

Knockcronal Wind Farm

Online Consultation Feedback Report September 2021

About Knockcronal Wind Farm

Knockcronal is a proposal for a 9-turbine wind farm. The site is approximately 5km south of Straiton in South Ayrshire. The graphic below highlights some key information about the proposal.

	No. of Turbines	Max Blade Tip Heights Up To	Installed Capacity (MW)	Estimated Generation (homes equivalent)	Community Fund (per year)
Knockcronal	9	200m	over 50	over 40,000 homes*	Estimated £250,000 per year**
				* Based on 50MW of installed Capacity, wind resource assessment and Scottish average household consumption of 3,393 kWh pa (BEIS Dec. 2020)	** Based on 50MW x £5k per MW of installed capacity. If consented, value of fund determined by actual installed capacity.

The project was introduced to community representatives in January 2021 and an online consultation event, adhering to Scottish Government advice in relation to Covid-19, was held in May and June 2021.

Initial Consultation Period

It was important from the outset of the project to provide communities with every opportunity to view and comment on the proposals. We set up a dedicated project website (<http://www.knockcronal.co.uk/>) and launched it when the scoping request was first validated by the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit in January 2021.

The host and neighbouring Community Councils* to the project were directly contacted and offered an opportunity to virtually meet with the development team, to find out more about the proposal and provide feedback on the consultation approach and the proposals.

Through early feedback and further studies, we reduced the number of turbines from 12 (original number in the scoping document) to 9 turbines.

Main Consultation Period

This overview presents the findings of the feedback received during the first round of consultation. This was held between 19 May - 8 June 2021 and included an online consultation website and non-digital sources of feedback such as by phone and postal feedback forms. Responses submitted after this date will continue to be evaluated and responded to, if required, and help to shape and inform the proposals.

The consultation was publicised in various ways, including:

- Advertisements in the Ayrshire Post and Ayr Advertiser at the start of the live consultation;
- Mailing to all households (1345 households) and businesses (49 businesses) within c.10km of the site with an invitation and details to take part in the online consultation as well as providing feedback cards and freepost envelopes for those who preferred to write back rather than go online;
- Writing to host and neighbouring Community Councils at the start of the consultation;
- Details of the consultation on the Knockcronal project website; and

*Community Councils of Crosshill, Straiton and Kirkmichael, Barr and Dailly have been directly contacted.

- Community Councils publicising via their Facebook and webpages.

As part of the online consultation, we provided:

- Exhibition brochure - information you would usually find on boards at a village hall exhibition;
- Pre-recorded videos introducing the project and some of the project team as well videos presenting key aspects of the project, including the landscape and visual impacts;
- Extensive FAQ section on the project to help inform residents when they arrive on the consultation website;
- Multiple photomontages from key viewpoints;
- Live Q&A sessions with the project team on 27 May, 2 June and 8 June - giving residents the opportunity to have live interactive chat with the project team;
- 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.

It is intended to submit a Section 36 application for the proposed Knockcronal Wind Farm to the Scottish Government later this year.

Summary of Consultation Responses

Of the 1,394 households and business contacted with the invitation and freepost feedback form we received 79 (5.7%) back. In addition, we received over 300 website views and 7 online forms were completed between 19 May to 8 June. In total, there were 88 interactions, including call backs, online forms, feedback forms and emails.

The results of the returned offline and online forms is provided below:

Of those who provided a response to the question, 74% agreed that the country needs to generate more electricity from renewable sources. The belief of respondents that onshore wind is a good way to achieve this is quite evenly balanced 41% believe yes, 46% believe no, and 13% are unsure.

Of respondents who answered the question; Do you think this is a good location for a wind farm, nearly three fifths (59%) said no, just over a third responded yes (35%) and 6% were unsure. We explore the chosen locations for wind farms in more detail below.

In terms of local benefits there is appetite for Statkraft to continue to explore the potential to assist in bringing improved broadband to the area (38% responding that this is of interest). A quarter of respondents were interested in shared ownership with a further one fifth of respondents (18%) unsure. We will be happy to provide more information on shared ownership as the project progresses, such as arranging an information session with Local Energy Scotland.

65% of all respondents wish to be kept up to date on the project and we look forward to engaging with the community over the coming months.

Key Topics from Consultation

During the consultation period, some questions and comments were frequently raised. When responding to feedback, a summary of these questions and our responses to those were included. This is appended to this report and included on the project website. Some further information on those and other topics are also provided below.

We welcome further discussion with the community on these topics throughout the development process.

Cumulative Impact

A number of comments and questions about the location and 'too many' wind farms in the area were received as part of the feedback. With less than 10% of the land area in Scotland suitable for onshore wind farms, substantial analysis of potential suitable locations is undertaken including landscape and visual sensitivities. We believe this proposal strikes the right balance between maximising electricity output and relating to the existing landscape including other developments. Our Head of Development recently outlined more information on this topic during a webinar 'Location, Location' which is available to watch on demand at www.FutureNetZero.com.

Community Benefits: Community Benefit Funding and Broadband

Community benefit fund

Statkraft is dedicated to engaging with communities and finding different ways projects can bring positive benefits to the local area. The provision of community benefits, such as the fund and the broadband feasibility study are not considered material in planning, meaning they are not taken into consideration when a planning decision is made on the project.

If the project is approved, Statkraft are committed to offering a Community Benefit Fund that delivers, £5,000 per MW installed per year as per Scottish Government Guidance. Statkraft aims to offer maximum flexibility regarding how community funds are used, as local communities best understand how funds could be utilised to meet local needs and ambitions.

Broadband

High-quality broadband is required to operate wind farms, including Knockcronal Wind Farm, should it be consented.

Statkraft is the only developer to commit to funding a broadband feasibility study for each of its onshore wind farm development projects. This will assess the potential for fibre and wireless line-of-sight broadband that can also benefit the local and wider community as well. If there is an opportunity for our wind farms to help improve broadband connections for residents and businesses in the area, then we would be happy to explore this with the community.

Statkraft has commissioned a feasibility study that can be used to start discussions with local residents and their elected representatives. The consultation feedback has shown that there is interest from local respondents in improving broadband in the area and we look forward to following this up.

Next Steps

As the application (this will be a Section 36 application) is finalised for submission later this year, the next steps for local engagement are:

- Send a copy of this summary report to the host and neighbouring community councils and elected representatives and welcome further discussion on the key areas and any other considerations for the project.
- We will hold a further public exhibition event in Autumn 2021 which will include information on how feedback has been incorporated into the design. The exhibition will run from 14 September – 5 October and include local in person drop in sessions on 21 September in Dailly and 22 September in Straiton, both will run from 2pm – 7pm.
- Continue to receive feedback and respond to queries.
- Progress setting up a shared ownership (virtual) roundtable with Local Energy Scotland to provide more information to those interested in shared ownership opportunities.
- Follow up with community stakeholders regarding the potential for enhanced access to broadband by sharing the findings of the feasibility study.
- Continue to engage with elected representatives, community councils and local residents to keep them updated on progress.
- Record and store all comments made regarding suggestions for community benefit funding.
- Continue to update the project website.

Appendix 1: Consultation FAQ's

Knockcronal Wind Farm

During the consultation held during May and June 2021, some questions and comments were frequently raised. Below are our responses to these.

(August 2021)

There are too many wind farms in this area; similar proposals have previously been refused

As part of our work towards the planning application for the project, we have undertaken substantial analysis into the landscape and visual sensitivities in the vicinity of the development. We continue to develop the project, with the aim of finding the right balance between maximising electricity output and carefully siting and designing the proposals to relate to the existing landscape, including other wind developments. This has included moving the turbines further west and, to reflect the topography of the site, using different turbine heights on site to produce a better overall design. We will present the finalised scheme at a second public exhibition later in the year when these assessments will be completed and will form part of the future planning application. In the meantime, a video description of how we have considered the landscape and surrounding area as we have developed the project is available at this [link](#).

The Scottish Government has a target to achieve net zero by 2045. Onshore wind is expected to play a 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 Head of Development, Richard Mardon, explores the challenges faced in finding the best sites to maximise Scotland's excellent natural wind resources.

I don't like the look of onshore wind farms

We appreciate not all people like the look of wind turbines, but they are very much part of the answer to increasing our carbon-free electricity generation and decreasing the need for fossil fuels. The UK Government has surveyed attitudes towards different types of electricity generation since 2012 and the results consistently show around 75% support for onshore wind ([BEIS Attitudes Tracker](#)).

If there is concern about a specific view please let us know and we'll try to provide suitable illustrations at our next consultation event later this year. In the meantime, a video description of how we have considered the landscape and surrounding area as we have developed the project is available at this [link](#).

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.

What are the benefits 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 - over 80 businesses completed our local suppliers register for the construction of our Keith Greener Grid project. Local suppliers can register [here](#).

The operation of the wind farm brings significant local investment. Statkraft is committed to delivering a community benefit 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 installed capacity of the project, but as a guide, based on 50MW, this is around £250,000 per year over the operating period of the wind farm.

For more FAQs go to www.knockcronal.co.uk