



12.30-14.00 20 March 2014

Committee Room 2, Scottish Parliament

Chair: Jim Eadie MSP

Community Benefit and renewable energy

Meeting Note

1. Attendees

A provisional list of attendees is attached to the end of this note. If you attended and are not shown on the list, please email Gavin Donoghue at gdonoghue@scottishrenewables.com.

2. Introduction and approval of minutes from the last meeting

Jim Eadie MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced the speakers, and asked if there were any corrections to the previous minutes. There were no suggestions.

Alex Hill agreed and Tariq Muneer seconded that the minutes represented an accurate description of the previous meeting of 23 January.

3. Presentation: *Community Benefit from the Inside* - Charles Dixon-Spain, Chair, Colintrave and Glendaruel Development Trust

4. Presentation: *Sharing the benefits of local renewable energy generation* - Steve Salt, Planning and Public Affairs Director, West Coast Energy

5. Presentation: *The Scottish Government Community Benefit Register and Good Practice Principles* - Jennifer Ramsay, Community Benefits Officer, Local Energy Scotland

6. Questions

A range of questions were directed at the panel; please note that the intention of this meeting note is not to record a verbatim account of the meeting. Questions posed to the panel included:

- Mike Martin asked Charles whether owners of second homes had proved to be an obstacle to development in the area to which Charles replied that there was no easy answer than that the development trust had debated the issue a number of times.
- Neil Philips asked what kind of size windfarm was required for community benefit and whether you could replicate the Fintry model of development.

- Charles said that the community council, windfarm trust and local development trust provided a level of due diligence to the funding and that the community benefit was directed at the absolute need of the community.
- Steve Salt said that windfarm size could be as low as a seven turbine scheme that could have one community turbine, but all depends on size and grid connection.
- Bill Rodger asked about investments in the land and what happened after 25 years
 - Charles said cost of decommissioning included in Community Benefit level.
 - Steve said decommissioning was dealt with properly by the planning authorities
- Patrick Harvie MSP asked why Community Benefit policy was a fixed amount rather than a percentage linked to the price of electricity
 - Steve said it was right that communities pushed for as much benefit from developers as possible but that a percentage of profits difficult due to commercial realities.
 - Charles suggested £10k might be closer to mark for communities but that too much Community Benefit could make marginal schemes undevelopable.
 - Jennifer pointed out that the principles were the equivalent of £5k benefit so take a number of different forms.
- A number of questions were then taken at once from the following
 - Neil Philips asked how many projects effected by poor grid infrastructure
 - Graham Laing asked why developers didn't just concentrate on good sites that had a realistic chance of receiving a consent
 - Lorna Ross aksed whether community benefit was paid by biomass plants
 - Hugh Hunter-Gordon asked about community benefit arrangements for s.36 applications
- Charles replied that the planning system was not quite right but would be difficult to relax it so that Community Benefit was related to a planning consent
- Steve said the Scottish Government's new principles may help with interaction with communities
- Jennifer emphasized that planning and Community Benefit need to be kept separate.
- Charles said if biomass plant commercial scale then they should provide community benefit
- Jennifer pointed out that the principles applied to all onshore technologies

8. Date and Topic of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on 25 June 2014 between 12.30pm and 2.00pm in Committee Room 2. The meeting will focus on the European context – policy, funding, education

9. AOB

For suggestions for correction of this note and to request copies of presentations, please contact the secretariat, Gavin Donoghue (gdonoghue@scottishrenewables.com).

9. Attendees

Blair	Armstrong
Barbara	Atterson
Joss	Blamire
Andrew	Bright
Tony	Brunton

Stefan	Buettner
Nikki	Carlyle
Stephanie	Clark
Greg	Clarke
Michelle	Cullis
Jack	Davies
John	Debenham
Graeme	Downie
Jim	Eadie MSP
Hew	Edgar
Karen	Freel
Paul	Gill
Anne	Gray
Kelly	Green
Jelte	Harnmeijer
Patrick	Harvie MSP
Jenny	Hazzard
Thomas	Hind
Linda	Holt
Hugh	Hunter Gordon
Aileen	Jackson
Christine	Jones
Sue	Kearns
Graeme	Keddie
David	Keddie
Alan	Kyle
Graham	Lang
Marion	Lang
Elizabeth	Leighton
Ian	Lindsay
Mike	MacKenzie MSP
Ed	Maddox
Graeme	Mair
Mike	Martin
Philip	Matthews
Liam	McArthur MSP
Janis	McCulloch
Jamie	McGrigor MSP
Stewart	Mckenna
Brian	McLeish
Emma	Megaughin
Beatrice	Morrice
Bristow	Muldoon
Tariq	Muneer

Andy	Murray
Alex	Orr
Liz	Partington
Paul	Phare
Neil	Philips
Clive	Richardson
Bill	Rodger
William	Ross
Lorna	Ross
Stephen	Sheridan
Peter	Strachan
Neil	Sutherland
John	Taylor
James	Thomson
David	Torrance
Barry	Truswell
Kate	Turner
Jean	Welstead
Mark	Whittle