



Background

Kirknewton has been identified as one of the host communities for a wind energy power station to be sited to the west of Harperrig Reservoir. West Calder and Harburn are the other host communities. You may know it as the Fauch Hill Wind Farm. The developer, EFRG, is seeking to gain community acceptance for the scheme; it has conducted its own consultation and is offering a number of community benefit packages to encourage acceptance.

The Kirknewton Community Council first met with the wind farm developer, EFRG, well over 12 months ago. The Kirknewton Community Development Trust has been charged with the conduct of the negotiations over the Community Benefit Package and details of the package negotiated are summarised below.

The Community Council had been relying upon the developer's consultation to ensure that the views of local communities were understood fully. However, it has not obtained sufficient confidence in the results of the consultation, particularly with regard to the sample size of people from Kirknewton that have made their views known.

About this Consultation

The Kirknewton Community Council have produced this document to help people in our community decide what they think about wind farm energy, the Fauch Hill proposal and the community benefit / investment opportunities and to help you to complete the enclosed questionnaire.

The results of this consultation will be presented in due course to the appropriate authorities in West Lothian Council and Scottish Government. To ensure objectivity, we have asked an independent market research company, **IBP Strategy and Research**, to assist us in this process. The results of the consultation and the methodology employed will be published on the Kirknewton website and will be widely available for all those that might wish to access it.



Issues to be Considered

Kirknewton Community Council has not taken a position on this development and we want members of the community to express your views on the basis of objective information about the development. We believe that there are a number of issues that members of the community might wish to take into account, including:

- Whether you think that wind power stations are an effective and responsible method of contributing to meeting the nation's energy needs as compared to other methods (such as nuclear, coal, oil and gas and other forms of renewable energy other than wind).
- What you think about the visual and noise impact of such a development and any impact you think it may have on wildlife and nature.
- The benefits to the local community arising from the Community Benefit Package described below.

It should be noted that those most immediate to the wind-farm and therefore directly impacted by a change may have a different opinion to other Kirknewton residents who will not see the wind farm on a daily basis. It must be remembered that they are members of our community.



The Community Benefit Package

Kirknewton Community Development Trust was charged by the Community Council to conduct discussions with the developers, EFRG, on the one hand and West Lothian Council on the other. These discussions have been extensive. The Development Trust has also set up arrangements to enable separate but very important discussions concerning special arrangements for those households which are really close to the wind-farm.

It is common practice for developers to recognise that they are using space which, although not owned by anybody, can be seen to impact on all those nearby and to offer to compensate them for using this space.

After much discussion with all parties, arrangements have been agreed in principle, whereby the two "host" communities of Kirknewton and West Calder/Harburn (as defined by Community Council areas), will each benefit from about 30% of the Community Benefit Package. These funds will be administered by properly established, fully transparent and wholly accountable Community Development Trusts. The remainder of the Community Benefit Package will be devoted to educational, rural and other community objectives and managed by an equivalent West Lothian Development entity.



It is probable that the scale of share of this community benefit that Kirknewton can anticipate enjoying on an annual basis will be around **£82,800**.

Potential Participation in the Wind Power Station

An opportunity has also been provided by the developers to those local entities that can invest funds to participate in the ownership of the wind power station and to obtain a related share of the profits from it. We, with other local communities, could well apply to grant funders, such as the Big Lottery Fund, and thereby participate directly in ownership of the wind power station. Clearly a regular, reliable revenue stream from such an investment would be beneficial for the implementation of projects and programmes as set out in the Kirknewton Community Development Plan (this can be seen online at http://www.issuu.com/kirknewton/docs/community_development_plan_nov_11).

Planning Implications

The development will require planning consent. Objections often occur to the use of the land and space in this way. Planning consent is, of course, a formal process and one into which many can contribute. In the case of this wind-farm, as it is deemed to be a Section 36 Power Station, the Scottish Government is the planning authority (not the Local Authority). There are statutory consultees to such a planning application. One of these is the Local Authority (West Lothian Council) in whose territory the proposed power station lies. A report will be prepared by the Planning Department of West Lothian Council, which will evaluate the application, setting it against the criteria of the adopted Local Plan and other relevant factors. This report will be presented to the Local Authority's Planning Committee for consideration. Should the Local Authority raise an Objection then this would be expected to lead to a Public Enquiry. A Public Enquiry can be time consuming and expensive. Clearly, therefore, developers, wishing to avoid a Public Enquiry, will seek to make their arrangements with local communities and the Local Authority so that the risk of there being an Objection is reduced.

More information

You can find out more about the Fauch Hill Development at the website <http://www.fauchhillsustainableenergy.com/>

Useful information

<http://www.communityenergyscotland.org.uk>

If you have any questions regarding this paper or the accompanying questionnaire please contact Fraser Grieve at IBP Strategy and Research on 01698 743075 (f.grieve@ibp.eu.com).