.

Through identifying any gaps between the skills offered by the current workforce, and those required to deliver the Loch na Cathrach project, the report will provide early recommendations for addressing identified gaps through education, training, and strategic partnerships. It is intended that work on the study will begin in spring, with a final report published by UHI in the summer.

Iain Robertson, Head of Statkraft Scotland, said: "This report will provide an essential picture of the skills required to build Statkraft's most significant project in Scotland. I'm delighted we're able to build on our existing relationship with UHI to help them deliver this important piece of work, which will benefit students, businesses, and communities alike.

Alison Wilson, Director of Economic Development and Advancement, from UHI, said: "Statkraft are one of our key industry partners and as such we're really pleased to be working with them once again on a report like this. This funding will help us plan for future education provision, to ensure it continues to be closely aligned with the needs of key sectors and our industry partners across the region. **ENDS.**



BUMPER YEAR: Lerwick harbour saw increasing rates of use in most sectors last year.

Record cruise rates as port bounces back

BY KEITH FINDLAY

Bosses at Lerwick harbour are celebrating a record year for Sheadan's main port.

Activity levels bounced back from a downturn caused by Covid.

And hopes are high that 2024 is going to be an even better year.

Figures for 2023 include a 39% year-on-year jump in ferry passengers to 161,713.

Cruise vessels brought in 123,903 visitors last year, up 112% on the 58,540 visitors recorded in 2022.

These new totals were both records for the port and drove the overall total up 63% to an all-time annual high of 285,616.

The harbour also set a record for the tonnage of ships piloted in and out at 15,430,213 gross tonnes, up 33% on 2022, with the 1,023 pilotage movements, an increase of 29%.

There were 5,002 vessel arrivals during the year, up 5%, with the tonnage increasing by 18% to nearly 14.6 million gross tonnes. The total included a record 129 cruise ships.

Lerwick Port Authority



Port chief Calum Grains.

chief executive Calum Grains said the figures reflected "a welcome recovery to normal operations in 2023, post-Covid".

There was a strong performance across the sectors and an "outstanding contribution by all involved in our increasingly important marine tourism activities", Mr Grains said.

He added: "We can now plan for the future with renewed confidence."

Reasons for optimism include a recently completed reclamation project, creating space for more improvements to the facilities available to

the local fishing fleet. Another record-breaking cruise season may be in store.

And support for the giant Rosebank oilfield will likely create a stream of marine traffic.

Meanwhile, the port's bosses are progressing plans for an ultra-deepwater quay and strengthening ties with offshore wind farm operators as ScotWind projects ramp up.

An upturn in offshore industry traffic drove a 12% rise in all oil-related shipping last year. Oil-related cargo was up 34% to 54,743 tonnes.

Total cargo was down 1% at 877,197 tonnes, which LPA said reflected a 5% drop in roll-on/roll-off shipments from 2022, when figures were boosted by materials arriving for Viking Energy's onshore wind farm.

Although there was a 2% drop in fishing vessel arrivals, there was a 14% increase to 232,701 in the number of white-fish boxes landed as skippers took advantage of strong prices.

Appeal for help to mark 80 years since islands' POW camps closed

An appeal has been launched to find artefacts from the prisoners of war (POWs) who built Orkney's Italian Chapel for an event to mark 80 years since the camps they were held in closed.

The Friends of the Italian Chapel committee is planning to display items brought forward by members of the public at a special exhibition with The Orkney Museum to run over the summer, marking the 80th anniversary this August of the camps closing.

The chapel on Lamb Holm was built in 1939 by Italian POWs relocated to the island to construct barriers across the entrances to Scapa Flow.

Committee member Morag Ewing said: "The concrete causeways were constructed during the Second World War by Balfour Beatty, with labour from around 1,300 Italian POWs who had been captured in North Africa.



Lamb Holm's Italian Chapel.

"These prisoners were held at Camp 34, Burray and Camp 60, Lamb Holm, where they famously created the beautiful Italian Chapel from two Nissen huts.

"Prisoners would also spend their time making artefacts, such as toys, wooden carvings, jewellery from tin, inlaid boxes and many other objects and gifted to people they had struck up friendships with during their time in the islands.

"We, as a group, are

aware that there are many objects and artefacts of interest relating to the Italian Chapel scattered throughout homes within the county and we thought it fitting to host an exhibition of these items."

The exhibition is planned to run from May 11 to October 12 in the Balkie Library of the Orkney Museum at Tankerness House in Kirkwall.

It will include artwork by 52 pupils from Kirkwall Grammar School, inspired by the Italian Chapel.

Statkraft Invitation to Drop-in Sessions – 12 March 2024

Introducing ourselves – new owners of Red John Pumped Storage Hydro Scheme. Statkraft will be holding drop-in sessions to discuss the Red John project and to answer questions.

Drop-in Sessions	Tuesday, 12 March 2024
	2pm – 5pm Farr Community Hall, Inverarmie Park, IV2 6AX
	7.30pm – 9pm Doros Village Hall, Doros, IV2 6TT

We invite you to come along and meet some of the project team. A variety of goods and services will be required throughout the construction and operation of the project. Register your interest or recommend a supplier at www.redjohnpsh.co.uk

Freephone: 0800 772 9608 Website: www.redjohnpsh.co.uk Email: skproject@stakraft.com

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The Press and Journal

Active
Outdoors



Looking west from the summit cairn on Lurg Mhor.

CLOUD COVER FAILS TO PUT BRAKES ON FUN

By John Davidson
j.davidson@inverness-courier.co.uk

SITUATED in a huge expanse of mountainous terrain stretching from Strathglass in the east to Loch Carron in the west, the Munro of Lurg Mhor is considered one of the most remote. The Scottish Mountaineering Council guidebook advises leaving it, along with its close neighbour Bidein a' Choire Sheasgaich, for a fine day to appreciate the panoramic views after the effort of reaching the top. Perhaps we're spoilt being so close to such wonderful country here in the Highlands, or perhaps I just like to ignore sensible advice sometimes. Either way, the weekend I had earmarked to

climb these two hills didn't look great weatherwise. It did make me alter my original plan of heading to the bobby at Bendorraig the night before - a tough cycle in pouring rain didn't appeal that much for a Saturday night. That turned out to be a wise decision, when we rode past on the Sunday morning, observing a large collection of mountain bikes propped up against the bobby's walls and the chimney still sending out puffs of smoke into the cold morning air. The bobby here is provided for walkers and other travellers by Attadale Estate, which seems to keep the shelter well stocked with wood to burn. The bobby has a sink and a toilet - though no water on tap, of course. The flush is operated by filling a bucket from the nearby burn. It's well situated for accessing these two Munros, but with a mountain bike and a lot of energy and determination, you can cycle the eight miles to the bridge just beyond the bobby, climb both hills and cycle out on the same day. Parking is also provided by the estate, with a car park for walkers beside the entrance to Attadale Gardens, just south of Strathcarron. There's a railway station here, but you won't manage to fit the full expedition in a single day if you use the train from Inverness or anywhere along the Kyle line.

I met Allan at the car park, having driven through torrential downpours just a couple of miles back along the road. The mountain forecast had suggested the chances of cloud-free Munros as being 'almost nil'. Our expectations were pretty low as we set off on the bikes past the entrance to the gardens and out on the estate track. After crossing the river, it climbs - oh boy, does it climb! - up to Loch an Dhrighinn then higher still, past dramatic gorges with gnarly old trees surviving in their depths. Eventually you reach a beach and then a long downhill towards the Uisge Dubh, crossing the water at a beautiful little gorge surrounded by lichen-covered trees. Soon we passed the lodge and bobby, leaving our bikes at a bridge a short way beyond. My front brake had been playing up a little on the way, and I made the mistake of filling too much, which wasn't a wise idea eight miles from the nearest road. I managed to drain the brake fluid, leaving myself with no front brake for the return journey which would include some seriously steep descents that I had just pedalled up!

At nearly 250m above sea level, we were almost in the cloud base already. The walk follows an older track off to the right immediately after the bridge - passing a rather decrepit footbridge - but soon leaves the track at a 90-degree turn to the right just before a burn. Here, we started to make our way up the soggy slope initially alongside the burn then, higher up, following an ill-defined spur to reach to west ridge of Sàil Bhabhach. As predicted, there was very little to see, save from some patchy remnants of snow that served to make the navigation that little bit trickier. However, now on the ridge beyond the 773m top, we were soon at the final steep ascent to the summit of Bidein a' Choire Sheasgaich.

We landed there so suddenly if the tiny cairn was the true summit, but just a few steps past it was clear that the ground was heading down the other side. Back we went, retracing our steps a short way past the summit - an important bit of navigation here if you don't want to end up on the wrong side of the hill completely - before heading south-east down a



Crossing a burn on the old track along the north shore

Statkraft
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To contact us:
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Email: ukprojects@statkraft.com
Website: www.redjohnpsh.co.uk

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