

South Kyle II Wind Farm Pre-Application Consultation

Appendix F: 2024 Local Feedback Report (second round)

Confidentiality class: C1 – Public

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Preface

The views of local communities, businesses, and stakeholders are critically important in the design of Vattenfall's wind farms.

Following the initial launch of Vattenfall's proposals for South Kyle II Wind Farm in 2022, the project sought feedback from local communities and undertook an extensive environmental analysis.

This review led to a refreshed layout for the proposed wind farm, and in spring 2024 details were published with local communities and stakeholders invited to provide feedback on this updated proposal. This was targeted to Dalmellington and the Doon Valley area and the New Cumnock area.

A number of steps were taken to facilitate this including:

- Refreshed details published online including a virtual exhibition;
- In person exhibitions held in Dalmellington and New Cumnock, the communities nearest to the proposed development;
- Direct stakeholder engagement;
- Direct postal flyer;
- Survey – digital and paper;
- Project newsletter;
- Attendance at community events;
- Local advertising – in print and online;
- Social media campaign;
- Deadline extension to enable further feedback to be gathered.

Participants were encouraged to use the survey to communicate their feedback. Most of the information within this report reflects that response. Further conversational feedback was also gathered

This document summarises the feedback we have received to date. It identifies several themes and issues, and how we will respond to each.

As this was the second round of pre-application consultation, we anticipate this will be the final feedback review published prior to the finalisation of the proposals for South Kyle II Wind Farm, and ahead of their submission to the Energy Consents Unit of the Scottish Government. Nevertheless, Vattenfall will continue to explain our proposals for South Kyle II Wind Farm and welcome feedback from local stakeholders throughout the consenting and development process.

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to fill out the survey and discuss the proposal with us. Your opinions and suggestions are extremely valuable to us. We look forward to continuing the discussion with you over the coming months and years.

1. Survey Feedback

1.1. Who responded

We received 62 individual responses to the questionnaire, of which 51 were online and 11 on paper. Technical steps were taken to prevent multiple answers being submitted by the same respondent via the online survey.

In recent years, these communities have been regularly asked to provide feedback on wind farm proposals, and this reflects the relatively small sample size.

We asked a series of questions to understand who the respondents were.

1.1.1. Location

Of the 44 people who responded to this question, all but 3 were from East Ayrshire (the others being one from South Ayrshire, one from Other, and one Prefer Not to Say).

Of the East Ayrshire respondents, 93% said they were from the community council areas nearest to the proposed wind farm: New Cumnock, Dalmellington and Patna. When broken down by community council area, the response from New Cumnock (29) far outweighed that from Dalmellington and Patna combined (9).

It is difficult to pinpoint a reason for this. The communities are of similar size; public exhibitions were held on consecutive nights in Dalmellington and New Cumnock, and the consultation was promoted widely across both areas.

Nevertheless there are some factors which could account for the significantly greater response rate from New Cumnock:

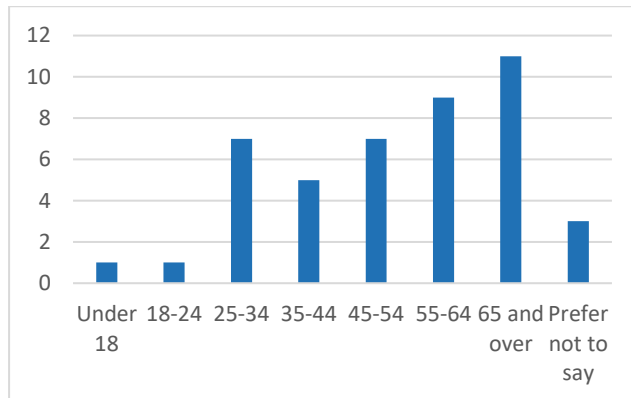
- Consultation fatigue in Dalmellington, an area very familiar with Vattenfall over recent years during the construction of South Kyle Wind Farm, and which has hosted a number of other wind farm consultation events recently.
- Partner sharing – the online survey was shared on social media by New Cumnock Development Trust encouraging people to respond.
- Confusion with other wind farm engagement activities in New Cumnock - some detail within the responses from New Cumnock residents indicate they may have been thinking about other development proposals and/or existing wind farms. For example, the South Kyle II Wind Farm turbine delivery route was clearly communicated in the exhibition materials and survey, yet we received comments about a different route, one relevant to other wind farms being constructed and proposed.

Dumfries & Galloway

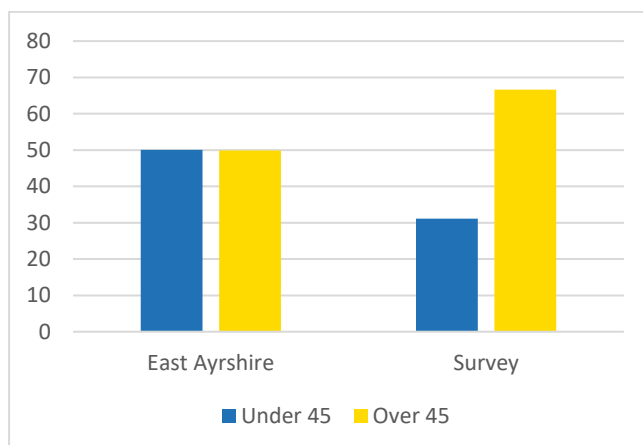
South Kyle II Wind Farm lies wholly within East Ayrshire, so this area was the focus of our consultation activities. However, as the adjacent wind farm – the Vattenfall developed South Kyle – also reaches into Dumfries & Galloway, and there is some crossover with local and social media, we included 'Dumfries & Galloway' as a choice in the survey. No respondents stated they were from this area.

1.1.2. Age

The age of respondents was fairly broad but leaning towards older age groups. Around 44% were over 55yrs, with those aged over 45yrs representing 60%.



However, when compared to the population across East Ayrshire¹, it is clear that responses to this survey were disproportionately from older members of the community.



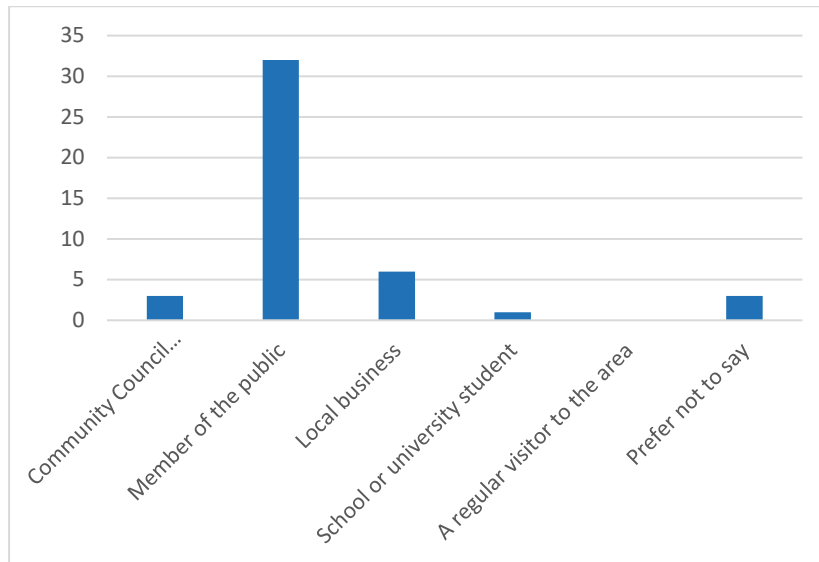
To address this, we have continued to engage directly with local schools, in particular Doon Academy in Dalmellington. This is particularly important given it is younger generations who will be most exposed to the positive and negative aspects of a wind farm development and the long-term impacts of climate change, so they have an important voice in the debate which needs to be heard.

¹ https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/council-area-data-sheets/east-ayrshire-council-profile.html#table_pop_est_sex_age

1.1.3. Role

We also asked in what capacity people were responding: as a community councillor, member of the public, local business, school or university or student or a regular visitor to the area.

Around 73% identified as members of the public.

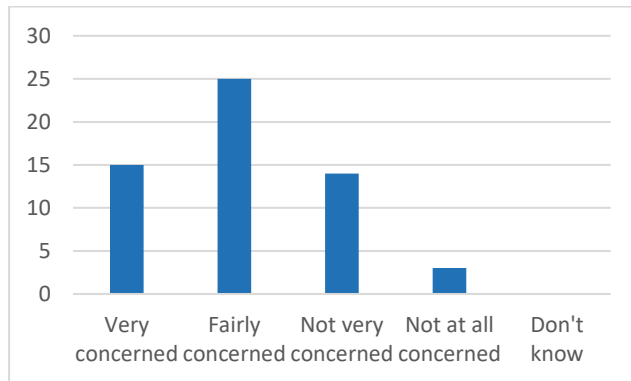


1.2. Energy, climate change and onshore wind

Before we asked questions about South Kyle II Wind Farm, we wanted to understand general attitudes to climate change, renewable energy and onshore wind to see if there was a difference between general positions and more localised issues.

1.2.1. Concern about climate change

We asked: How concerned are you about climate change?



Our respondents were generally concerned about climate change – 70% of people felt they were 'very' or 'fairly concerned'.

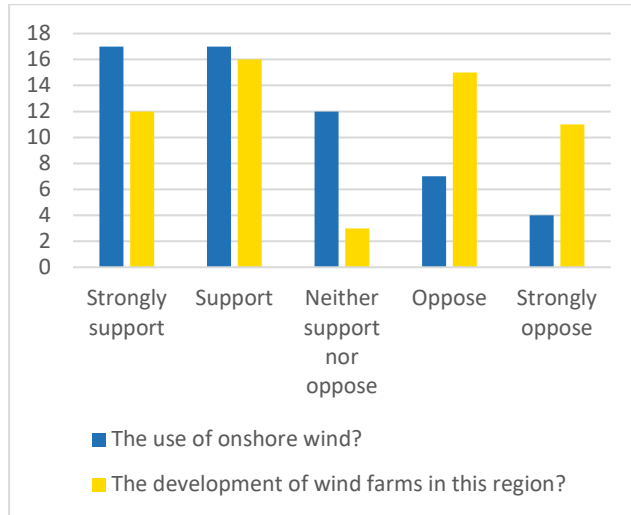
This is below other studies with larger datasets. For example, the UK Government's Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy regular Public Attitudes Tracker reported in its most recently published survey that 82% of their survey sample were at least fairly concerned about climate change.²

A slightly higher proportion – 74% - said they supported the transition to renewable energy.

² BEIS Public Attitudes Tracker (Winter 2022, UK)

1.2.2. Onshore wind

We then sought views specifically about onshore wind in general, and the development of wind farms in this region.



Onshore wind was supported by 60% of respondents, with 19% opposed. *This is markedly different from larger, nationwide datasets which show 77% support for onshore wind, and 5% oppose.*³

However, when asked specifically about wind farm development in this region, support dropped to 48%, with opposition rising to 45%.

These response rates are echoed by comments received indicating that some people felt there were already enough wind farms in their area.

This data suggests that as some people move from thinking about general global or country-wide trends to more specific local issues, some support falls away. That said, a narrow majority – 53% - were either in support of or neutral on onshore wind farms in this region.

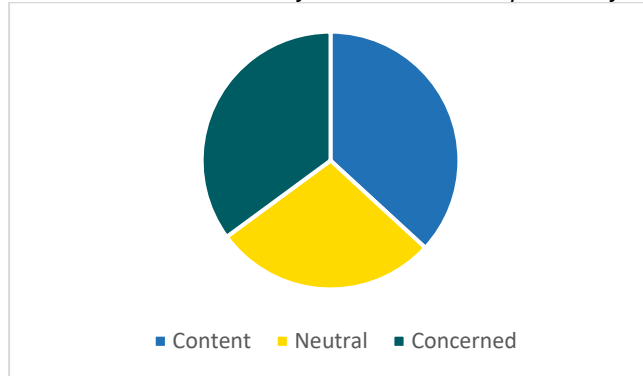
³ DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker: Renewable energy, Spring 2024, UK

1.3. South Kyle II Wind Farm

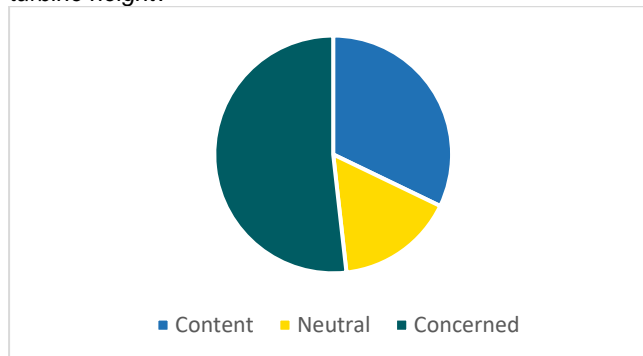
We then sought views on the updated proposed layout of the wind farm. Compared to the earlier proposal, this new layout included two additional turbines raising the total from 9 to 11. Some of the original 9 had been moved to accommodate constraints, whilst turbine tip height (up to 200m), battery storage location and main access routes remained largely unchanged.

1.3.1. Layout, turbine height and battery storage

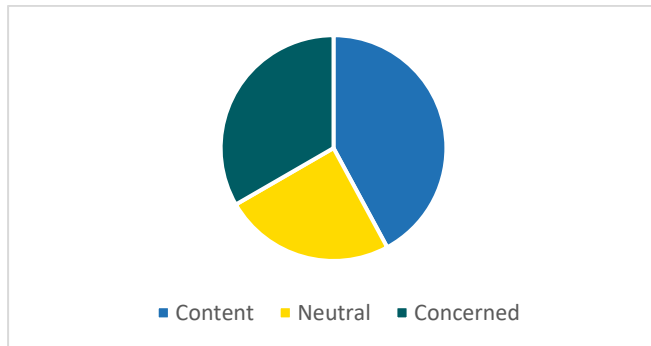
We asked: *Overall how do you feel about this updated layout?*



We asked: *South Kyle II's wind turbines would be no more than 200m tip height. This is taller than what is currently installed in the local area, but would generate more electricity and reflect what manufacturers will be producing. How do you feel about the proposed turbine height?*



We asked: *Battery storage will help the wind farm store excess energy and stabilise the grid. How do you feel about this being included in the proposal?*



On layout and turbine height, those who were content or neutral about the proposal outweighed those with concerns by around 2:1.

A slightly higher rate of concern was observed regarding battery storage. As new technology not yet seen in the existing wind farms in the area, this higher rate of concern was not surprising. It does, however, highlight the need to provide more information to local people about this feature of the wind farm.

To better understand the reasons for concerns about South Kyle II Wind Farm, we invited respondents to provide comments. Most related to general concerns over the number of wind farms in the area and visual impact. Others express more positive views. For example:

I am 73 years old and think that windfarms are the way forward for the future for our youth. Cleaner air and efficiency.

Concerned about the amount of windfarms accumulating in this area. It seems that we will soon have a fence around this area made up of windfarms. Time for a halt and perhaps give the Doon Valley a rest. Concerned about overall impact.

1.4. Community investment and shared ownership

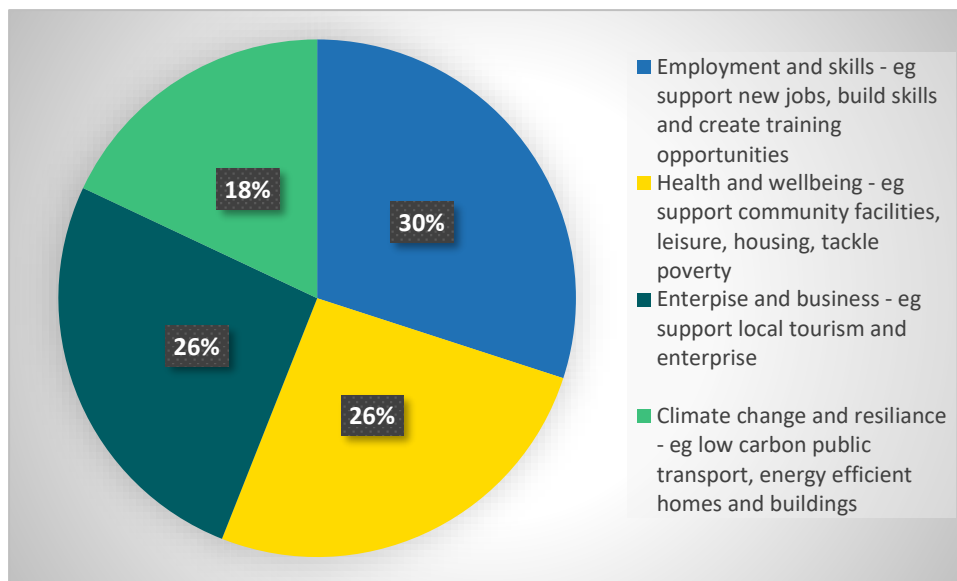
If consented and constructed, South Kyle II Wind Farm will generate significant community benefits for the local area. We wanted to gauge local opinion on how that could be deployed and gather initial levels of interest in potential shared ownership.

Over the previous three years, Vattenfall had consulted and worked closely with communities in the Doon Valley and New Cumnock to establish the bespoke South Kyle Wind Farm community benefit fund. The survey questions and responses should therefore be seen in this context.

1.4.1. Local priorities

First, we explored what people wanted to see prioritized in their communities, inviting them to consider key themes previously identified through our local research.

We asked: *There are many ways community benefit funding could make a change to your area. Thinking generally, what should community benefits prioritise in your area? (choose all that apply)*

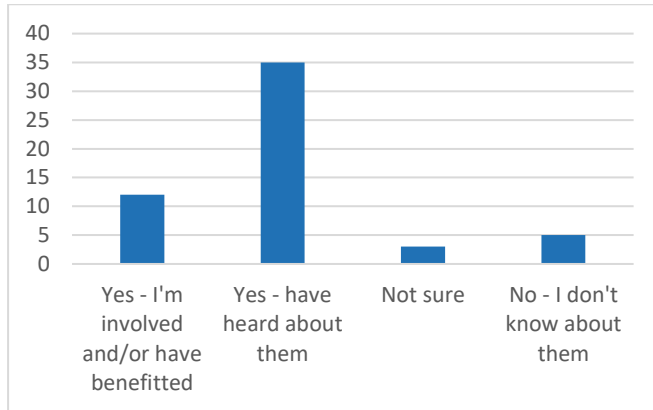


We also invited respondents to provide other ideas. Cheaper energy was the most common response, with access to nature and more walking/cycling paths also noted.

1.4.2. Awareness

We also wanted to measure how aware local people were of wind farm community benefits.

We asked: *Other wind farm community benefit funds operate in this area - including South Kyle Wind Farm. Are you aware of them?*



This provided reassurance that responses were predominantly from individuals reasonably familiar with wind farm community benefits.

1.4.3. Thinking ahead

Respondents were invited to think ahead and give us their thoughts on how funding from South Kyle II could be used. A broad range of issues and themes were identified including:

- roads and pavement improvements
- apprenticeships in renewable energy and training
- regional climate resilience fund
- environmental improvements and conservation
- cheaper energy
- youth facilities
- more help for the elderly
- support local groups
- payments direct to residents

Although we did not seek feedback on how community funding should be administered, or by whom, we did receive some comments on these topics. Some communicated a preference for the traditional localised approach where the focus is on communities nearest to the wind farm, and following a process similar to that established for South Kyle Wind Farm. Others recommended 9CCG, a group of nine community councils formed to pool community benefits arising from wind farms across their broader area. For example:

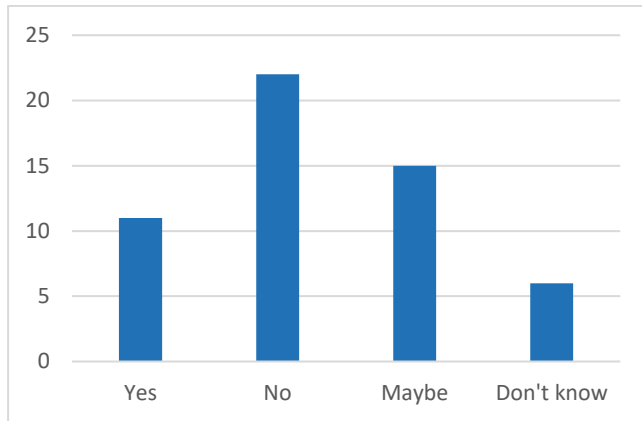
Not given to communities outside of Dalmellington and New Cumnock. None of the other local villages etc are being blighted by this farm in particular.

I strongly believe in communities taking a collaborative and co-ordinated approach to CB funds - 9CC Group.

1.4.4. Shared ownership

South Kyle II Wind Farm also provides an opportunity for shared ownership.

We asked: *Shared ownership is also available. Are you interested in this opportunity?*



Whilst there was a swing towards 'No', there is clearly some appetite to at least consider Shared Ownership. Vattenfall will take this on board and explore further opportunities to discuss this with local communities.

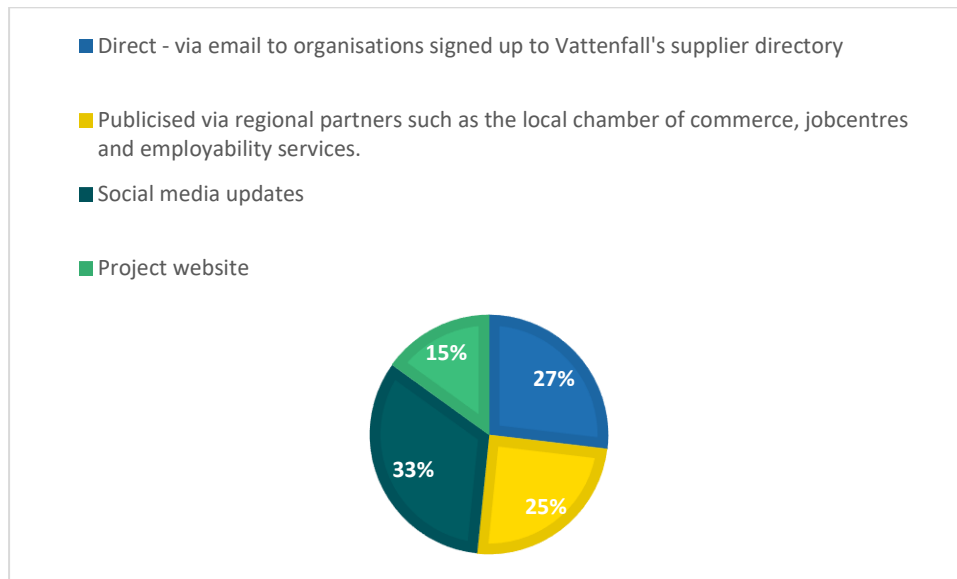
1.5. Jobs and business

Should it be consented, South Kyle II Wind Farm will create numerous opportunities for local businesses and workers.

1.5.1. Communicating opportunities

Informed by our experience in the region, we wanted to refresh our understanding of the most effective ways to communicate such opportunities at a local level.

We asked: *How could we inform local people and businesses of these opportunities?*



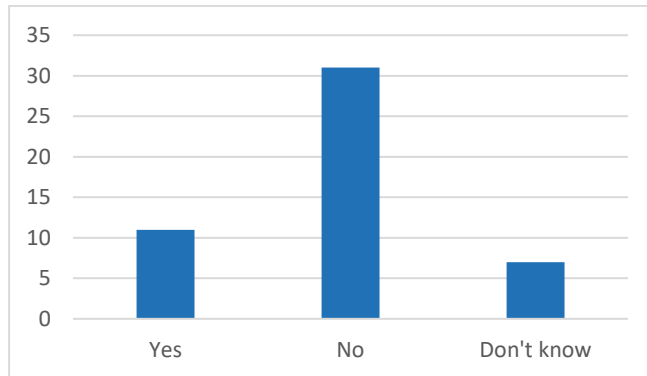
Other suggestions included

- An automated system informing all households in the area
- Open evening, leaflets and direct mail
- Through schools, community centres and local organisations such as community councils, NCDT or 9CCG
- Tiktok

This feedback will help Vattenfall deliver our skills plan for the project, and will be reviewed once construction is confirmed.

1.5.2. Apprenticeships

We asked: *Would you be interested in an apprenticeship scheme, creating opportunities in the project's supply chain (eg in fields such as construction, forestry, engineering, ecology)?*



The high level of 'No's, this may reflect the older profile of those responding.

Since the survey, further engagement on skills and apprenticeships has been undertaken, with a Skills Plan being developed for the project.

1.5.3. Schools

We asked for suggestions of local schools and groups who could be interested in finding out more about careers in renewables.

New Cumnock Primary School was frequently mentioned (reflecting the higher number of respondents from this area), with Robert Burns Academy, Doon Academy, Patna Primary and Yipworld suggested. One respondent also suggested schools in neighbouring South Ayrshire.

Vattenfall's engagement with local schools continues, both directly with individual schools and organisations, and more broadly across the region with East Ayrshire Schools' Clean Green programme.

1.5.4. Further comments

A number of further comments were received on this topic. Whilst some veered into other themes (eg environment issues and onshore wind in general), constructive suggestions included:

- Encouraging workers to use local businesses
- Considering public transport links to the site
- Free transport to jobs fairs and similar other poverty-addressing actions

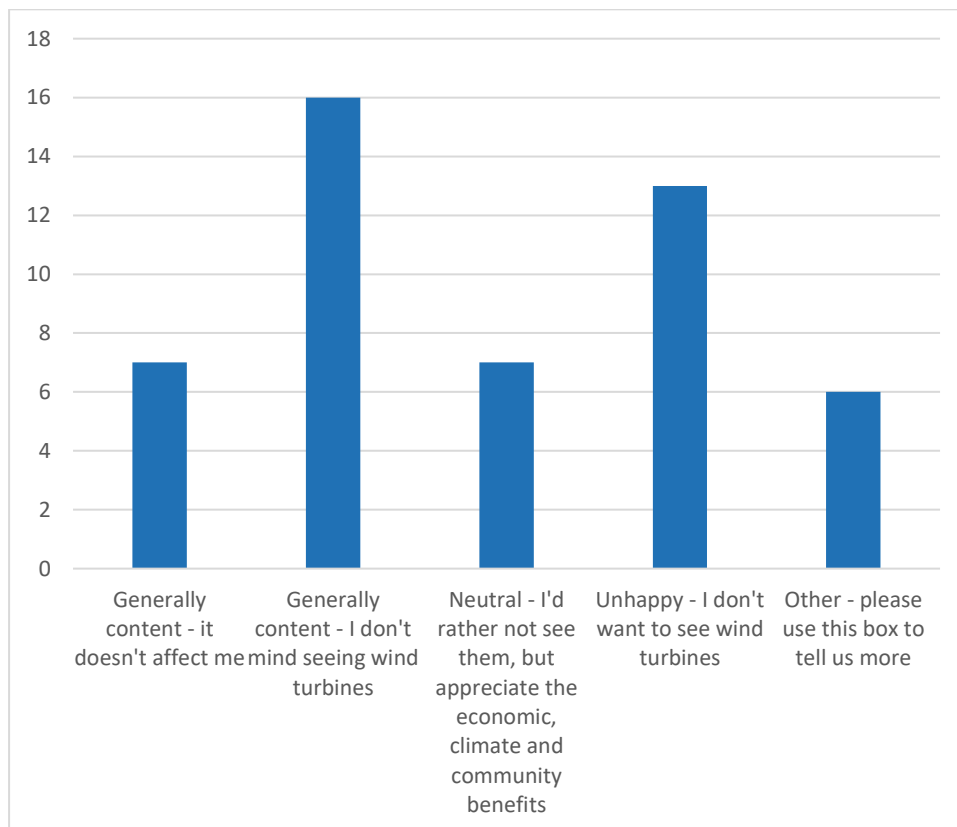
This feedback will help Vattenfall deliver our employment plans for the project and will be reviewed with key contractors once construction is confirmed.

1.6. Visibility, habitats and biodiversity

1.6.1. Visual impact

To help local people understand how the wind farm could look, wirelines and photomontages were produced from a variety of viewpoints. These were included in the exhibition materials – both online and in person. Bespoke digital visualisations from individual addresses were made available to those visiting the public exhibitions in person.

We asked how people felt about the visibility of the proposed wind farm.



Significantly more people were content (48%) than unhappy (27%).

However, the comments received from those who selected 'Other' suggested these individuals also had concerns. It would therefore be more accurate to say that the response was roughly a 60:40 split in favour of those content or neutral vs those unhappy or with concerns.

Further comments were received on visual impacts elsewhere in the survey and in general feedback. These provide us with an insight into why some respondents were unhappy. For example:

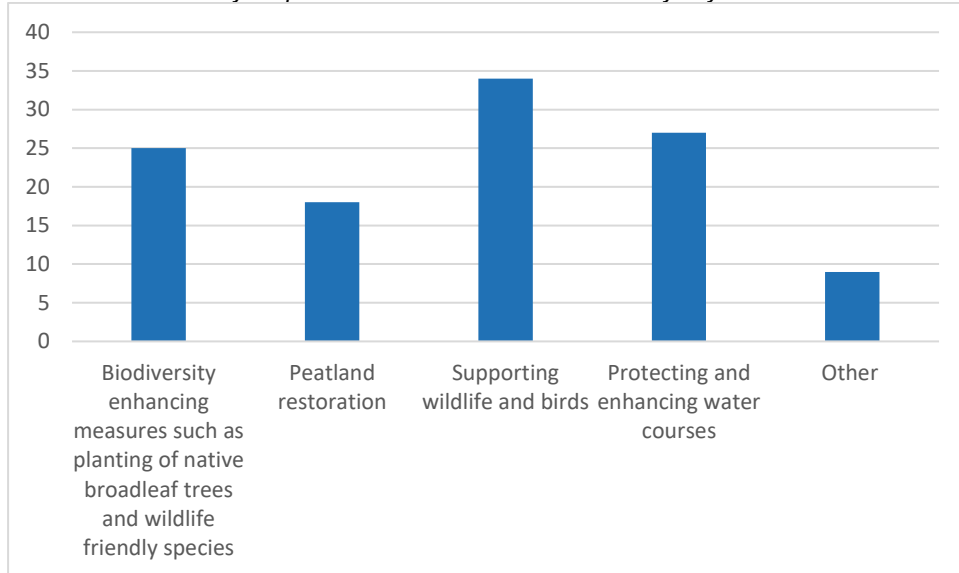
- Too much concentration in one area can impact tourism
- Impact of light pollution on dark skies area

This feedback is addressed in the next section.

1.6.2. Habitats and biodiversity

The wind farm offers opportunities for habitat and biodiversity enhancements. To help inform the project's Habitat Management Plan, we sought views on local priorities.

We asked: *What are your priorities for habitats and biodiversity in your area?*



Comments and suggestions included:

- Protection and enhancement of natural beauty
- Grazing opportunities for local farms and supporting local farmers
- Leave peat and moss alone

This feedback will help us develop our Habitat Management Plan.

1.7. Constructing the wind farm

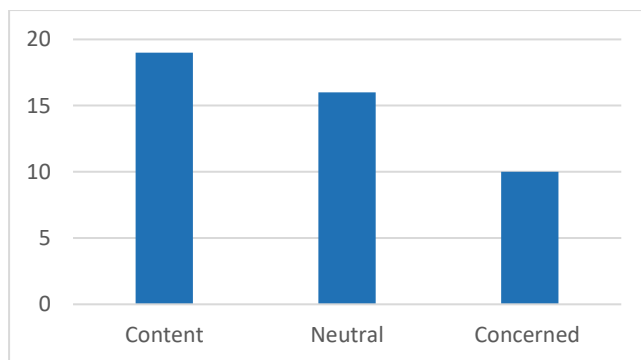
Both the Doon Valley and New Cumnock areas have experience of wind farm construction. This includes the Vattenfall project at South Kyle (2020-23) and a number of projects by other developers which are currently at various stages of construction.

We were therefore keen to gather feedback on how local people felt about the potential impacts of construction related issues such as traffic.

1.7.1. Turbine deliveries

For South Kyle II Wind Farm, the main turbine components would be delivered from the north and west via the A713 and the existing South Kyle entrance near Eriff. Details were provided in the exhibition materials and a map was included in the questionnaire showing the route to site.

We asked: *How do you feel about this delivery route?*



Whilst most were either content or neutral, 22% of respondents said they were concerned about this route, and were invited to give the reasons for their concerns. However, most replies were general comments, not specific to this route. For example:

- Roads are bad enough already without the extra loads
- Too much disruption already
- Levels of traffic increase litter and noise
- Vibration damages abodes

We also received a suggestion regarding improved pedestrian access/safety at Chapel Row.

1.7.2. Further suggestions

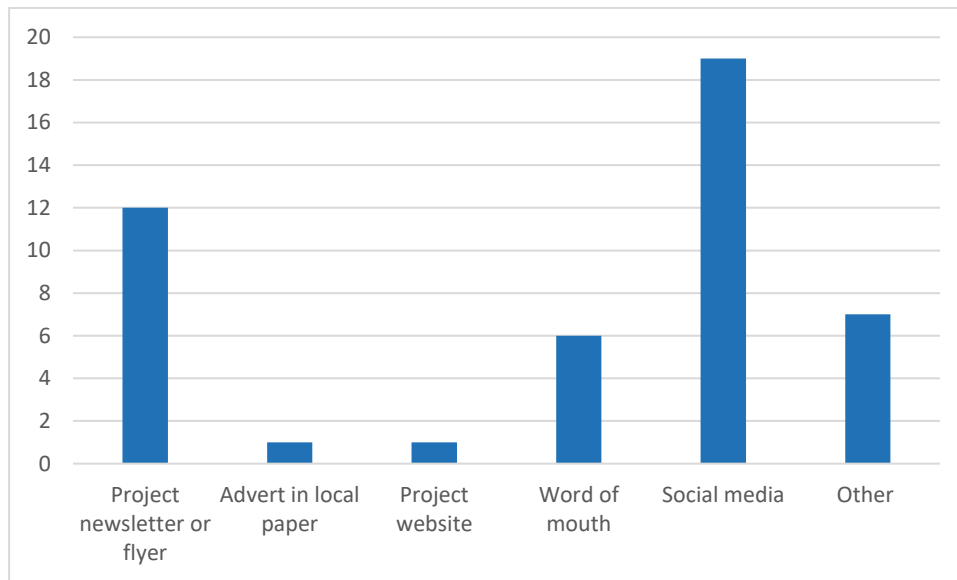
Further suggestions and comments were also received regarding the construction of the wind farm including

- Using Port of Ayr as port of discharge
- Good idea to use the existing South Kyle access track
- Concerns about pot holes and volume of traffic during to construction
- Desire for more updates during construction

1.8. The exhibition

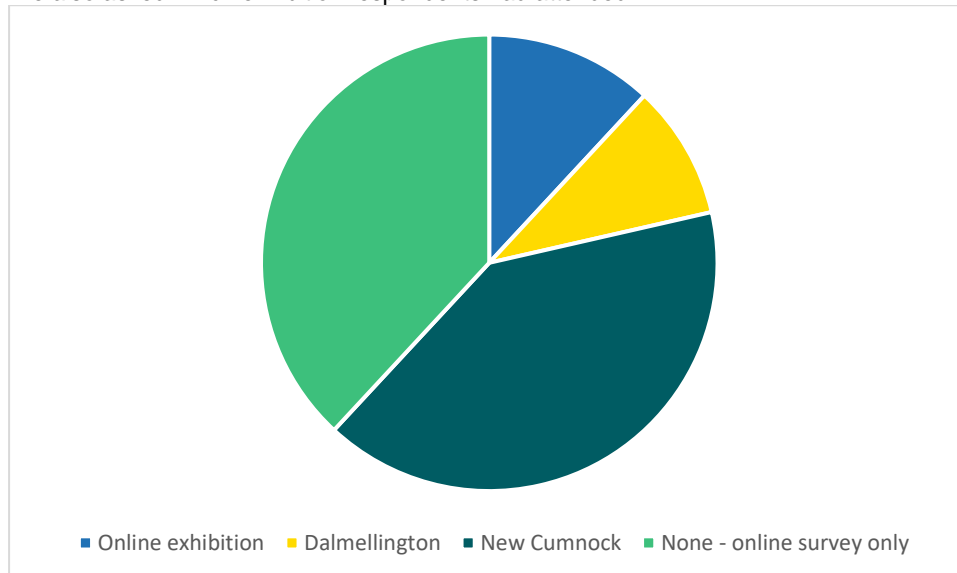
The survey was also an opportunity to gather feedback on the exhibition and how information on the proposed wind farm was presented.

First we asked how people had heard about the exhibition.



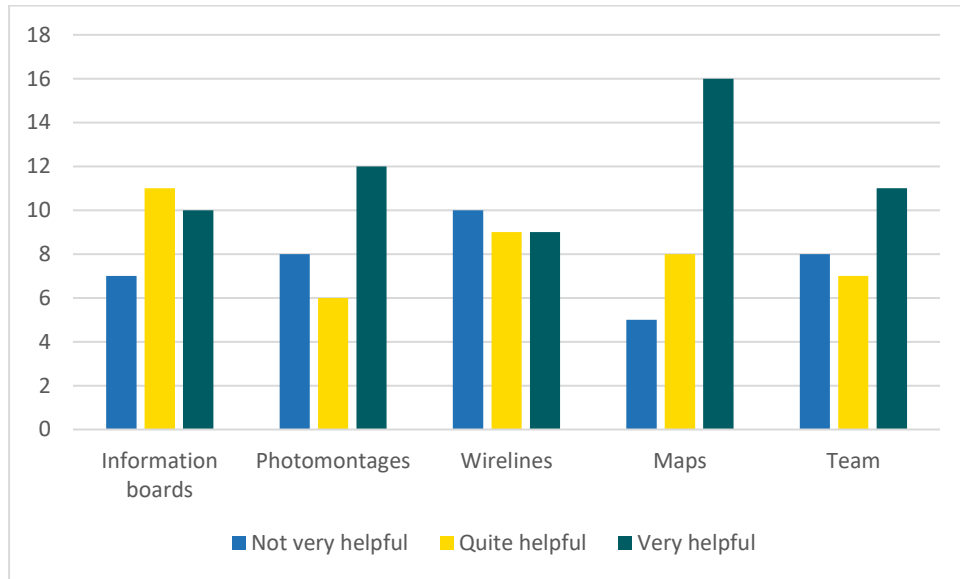
Whilst an advertisement had been placed in the local newspaper, the most impactful means of communication were the project newsletter and flyer plus social media. (Nb most of those ticking 'Other' described hearing about the exhibition via word of mouth.)

We also asked which exhibition respondents had attended:



This data indicates that 16 responses – over 37% - were from people who had not viewed the exhibition materials online or in person.

We also sought feedback on what was most or least helpful for those attending the exhibitions in person.



Whilst opinions were mixed, it is clear that maps, photomontages and being able to talk to the project team were the most helpful aspects of the exhibitions. We will consider this feedback when planning future local engagement events.

2. Additional feedback

In addition to feedback gathered via the survey, Vattenfall also noted questions and themes that arose through conversation.

These informal pieces of feedback were gathered in a variety of settings such as local shops, school events, community events and business fairs, as well as the project's public exhibitions.

Whilst not scientific, this data enriches our understanding and context of the themes people wished to discuss, especially those who did not complete a formal feedback questionnaire.

Much of this feedback aligned with that of the survey response (eg desire to see reduced energy bills) whilst others provided an alternative point of view more relaxed about the proposal (eg appreciation of the opportunities for local jobs and businesses, no issues over the turbine transport route). We also heard new questions and ideas.

This feedback can be summarised as follows:

Get them up - the more the better, brings work and money to village. Offer free electricity.

Concerned about visual impact and proximity to Dalmellington.

Dalmellington has been more prone to flooding than in previous years, and links this to deforestation on wind farms – would this project would make it worse?

Wants evidence of economic impact of South Kyle on Doon Valley (not wider Ayrshire area as previously assessed).

Wants to see video representations of visual impact of lighting at night

In favour. Very positive experience of South Kyle. Compared favourably to impression of other developments currently under construction.

Key issue is giving electricity to England.

Keen to resolve issue of cameras on Ospreys at Loch Doon. Could South Kyle II Wind Farm help?

Issue over bridge at Waterside/Dunaskin (NGR 244791, 608106). ARA were supposed to installing a footway to enable residents from cottages to safely access bus stop and chapel without having to walk on very busy road. However, this work has been delayed due to repeated delivery of wind turbines.

Also asked about the feasibility of having electric bike charging points on the network of off road paths/cycle paths in the area.

Concerns about potential road disruption on B741.

Sheep farmer interested in any plans for land within the site boundary directly adjacent to his property.

Interested in jobs and opportunities for young people. Concerns about Doon Academy

Very interested in apprenticeship opportunities

Referenced the successful approach to community benefits for South Kyle Wind Farm and would like to see similar for South Kyle II Wind Farm

Interested in engineering careers for grandchildren

Concerned about Afton Road in New Cumnock

Interested in how wind farm proposals are communicated

Concerns about concrete, micro plastics from blades and other environmental impacts from operational wind farms.

Very concerned about vibrations which appear to be coming from South Kyle Wind Farm, impacting on residents' health and wellbeing.

Too many turbines already and concerned about future

Public recreation access opportunities via community benefits

Concerned with tourism and ability to use the land the turbines will be built on.

Would like to see Dalrymple and Hollybush community council included in community benefits. Currently excluded and is not part of 9CC, yet Hollybush is arguably as affected as Patna by turbine transportation route.

3. How we are using this feedback

The feedback gathered will help Vattenfall design the best wind farm we can and inform how we proceed to construction and beyond should South Kyle II Wind Farm receive consent.

The following pages address key themes, with an outline of Vattenfall's response.

3.1. Communicating the suitability of this location for onshore wind

The survey response showed that whilst 60% supported onshore wind, only 49% supported wind farm development in this region. Comments received expanded on concerns some people have about the number of wind farms already in the local area, particularly their visual impact, and a sense of unfairness compared to other parts of the country.

To help explain why we are proposing a wind farm in this area, the suitability of this location for onshore development was included in the public consultation materials. This will be expanded upon in the EIA.

Vattenfall will also continue to focus on both communicating and delivering the positive impacts of Vattenfall's approach to onshore development including supporting local jobs and businesses; generating community benefit funding and delivering habitat and biodiversity improvements.

3.1.1. Grid capacity

Some feedback indicated concerns over the grid's capacity to cope with further wind farms development.

We will be mindful to address this point in communications, highlighting that the national grid is currently being upgraded across the country, and that South Kyle II Wind Farm will, along with other renewable developments, upgrade the parts of the grid that they connect to. This will ultimately bring forward improvement work to the local and national grid capacity.

3.1.2. Energy exporting

We heard some comments about wind farms exporting electricity to England, and that this should mean wind farms should rather be built there and not in this part of Scotland. We note this feedback and will consider it when planning future communications, including updated project FAQs.

3.2. The project layout

The survey response showed that around two thirds of respondents were either content or neutral about the wind farm, and one third concerned. A similar ratio as expressed on the inclusion of battery storage. However, 52% said they were concerned over turbine height.

This concern reflects the proposed 200m tip height for South Kyle II Wind Farm – taller than those currently installed in the vicinity of Dalmellington and New Cumnock. This is, however, aligned with, or in some cases lower than, the most recently consented wind farms in the area. Nevertheless, Vattenfall recognises the concerns expressed, particularly the desire from local people to better understand the potential impacts of the additional height, and the reasoning behind taller turbines. This was noted early in the design process with the tip heights reduced from an initial 250m. Reasons for the 200m tip height were covered in public information, and a graphic has been published demonstrating the potential increased electricity yield.

We will continue to address this in our communications with local communities and stakeholders and provide further detail in the EIA.

3.2.1. Battery storage

Some specific concerns about the safety of battery storage were raised, in particular fire risks. These will be addressed in the EIA.

3.3. Visual impact

The wind farm has been carefully designed to minimise visual impact where feasible. Viewpoints have been selected across the area, with visualisations and wirelines produced.

Further bespoke visualisations have been generated where requested by individual residents. We will continue to offer this to local residents.

Feedback was received from a local hotel raising concerns about potential visual impact. To address this, wirelines have been produced from the hotel location to be shared with the management team.

3.3.1. Night lighting

At 200m tip height, some aviation lighting will be required at South Kyle II. Feedback was received express concern about the impact this could have on the area's dark skies.

The potential impact of night lighting will be thoroughly explored in the EIA.

Vattenfall have instructed a study by Dr Stuart Lumsden on the visibility of Aviation Warning Lights at night for South Kyle II. This report will be part of the EIAR along with aviation lighting visuals from key viewpoints. Dr Stuart Lumsden is an Associate Professor in the School of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Leeds. He worked for the professional optical observatory based near Coonabarabran, NSW, the (then) Anglo-Australian Observatory for 6 years, working on optical and infrared instrumentation for astronomy, and is therefore familiar with issues related to light pollution, and the propagation of light, at night. He has acted as an expert on such matters for wind farm developments in Scotland over the past 10 years, with particular regard to the use of

infrared lighting on turbines with tip height of less than 150m near the Dark Sky Park in Galloway, and visible red aviation lighting for the turbines exceeding 150 m at developments across Scotland, including the public inquiries for Crystal Rig IV, and Clash Gour. He is a member of the Scottish Government Aviation Lighting Guidance Working Group.

In summary, from his analysis, the lights appear similar to bright stars (albeit red) from the selected night-time viewpoints, with background light pollution reducing the contrast we see them at from many locations. In twilight, they are sufficiently distant that the brightness of the lights against the sky is limited somewhat by contrast with the background. More distant locations in the Core zone of the Dark Sky Park, such as the Merrick Wild Land Area are far enough away that even though the lights are largely viewed horizontally, they appear faint purely because of the effect of distance. Although more visited nighttime areas such as the Loch Doon Road are closer, the effect of viewing angle means the apparent brightness of the lights is less than those at higher points as looking more towards the background light pollution from the central belt.

One individual requested that a video be produced to illustrate how night lighting may look. Vattenfall does not plan to commission such a video, and is content that still illustrations and accompanying commentary will provide a more accurate representation.

3.4. Habitats and biodiversity

The survey indicated what local people wanted to see prioritised in the wind farm's approach to protecting habitats, boosting biodiversity and wildlife. This included supporting wildlife and birds (71%), protecting and enhancing water courses (56%) and biodiversity enhancing measures such as planting native broadleaf trees and wildlife friendly species (52%)

This has been fed into the development of the project's habitat management plan.

3.4.1. Protecting forests

Feedback included reference to protecting forests including the proposed Galloway National Park.

The importance of forestry to the local area is noted, and we will work to provide updates on this aspect of the project as the development progresses.

Concerns were also raised about felling and the creation of existing forestry tracks. To minimise the requirement for new roads, existing wind farm and/or forestry roads will be utilised as far as possible.

Felling is to be expected in an area of plantation forestry such as South Kyle II, and is part of FLS's forestry management plan. Nevertheless, felling required for the wind farm will be subject to replanting, and an improved species mix to enhance biodiversity. This will be explored in the EMMP which includes measures for habitat enhancements and restoration and is provided as an Appendix of the EIAR.

Concerns about this potential impact of felling on flood risk have been passed to FLS.

3.4.2. Microplastics

One respondent expressed concerns about the use of concrete and microplastics.

Whilst Vattenfall disagrees with the premise of this question, we acknowledge that concerns relating to wind farms can cover a very broad range of topics. The project FAQs will be updated to cover these specific areas.

3.4.3. Birds and wildlife

Concerns were raised regarding the impact of wind farms on wildlife and birds of prey.

Flight activity surveys and Collision Risk Modelling (CRM) have been carried out as part of the EIA process. From this, ornithological features were identified and of these only one Important Ornithological Feature (IOF), goshawk, was identified in the context of the Proposed Development.

There are no predicted significant effects on goshawk as a result of the Proposed Development, including cumulative effects. Additionally, there are no predicted significant effects on other ornithological features recorded during baseline ornithology surveys for the Proposed Development.

For all ornithological features, although no species-specific mitigation is required, various embedded measures will be implemented to ensure compliance with legislation, and to follow good practice guidance with regard to breeding birds. In addition, an EMMP has been prepared which includes measures for habitat enhancements and ornithological monitoring and is provided as an Appendix of the EIAR. ^[96]

3.4.4. Environmental disturbance and protecting biodiversity

Comments were received suggesting an expectation that the wind farm will harm the environment, and a desire for developers to 'put right their mess' and 'stop destroying local ecosystems'.

Vattenfall disagrees with the premise of such comments and is proud of the record of our projects in delivering habitat and biodiversity improvements. We acknowledge that public awareness of this investment could be higher and will consider this in our future communications plans.

In developing our proposal for South Kyle II Wind Farm, environment and biodiversity has been a key factor in the design process.

By applying effective mitigation measures, mainly through the design process (embedded mitigation) and following good practice guidelines during construction including production of an outline EMP, the magnitude of residual effects of the Proposed Development are assessed as being low/negligible in terms of magnitude, and thus not significant. Although no specific mitigation is required, various embedded measures will be implemented to ensure compliance with legislation, and to follow good practice guidance with regard to ecosystems, habitats and biodiversity. In addition, an EMMP has been prepared which includes measures for habitat enhancements and ecological monitoring and is provided as an Appendix of the EIAR.

Habitat surveys have been carried out and identified habitats of concern/high importance are avoided and also have development buffer applied to avoid impact. Due to commercial forestry there are no such habitats of concern in development area - mitigations and good practices will be followed to avoid impact on nearby habitats.

As commercial forestry biodiversity in Proposed Development is low, however Vattenfall would look to improve and increase biodiversity as part of the development and habitat management/restoration. Outline plans will be included in EMMP.

3.4.5. Grazing and support for local farmers

Some feedback was received suggesting that regenerative grazing be included in the plans. This feedback will be discussed with the landowners, FLS.

3.4.6. Peat

The wind farm design avoids deep peat as far as practicable. On surveying peat in proposed development area is typically of poor quality/already degraded/disturbed due to commercial forestry operations. Vattenfall look to restore and enhance peat habitat above and beyond any impact from wind farm construction as part of EMMP.

Vattenfall look to restore and enhance peat habitat above and beyond any impact from wind farm construction as part of EMMP.

3.4.7. Vibrations

One individual expressed concern about vibrations, saying they had experienced this since the installation of South Kyle Wind Farm. To address this question and how it may relate to South Kyle II Windfarm Vattenfall consulted independent specialists TNEI. Their studies have verified that the level of ground borne vibration generated from the operation of wind turbines is extremely low. TNEI's measurements directly at the base of turbines have all been well below any vibration limits that might be imposed on a residential receptor, which would be at a much greater distance away.

3.5. Community benefits and shared ownership

3.5.1. Broad priorities

When asked about how South Kyle II Wind Farm's Community Benefits should be prioritised a number of broad topics were supported. Those identified through our earlier consultation for the South Kyle Wind Farm Fund remain popular, namely Employment and Skills; Health and Wellbeing; Enterprise and Business; and Climate Change and Resilience. We also heard about a desire for cheaper energy and access to nature, plus a number of other ideas (see below).

Should the project receive consent, we will explore these priorities, ideas and other suggestions made. We will be looking at key organisations and initiatives delivering programmes within these sectors and ascertaining where value can be added that meets local needs and aspirations. The community will be in the driving seat of where this goes.

3.5.2. How the community benefits could be used

Feedback indicated an appetite for the wind farm to help address domestic energy prices. If consented, the project will commence further discussions with local communities on community benefits. Energy will be noted as a key topic and we will explore how we can help communities build resilience in the face of market price rises including looking longer term at energy efficiency of residents. We also hope to work with local organisations working within this space so that a collaborative approach to building that resilience is taken.

Other ideas suggested in the feedback (including enhancing access to nature, more walking/cycling paths; facilities for young people and the elderly; a fitness centre; sponsoring a viewing facility for the ospreys at Loch Doon; skills and apprenticeships; and roads/pavement improvements) will also be part of exploratory conversations we will have with community members and organisations should the project receive consent.

3.5.3. Area of benefit

Whilst we did not seek feedback specifically on the area of benefit, we did receive some feedback on this topic. We heard divergent views on whether community benefits should only be for those who live closest to the wind farm, or if it should be shared across a wider geographical area. We were also asked if Dalrymple and Hollybush should be considered given the impact of turbine deliveries.

We will take these points on board and consider these issues at a further stage in community benefits consultation.

3.5.4. Administration

Whilst not seeking feedback on who should administer the South Kyle II Wind Farm community benefit fund, some respondents offered opinions on this topic. We heard a range of views, and this feedback is noted and will be explored in later stages of consultation should consent be granted. Initial updates have been provided to key local organisations and we will continue to update them as the project progresses.

Similar to when we developed the fund for South Kyle Wind Farm, Vattenfall will take an open and collaborative approach to helping the community to establish which local partners are best placed to deliver their needs and aspirations.

3.5.5. Shared ownership

There was a mixed response to the question of shared ownership. Should the project receive consent, we will explore shared ownership further so that local people and organisations are more informed.

3.6. Economic impacts - jobs, skills and supply chain

3.6.1. Apprenticeships

As the project proceeds, further information will be shared with local partners and communities about Vattenfall's apprenticeship scheme. Ahead of this, further engagement will take place with key stakeholders including training providers, schools and suppliers.

3.6.2. Local business opportunities

When sharing information on jobs/business opportunities for local people, the most favoured media were direct email, social media, and via partner organisations. This feedback is noted and will help Vattenfall devise future communications as we deploy the projects Skills and Employment Plan.

Specific reference was also made to the Port of Ayr. Our experience in Ayrshire has shown that using the local port can add significant local value to the local economy. This is a priority for Vattenfall, so we will explore the technical potential to use Ayr with turbine and logistics providers again.

Vattenfall has created and maintains a bespoke local supplier directory, encouraging and facilitating contractors to use this when feasible. Commitments to local content are outlined within our contracting requirements. During construction, when opportunities are at their greatest, these processes will be monitored with bespoke responses initiated where required - e.g. the creation of a local accommodation list; building direct links with local food vendors; procuring from local printers etc

During construction, local stakeholders and groups will be added to a 'broadcast list' for news of jobs and supplier opportunities

3.6.3. Schools and young people

Numerous local schools were suggested for us to connect with - particularly New Cumnock Primary School, Doon Academy and Robert Burns Academy.

Vattenfall will continue to engage extensively with local schools both directly and through partner programmes and initiatives such as the East Ayrshire Clean Green Schools Awards and Developing Young Workforce initiatives.

Once consented, we will investigate further how the wind farm can best serve its local schools in terms of their needs, for example site visits, STEM workshops on renewables and career preparation pathways and other suggestions coming from the local education sector.

3.6.4. Barriers to employment

We also note the feedback received concerning barriers to local people who seek to work on the project – from transport links to the site, to being able to afford training and appropriate clothing. This will be discussed at a later stage with Tier One contractors, and with partner agencies.

3.6.5. Evidencing impact

One respondent asked for details of the economic impact of South Kyle Wind Farm specifically on the villages of Doon Valley, rather than the broader area. Whilst independent research has shown the positive impact on the local economy of the South Kyle project across south west Scotland, data was not gathered on a village by village basis. We will take this feedback on board and should South Kyle II proceed to

construction we will explore the feasibility of measuring economic and social impact at this level.

3.6.6. Tourism

Some people expressed concerns about impacts on tourism. Independent research suggests onshore wind has little if any negative impacts on tourism, and we will continue to communicate this in our engagement activities.

Should the project be consented, we will continue to engage widely in the local area.

3.7. Construction

Most people were content or neutral about the proposed turbine transport route, with 22% concerned. Comments provided some indication of what these concerns were including road quality; littering; increased traffic volume, speed and noise; and cumulative impact.

However, it should also be noted that some comments were specifically relating to Afton Road in New Cumnock. This road will not be impacted by South Kyle II Wind Farm.

Vattenfall notes the concerns raised over the impact of increased traffic to site on local residents and will return to this once the project enters the construction phase. We will draw on experience of developing in this area and elsewhere, and will update residents regularly. This topic will be explored in further engagement and we will be keen to learn from the experience of residents - including those on Afton Road.

3.7.1. Roads

Comments on road surface quality will be shared with local roads authorities and be considered when preparing future transport and traffic management plans.

One respondent raised the issue of pedestrian access across the bridge at Dunaskin. Should the project be consented, pedestrian access will be considered in developing the traffic management plan. This comment will also be fed back to the local roads authority.

3.8. Communication and consultation

Social media and the newsletter/flyer were the most impactful method of informing people of the events. This feedback will help inform further consultation and communications as the project progresses

On the exhibition itself, 29% of responses gave high scores (8-10), with 36% giving mid scores (4-7) and another 36% giving low scores (1-3). The highest 'very helpful' scores went to Maps (59%), Photomontages (46%) and Talking to the Project Team (42%). The highest 'not very helpful' scores went to Wirelines (36%), Talking to the Project Team (31%) and Photomontages (31%). This data will help us plan future exhibitions and engagement opportunities.

One comment said the exhibition was not available to those who worked out of the area during the week. The exhibition and survey were made available online, and extended by a

further 6 weeks to enable further responses. This extension was widely circulated and advertised locally through social media

One respondent criticised the information as being 'not transparent'. All information provided was transparent and the project team was and remains available for further in-depth discussion with any local resident or stakeholder.

Feedback regarding the layout of photomontages will be taken on board. Although information on the location of viewpoints was included and mapped, for some people this was not clear, nor was the reasoning behind the selection of viewpoints offered (higher footfall/traffic and ensuring a broad range of views from across the area). This feedback will be considered when designing future exhibition materials.