



Durness Renewable Energy Project Newsletter 4

PLANNING AND SCHEDULING A RENEWABLE ENERGY SCHEME FOR DURNESS

Work is continuing on a Community Investment plan and demographic survey along with discussions of key issues facing the community and identifying persons who should be involved in planning and investment to resolve them. This process is involving an audit of community resources and skills. This is in association with Durness Community Council and Durness Development Group.

Scottish Southern Electric has carried out a feasibility study to determine the connection options available and the results are a little disappointing. We requested a grid network study leading to a budget quote from SSE Power Distribution Limited and the results of this have arrived. As the line and transformers stand the maximum generation capacity that can be exported over the exiting 11kV circuit is in the order of 300Kw providing local voltage levels can be controlled by the generation. This leaves the option to a maximum output to a single Enercon 33 wind turbine without a substantial investment in line upgrading.

All the appropriate documentation and reports were compiled and submitted to the Highland Council Planning department for a formal scoping opinion which has been received. This resulted in responses from all the expected agencies commenting on the Environmental overview confirming in most cases the further studies required.

- Highland Council
 - Planning
 - Archaeology Unit
 - Roads and Community Works manager
 - Environmental Health manager
- Scottish Environmental Protection agency
- Scottish Ministers
 - Historic Scotland
 - Trunk road network management Directorate
 - Environmental directorate
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Scottish Water
- Health and Safety Executive

This is in essence an Environmental Impact Assessment

This is expected to include

- Carry out Shadow and noise impact study
- Carry out landscape and visual impacts
- Carry out ecological Impacts study to include a bird study
- Determine wind capacity factor
- Archaeological Impacts
- Geological survey

In summary there are several factors to be considered at this point as considerable public money is invested in an environmental impact assessment. We must be certain of the economic benefits to the community and the likelihood of gaining planning permissions. It is at that juncture of obtaining planning that the community become responsible through the appropriate company for all the further costs involved. The project therefore must be financially viable for all costs and revenue to the community.

The Highlands and Islands Community Energy Company are holding a “Planning and Community Renewables” event on Saturday Sept 1st – Durness Village Hall. People are invited to come along and find out when a renewable project requires planning permission, what’s involved and who’s involved, learn about future developments such as permitted development rights and how they can affect our project. This event is free and open to community groups and individuals. Numbers may be limited so please book early. To book a place please contact Melanie MacRae, Assistant Development Officer for the North Highland HICEC on 01408 635103 or melanie.macrae@hient.co.uk

This day long event will feature key speakers in the Scottish planning system along with real life project experiences from community groups and individuals. There will be a chance to share your experiences, investigate the issues and meet others involved in similar projects. There will also be a chance to see a ground source heat pump installation and visit community wind sites.

I have been invited to speak with a Brief outline of 2 renewable energy case studies in Durness, the village hall geothermal and the current wind generation scheme.

Ronnie

Ronald Lansley
 Secretary
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 Registered in Scotland Number 222915
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