

DRUM HOLLISTAN WIND FARM



NEWSLETTER #1 – Winter 2015/16

Image for illustrative purposes only.

DEAR RESIDENT

This newsletter will be the first in a series detailing the Drum Hollistan Wind Farm proposal and its progress through the pre-planning, planning and potentially construction phases of the development.

This first newsletter will inform you of the details of the proposal, as well as providing an outline of the public consultation and planning processes.

THE APPLICANT

Drum Hollistan Renewables LLP is looking into the feasibility of developing a wind farm on the Sandside Estate near Reay, Caithness.

The partnership comprises members of Scotland's agricultural sector who have ambitions to help Scotland meet its energy requirements through utilising the country's abundant wind resource.

Initial feasibility studies realised great potential for wind energy production on the estate and encouraged the business to work on developing a proposal that is both sensitive and appropriate to the local area.

The project would consist of 18 wind turbines with an overall generating capacity of over 50MW. The proposed wind turbines would each have a generating capacity of 3MW and a maximum tip height of 126m.

THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

In 2015 a request for a Scoping opinion was submitted to The Scottish Government. The request detailed the environmental and technical studies that we planned to undertake in order to assess the feasibility of the Sandside Estate for a wind farm. The Highland Council, as well as individual national and regional bodies, such as the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), were consulted and responded with comments on the scope of works proposed. Through further correspondence with the consultees we created a comprehensive scope of studies to be undertaken.

Over the past year the environmental and technical studies have been taking place, with the results contributing to an evolving project design. The aim of this process has been to avoid or minimise any potential impacts created by the development. The results of all the studies will be reported within an Environmental Statement to be submitted with a section 36 application to The Scottish Government.

TIMELINE



WHY WIND ENERGY AT DRUM HOLLISTAN?

Drum Hollistan Renewables LLP believes that Sandside is a suitable site for developing a wind farm development because of a number of factors:

- Very high average wind speeds
- Significant landform screening to visibility from the south
- Large separation distances from residential properties
- Good proximity to grid network
- No part of the site is designated for its ecological or landscape value
- Close to existing local transport network

PROJECT SUMMARY

Location

2km west of Reay and 3km east of Melvich

Number of turbines

18

Maximum blade tip height

Up to 126m

Maximum capacity

Up to 54MW



View of the Sandside Estate in the distance from Douneay (A836)



Location map showing the Site Boundary of the proposed Drum Hollistan Wind Farm

HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE PROJECT

Drum Hollistan Renewables LLP would like to receive feedback on the wind farm proposal before the planning application is submitted. We would also like the opportunity to answer any questions or take on board any suggestions that you may have on the proposal. We would therefore be grateful if you could take a few minutes to fill out the questionnaire enclosed.

Starting in September we started discussions with Caithness West Community Council to allow feedback to be channelled back to ourselves. This process will be ongoing until we submit our planning application, with the aim that as many suggestions from the local community can be incorporated into the wind farm design and the community benefit fund.

Once feedback has been received from the questionnaires we hope to incorporate suggestions into the design of the wind farm. Plans of the revised wind farm will then be exhibited in the coming months in Reay to allow further comments to be made before a planning application is finally submitted. The exhibition will feature computer generated images of the wind farm and will provide an opportunity for you to ask questions to members of the team.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Drum Hollistan Renewables LLP are keen to share the benefits of renewable energy with the local community and we would like to offer two options that would allow the community a stake in the project.

- *Community ownership in the form of a co-operative*
- *Community ownership of a wind turbine*

Community ownership in the form of a co-operative

We have experience in setting up regulated co-operatives that allow local communities and individuals to invest varying amounts in a project in order to own a share in a wind farm development.

A co-operative can be set up to purchase a share of the wind farm and will consequently profit from the sale of green electricity. Members can then invest varying sums from between £250 to £20,000. The profits are then distributed to members through an annual dividend.

Preference for joining the scheme is given to people living in areas near to the wind farm development in order to maximise the economic benefits to the local community.

Irrespective of shareholding values, the co-op is run democratically with each individual member having one vote.

The Kilbraur Wind Farm in Sutherland, amongst others, is an example of where this type of community ownership scheme has been introduced.

Community ownership of a wind turbine

Alternatively, Drum Hollistan Renewables LLP are happy to look into the possibility of the community ownership of either one of the wind turbines or a set proportion of the wind farm. This would allow a trust to receive an income from its stake in the wind farm to fund local initiatives over the lifetime of the project.

The Fintry Development Trust near Stirling started a process similar to this in 2003. Following the development of their wind turbine they have worked on a number of community projects to allow people in the local area to benefit and have a say in how the income generated is spent. Examples of projects that they have undertaken include: providing free cavity wall and roof insulation for local homes, the installation of a biomass boiler for a local sports club and a new heating system for a village hall.

Details of the process they undertook with the owners of the Earlsburn Wind Farm can be seen on their website (www.fintrydt.org.uk).

We recognise that each community has different needs and aims and consequently we are committed to working with you to deliver the most effective arrangement for your area. If you would like to get involved in the project then please get in touch.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND

Throughout the lifespan of the wind farm, Drum Hollistan Renewables LLP are committed to working with the community to ensure the benefits of the wind farm are maximised. Rather than distribute community benefit funds across the wider Highland region (as per Highland Council guidance), Drum Hollistan Renewables LLP plans to distribute the suggested contribution (£5000/MW of installed capacity each year, index linked for the lifetime of the project) to the local community.

At this stage of the development process, Drum Hollistan Renewables LLP is seeking opinions on how the Community Benefit Fund could best serve the local area. In particular, we would like to establish what would be the preferred mechanism to distribute the funds and what areas of need within the community should benefit from the funds.

If you have opinions on the structure and the potential recipients of the funds, we would be keen to start discussions with you and anyone else who is interested. Your opinion will not affect your right to express a view on the planning application.

LOCAL ECONOMY

As a business based in the northeast of Scotland, Drum Hollistan Renewables LLP place great emphasis in trying to use local contractors during the construction of wind turbine projects. Although all work is subject to a competitive tender process, we believe that local contractors are always well placed to win a large proportion of the contracts on offer. The various phases of the wind farm construction process will take up to approximately 1 year and will consequently provide a significant boost to the local economy.

WIND POWER

In 2011 the Scottish Government revised its 2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy in Scotland and established a new target of generating 100% of the electricity demand equivalent from renewable energy. The need to act on climate change was also reaffirmed by the recent Paris Agreement, where all parties made commitments to make nationally determined contributions and domestic measures aimed at achieving them.

Onshore wind turbines are the most technically and commercially established renewable energy generation technology available in Scotland. Onshore wind farms therefore are of vital importance if we are going to meet the targets that have been set by The Scottish Government.

Drum Hollistan Renewables LLP are keen to help provide a more sustainable energy supply for Scotland through the development of wind turbine developments.

The Drum Hollistan Wind Farm would provide a significant contribution to Scotland's overall renewable energy capacity and help to address the serious challenges posed by Climate Change.

CONTACT

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