

East Lammermuir Renewable Energy Proposals  
Stakeholder Meeting

Innerwick Village Hall, Main Street, Innerwick, East Lothian, EH42 1SE

Wednesday 25th October 2023 16:30 – 19:30

**Feedback / Meeting Notes**

**Session 1 Introductions & Paired Conversations**

Two rounds of paired conversations took place with everyone involved and sharing time equally focussed around question prompts:

*What is your view of the proposed developments in East Lammermuir at present?  
What are the key local considerations?*

**Session 2 Reflection & Engagement** (discussion in small groups with prompt questions)

- How did we get here / what can we do? (*Reflection from community members [Annex 2] / discussion*)

Five mixed groups then discussed the prompts from the Reflection, considering:

- How we most effectively work together to meaningfully address local considerations?
- Bringing views together, next steps

Group 1

- OFGEM Transmission Planning – Greater transparency/ communication/ engagement
- Building great certainty at strategic level between transmission planning and land use planning system.
- Communication and collaboration amongst developers in area.
- Strategic Planning/ coordination/ master planning of developments on wider authority level scale.
- Better understanding of who community can turn to – chain of command – in both local and national government.

Group 2

- Retain rural character of area.
- Formal recognition of community view within planning process and an active input, plus greater consideration of cumulative impact on one area.

Group 3

- Transport Management Plan – multiple contractors, synchronicity
- Project activity forecasting, scope timing.

- Tensions twixt National infrastructure and planning authority (Loc)
- How do we measure development “saturation”?
- Better spatial planning by Local Gov?
- National Planning Framework (NPF4), is this adequate? Something we can call the Scot Gov out on?
- Independent middleman – consultation fatigue.
- Is the drive to achieve Net zero overshadowing a commitment to communities on a human scale.

#### Group 4

- Joined up approach to consultation
- Cumulative plan – how? Some applications are speculative.
- Cumulative programme.
- Joined up approach to traffic/ roads disruption.
- Good communication

#### Group 5

- By 2033 – The majority of the proposals will be built. Construction activity should be close if not complete.
- Post construction there will be negligible impact.
- Managing construction impacts CMTP
- Regular liaison – 2 workshops monthly
- Legacy benefits
- Formulated levy
- Active travel pathways
- Insulation
- Support the appointments
- Policy barriers can prevent firm commitments despite best efforts – needs to be centrally led.

### **Session 3      Engagement Moving Forward – Principles that underpin Engagement/ Commitment Charter**

A draft Charter was tabled by the developers’ group and discussed at the five tables. Comments were shared as follows;

#### Group 1

- Clear contact points.
- “Physical” card for contact details.
- Suitable resources.
- “Avoidance” is best.
- Reaction is too late.
- Using technology.

#### Group 2

- Accessibility – early & upfront. Communications and update, visibility in community.
- Commit and consistency of engagement, good dialogue.

- Responsiveness, understanding of where community have influenced proposals/ delivery! Proof that people have been heard.
- Coordination – independent coordination
- Single point of contact!
- Shared principles – including on what good dialogue looks like!

### Group 3

- Prioritise the Community – face & name, community first.
- Prioritise enforcement – reporting structure identified culprit
- Continual improvement – always seeking to review performance
- Joint engagement – sharing responsibility
- Centralised oversight – Always know who to call ie report line number.

### Group 4

- Mutual respect
- Clear, open communication
- Coordination
- Accessibility
- Meetings – mix of virtual and face to face
- Feedback

### Group 5

- Transparency
- Single contact
- Regular open dialogue – newsletter
- Cumulative project map
- Liaison officer
- Regular meetings (monthly)
- Map/ timeline.
- Engage with ambition, we will leave East Lammermuir better than it was when we arrived.

## Session 4 Resources

- Resources (Staffing and other) (*Proposal from ELC had been shared in advance showing two separate Job Scopes, Planning Officer – Energy Projects, and Project Coordinator - Transport*)

These were discussed at the five tables, with an eye to

- Scope / Duration / Funding
- Recruitment Process

### Notes from All Groups Collectively:

- Agree on need for planning officer for energy projects. Is there a need for more than one officer.
- Is there potential for funding for biodiversity officer?
- Some of the wording for transport officer is vague.
- It was agreed that a co-ordinator was needed, we hadn't realised the developers were expected to fund a planner too but at the end of the day all that was said was the job descriptions needed much more detail and the salaries needed to be high to get the right candidates.
- Planning officer – different developments require different resource.
- Potential for more developments to come forward.
- Condition of having a project in East Lammermuir – buy into charter – fund posts.
- Project Officer – wider scope – senior role – should be a team.
- Extent of role in terms of geography? Needs to be realistic – will definitely only work on Electricity Infrastructure developments in East Lammermuir.
- Who will fund which role?
- Project Coordinator – not limited to transport!
- What teeth/ enforcement powers would exist?
- Temporary or permanent posts?
- Speed of recruitment?
- Where will they be based?

## Session 5 Local Place Plan & Community Benefits

Chris Bruce, Chair of East Lammermuir Community Council spoke briefly to this item as set out in Annex 3. He asked developers and council officers to

1. take cognisance of emerging findings from the LPP process around:
  - an active travel network linking villages to each other and to the coast on safe routes
  - a safe crossing point (or two) over or under the A1 and railway to the coast
  - community ownership of local green electricity infrastructure (including any heat generated)
  - any and all infrastructure being so well designed as to disappear into the surrounding fields – sedum roofs, careful design
  - a focus on environmental improvement, thought through, co-ordinated and paid for
2. offer support to produce an excellent Local Place Plan for East Lammermuir by Spring 2024.

## **Session 6 Next Steps**

**Charter – Developers to use comments provided to work up a second draft and share this with the group.** If a meeting with community reps is needed this can be arranged at relatively short notice.

**Lead – Ciara Jamieson, SSE**

**Jobs – ELC to revise Job Scopes and share with the group.** If a meeting with community reps is needed this can be arranged at relatively short notice.

**Lead – Douglas Proudfoot, ELC**

**Next meeting – Small group volunteered to devise an agenda and plan for a further meeting, now proposed for 16.30 on Monday 4 December in Innerwick Village Hall.**

This will ensure we push on with the proposed jobs, the developer Charter, and enabling work including the single Map of all proposed developments, a single Schedule of Planning Applications and status and a single Schedule of Works to cover all known developments.

A manageable schedule and structure of meetings for 2024 will be included on the agenda and discussed at the 4 December session. The meeting noted the potential requirement to focus more time on single issues to allow more in-depth discussion at meetings moving forward.

**Lead – Chris Bruce**

**Meeting closed at 19.40**

## Annex 1

### Attendance List

Kevan Jamieson	Community
Steve Ruggi	Developer East Coast Grid Services
Fiona McGibbon	Community
Rachael O'Donnell	Developer Fred Olsen Renewables
Dominic Moynahan	Community
Tracey Dart	Community
Barry Hughes	Developer Scottish Power Energy Networks
Lesley Gordon-Smith	Community
Ciara Jamieson	Developer SSE
David Mumford	Community
Rebecca Meek	Developer RES
Karol Black	Community
Kirsty Leiper	Developer Fred Olsen Renewables
Christy Pryse Hawkins	Community
Jo Kerry	Developer Pegasus Group/Gresham House
Mick McLoughlin	Developer Island Green Power
Chris Bruce	Community (East Lammermuir Community Council)
Lesley Murray	Developer NnG EDF
Jill Malcolmson	Community (East Lammermuir Community Council)
Jim McLaren	Community
Sam McMillan	Developer Belltown Power
Sarah McLeary	Community
Katie Mackie	MSP Representative
Lynn Jardine	ELC elected member / MSP Representative
Nikola Miller	Scottish Government
Dave Sweeney	Developer NnG
Alison Baisden	Scottish Government
Donna Collins	ELC Elected member
Andy Kinnaird	Scottish Government
Keith Dingwall	EL Council
Simon Bonsall	Scottish Government
Norman Hampshire	EL Council Leader
Ian Lennock	EL Council
Colin Wylie	Developer Scottish Power Energy Networks
Diyar Kadar	Developer Scottish Power Energy Networks
Ross Cottam	Developer SSE
James Wheeler	Developer SSE
Douglas Proudfoot	EL Council

### **Statement from Community Group East Lothian Winds Of Change**

Thank you all for coming today. The primary objective for the Community (as we in East Lothian Winds of Change (ELWOC) see it) assembled here is to convey the level of anger, disappointment, frustration, anxiety and fear that we all feel due to the way this apparently uncontrolled expansion of the National Electrical Infrastructure is being inflicted upon us. One does not need to look far to see the effects of Climate Change, the storms of the past few weeks have provided a scary image of what is to come and so we need to rapidly de-carbonise the entire Industrial Complex of the Planet, not just Scotland. We get that and are prepared to play our part. However, this expansion of the National Grid should not become an opportunity for plc's, foreign owned companies & private equity 'chancers' to profit from this expansion at the complete expense of and with no consideration or respect for, this small rural community.

It is important that you all understand the level of damage to our community's health, well-being, spirit, culture and financial value due to these proposed infrastructure projects.

It is equally important to note that here tonight are not just the "disgruntled few" but a selection of the most active community members who represent many more concerned voices.

As this "Energy Infrastructure Gold Rush" has evolved we had hoped that we, as members of society and citizens of this country would be treated with fairness and respect. This is not happening.

We have, as a community over the last number of months put in huge amounts of effort trying to navigate our way through the myriad of legislation, planning frameworks, approval processes, elected and unelected officials trying to make sense of how things have gone "so wrong, so quickly" in and around East Lammermuir.

"Opaque" is the new word round this Community.

The complexity of Energy Infrastructure is not lost upon us. However the opacity with which these have been discussed, planned, decided, communicated, understood and approved defies belief and all measures of reasonableness. At the time of the last such 'Developer' & Community gathering, on the evening of 25<sup>th</sup> April the number of projects known (or divulged) at the time consisted of:

- Berwick Bank Wind Farm
- Eastern Link (now known as Eastern Green Link<sup>1</sup>)
- Crystal Rig 4
- Branxton Battery Energy Storage Station (Branxton BESS)
- North Belton BESS (FRV TH Powertek)

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<sup>1</sup> Eastern Link is an entry point for, rather than a generator of, electrical energy.

Assembled that night were both elected representatives, employees of East Lothian Council as well as representatives of the Developers listed above (with the notable exception of Scottish Power representing Eastern Link who declined the invitation). At no point on that evening, did any person whom it could be argued ought to have known, divulge that these projects though collectively massive already, represented the totality of development. We have since learned of the following additional projects:

- Gresham House Branxton BESS
- Branxton PV & BESS – Export capacity 1,000 MW
- Lawfield & Branxton Energy Park (BESS)
- Aikengall BESS

Despite the best efforts of many good and reasonable people, and the multiple admissions and acknowledgements from various officials that “this is not right” we have failed to gain any traction in securing a pause in the processing & consenting of these massive schemes, the cumulative magnitude & therefore impact of which is even now, not ‘in the public domain’ & therefore known by those impacted. That’s us in this community by the way. We have a few thoughts as to ways in which such a pause & review of these collective schemes and their true cumulative impact can be considered before agreeing a way forward and will be happy to discuss these later today.

Our key complaint is, and has always been, that we firmly believe we have not been meaningfully engaged with as a community. We have not had sight of the end point and we have not been given the opportunity to influence anything. The concept has never been discussed with us.

It is clear that the catalyst for all that will be discussed here tonight is the decision to increase Branxton Sub-Station’s capacity as a future key “grid connection”.

It is that first gold nugget around which all have planned their decisions.

It is the key around which many can & do claim to evidence their “commitment” to Net Zero and is also a major component in, surprisingly, sending electricity to England & beyond.

It is also the first nail in the coffin of East Lammermuir.

The first nail which has given rise with alarming rapidity to many other nails being banged in around us.

I’d like to raise Community Benefit.....not the oft touted handful of silver that is rather sparingly & somewhat spasmodically distributed to affected communities in certain cases .....nor the Community Benefit that some may be preparing to fire right back at us.....but Community Benefit as in the actual, tangible ‘**Benefit to the Community.**’

Is there one? Well, if there is it is certainly well hidden because we cannot see it.

Are there many that we can’t see?

Should we be honoured and proud of our contribution to saving the planet?

Or, as is our overwhelming perception at present, are we just collateral damage in the big money games of big business, landowners, Private Equity and obsessed government?



Will our future be decided by tension and lack of clarity between our local Council, Scottish Government and UK Government?

Whose moral compass thinks that this is fair?

Will any, body corporate or governmental actually poke their head above the parapet & intervene?

We have deliberately avoided quoting from various Government & Non-Governmental guidance and legislative documents in order to delay the onset of slumber. There is however one which would serve us well to keep in mind as we go through tonight. The 2010 Scottish Government Planning Advice Note (PAN) 3/2010 'Community Engagement' noted at paragraph 8:

*"In the context of this document engagement is, in effect, giving people a genuine opportunity to have a say on a development plan or proposal which affects them; listening to what they say and reaching a decision in an open and transparent way taking account of all views expressed."*

I leave you with a question: Is this an unreasonable request?

## Annex 3

### **Local Place Plan – position statement from East Lammermuir Community Council**

In starting to prepare our East Lammermuir Place Plan, we have held 6 **meetings** and heard from well over 180 people. What we heard was disturbing; before we can take a step in any direction, we need to express the strength of feeling around:

- the perception of an unfettered and uncontrolled goldrush around the Branxton grid connection,
- poor communication and lack of a collated plan from the developers
- concerns about unknown risks and lack of controls and safety concerns once the infrastructure is in place,
- cumulative impact on the landscape, ecology, and geology,
- lack of a collated programme of works
- other environmental concerns which are covered by the EIA

2. The associated **survey** has had about 80 responses to date. These add to what we heard in the meetings, and demonstrate (amongst other things) a desire for

- an active travel network linking villages to each other and to the coast on safe routes
- a safe crossing point (or two) over or under the A1 and railway to the coast
- community ownership of local green electricity infrastructure (including any heat generated)
- any and all infrastructure being so well designed as to disappear into the surrounding fields – sedum roofs, careful design
- a focus on environmental improvement, thought through, co-ordinated and paid for

3. Developers are asked to have an eye to this information when drawing up plans and proposals. Specific opportunities clearly exist around the legacy of access routes, haul roads, cable routes.

A way of working which privileges our local environment and seeing it improved, rather than degraded.

4. The community council has a long history of evaluating planning applications and responding to them according to the views of local people. As a statutory consultee we will continue to evaluate applications on their own merits and submit comments accordingly. This is entirely separate from any proposed community benefits that may accrue to our area in relation to any proposal.

5. If developers value the intelligence that can come from a Local Place Plan, they can help East Lammermuir Community Council to prepare an excellent plan, by contributing to our costs. We need less than £10,000 and would welcome a discussion about that.