

**KYPE MUIR**

**Wind Farm Proposals**

**PRE APPLICATION CONSULTATION  
REPORT**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION .....	1
2.	PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS .....	2
3.	MEETINGS.....	13
4.	TELEPHONE SURVEY .....	16
5.	ALTERATIONS AS A RESULT OF ENGAGEMENT.....	18
6.	CONCLUSION .....	19

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Banks Renewables recognise that the developments that we undertake can raise interest and concerns within locally communities. Our “Development with Care” philosophy to development is therefore central to the way that we carry out business. The approach ensures that our developments have a positive, long term effect on the environment and on the local communities within which we are working.

1.2 Before submitting a planning application Banks Renewables engage with local communities, consulting on our proposals, explaining our initial plans and listening to local views. We value the views of the local community and actively seek out local people’s opinions, expectations and requirements which often help to shape our developments. Our approach to community engagement is much more than just providing information on our developments. We aim to consult, listen and provide opportunities for community involvement in our projects.

1.3 In line with this philosophy Banks Renewables have undertaken a comprehensive programme of community engagement over the last 2 years in relation to our proposals for a wind farm at Kype Muir. The main objectives of this programme of have been:

- To encourage as wide a cross section of people as possible who live locally to have a say in the development of the wind farm;
- To ensure people have access to information about why the Kype Muir site was chosen;
- To ensure people have access to accurate and factual information on any aspects of the proposed development which may be of particular interest or concern to them;
- To allow the local community the opportunity to shape the development taken forwards; and
- To enable Banks Developments to gauge public opinion regarding the proposed wind project.

1.4 In order to achieve these objectives Banks Renewables have:

- Held meetings with local community groups, community councils, statutory consultees and other interested parties;
- Placed press releases in the local media and maintained up-to-date information on the company’s website to keep people informed of proposals and up and coming events;
- Held public exhibitions in the local area; and
- Commissioned a telephone survey of residents to ascertain their views on the proposed development.

1.5 This report sets out details of this public consultation.

## 2. PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS

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- 2.1 Two separate rounds of exhibitions have been held by Banks Renewables in relation to Kype Muir wind farm. At both exhibitions details of the proposed development were displayed for public viewing and comment (copies of the exhibition material can be found in appendices 1 and 2). All exhibitions were open from 3pm to 7pm with representatives of all the disciplines required for the development proposals (e.g. traffic consultant, technical staff, planners and project manager) present so that specific questions could be answered if required.
- 2.2 Comment sheets were available at the exhibition and people were encouraged to complete and return these sheets in order to provide feedback for the team. (See Appendices 3 and 4).
- 2.3 In both instances over 10,000 leaflets were distributed to households in the area, to provide details of the scheme and advertise the exhibitions. The area covered by the distribution was agreed in advance with the community councils.

### STAGE ONE EXHIBITION

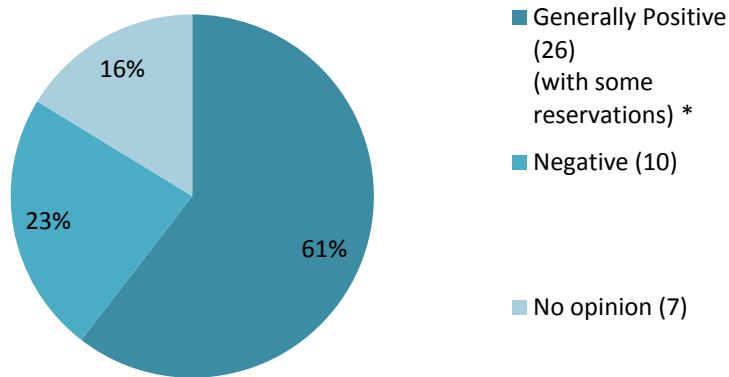
- 2.4 The stage one exhibition was held in the early stages of the development, prior to submission of the scoping report. The aim of this exhibition was to introduce members of the public to Banks Renewables proposals for a wind farm at Kype Muir and gain their views on what was being proposed. Due to the fact that this initial consultation was undertaken so early in the development process, no firm details in terms of the number of turbines or height of turbines was set out in the exhibition material; the aim was to set out the broad principle of a wind farm in this location.
- 2.5 Exhibitions were held at the following locations:
- Jubilee Hall, Lesmahagow – 8<sup>th</sup> December 2009
  - Barrie Shelter, Strathaven – 9<sup>th</sup> December 2009
  - Stonehouse Public Institute, Stonehouse – 9<sup>th</sup> December 2009

### Exhibition Responses

- 2.6 Over the 3 exhibitions 154 people attended and left their contact details. Of these 115 completed comments sheets expressing their views on the development proposals. This low turnout compared to the number of people informed of the event indicates a lack of concern in the local area in relation to the proposed development.
- 2.7 A general summary of the comments sheets and letters was as follows<sup>1</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> Not all questionnaires were 100% completed by all participants. Figures are representative of the number of responses to the specific question.



\* Unless outright opposition was expressly stated on the comment form, comments are treated as 'generally positive with some reservations'. These reservations are then laid out in the table and will be responded to accordingly during the progress of the application.

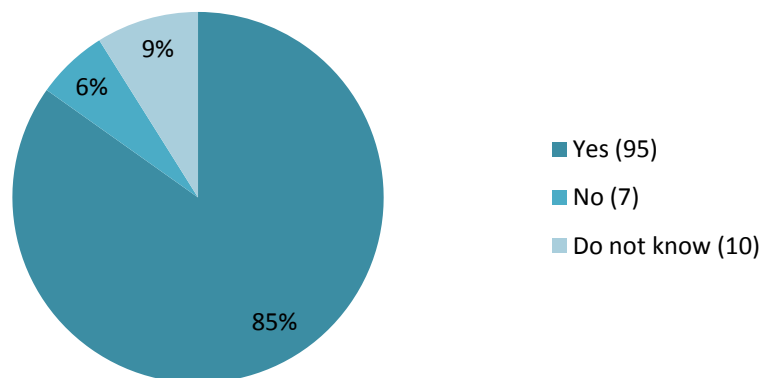
2.8 The outcome of the public response was considered to be very promising with less than a quarter of responses being negative.

2.9 The main issues that were recorded on the comments sheets are summarised below along with Banks Renewables responses at the time to the concerns raised where appropriate.

**Stage One Exhibition Comments Sheets**

2.10 Question 1:

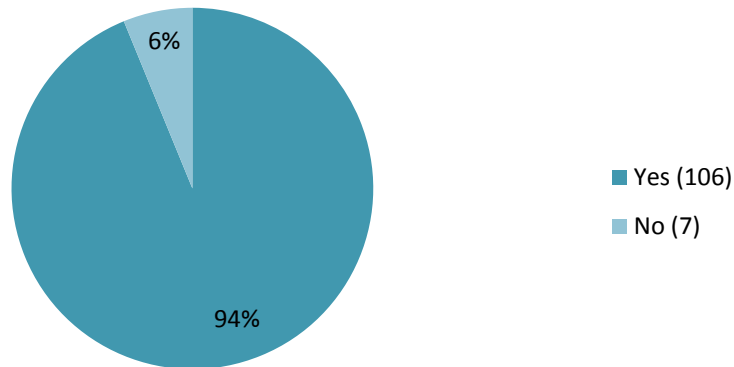
*Do you think climate change is an important issue?*



Banks Renewables are encouraged by the awareness of the issue.

2.11 Question 2:

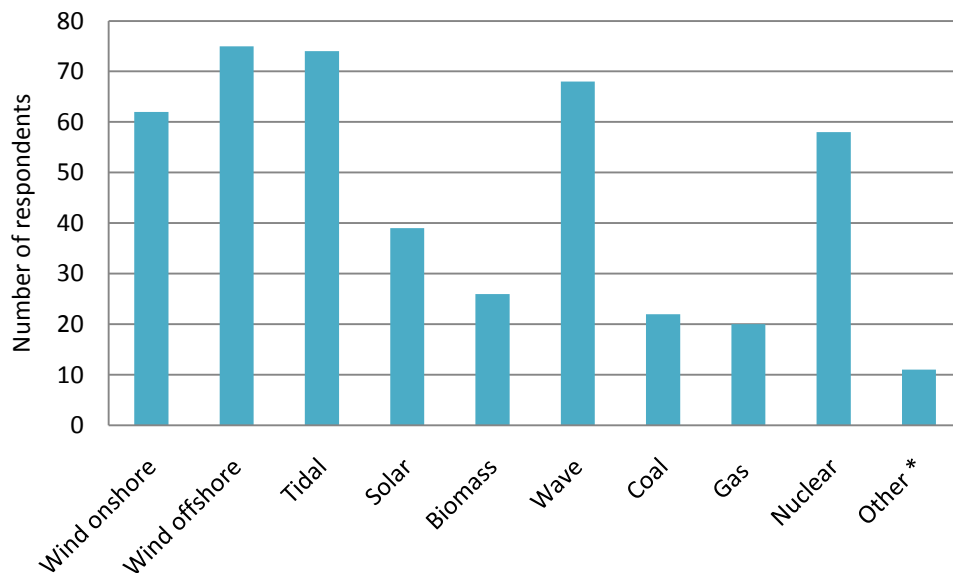
*Do you think there is a need for renewable energy?*



Banks Renewables are encouraged by the support for renewable energy developments in general.

2.12 Question 3:

*What form of energy generation do you think is most appropriate for the UK?*

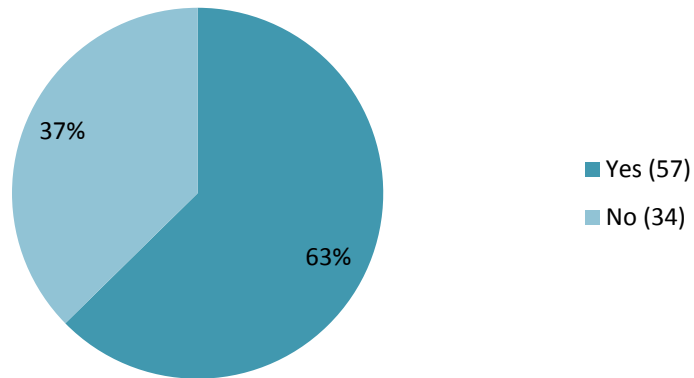


\* Other includes hydro, CHP oil and energy from waste.

Banks Renewables welcome that along with off shore wind and tidal, onshore wind is seen by respondents as being one of the most appropriate forms of energy generation in the UK, ahead of more traditional non-renewable energy sources.

2.13 Question 4:

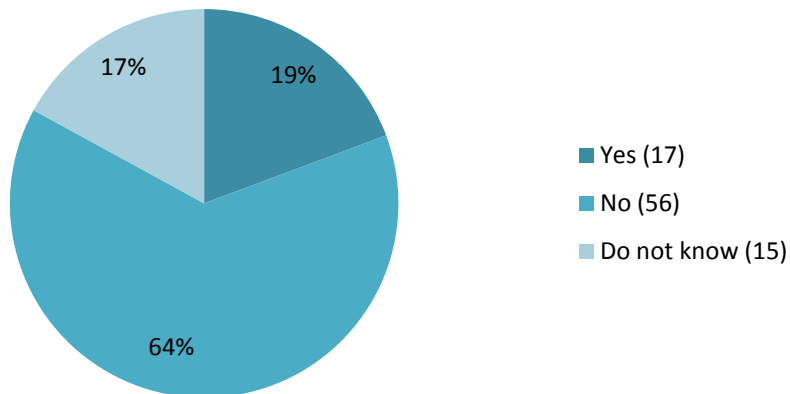
*Have you ever visited a wind farm?*



Banks Renewables are encouraged by people's interest in wind farm developments.

2.14 Question 5:

*Would you support a wind farm proposal within 2km of your home?*

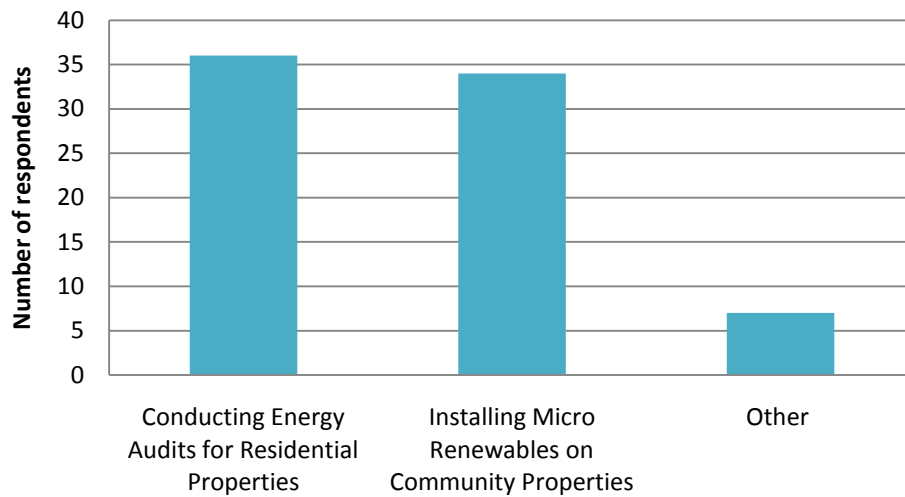


The response to this question, when compared to the support for on-shore wind development in general demonstrates the "not in my back yard" attitude to wind farm development.



2.15 Question 6:

*Which of the following aspects would most benefit your community?*



Banks Renewables will take responses into account when working on community benefits package that will be provided to the local community if wind farm is granted permission.

2.16 Question 7:

*Are there any projects/community groups that you would like to see any Community Benefit funding spent on?*

Lesmahagow Development Trust	School children	Older people
Access paths for wading and horse riding	Residential renewable energy	Individual help for double glazing
Projects to reduce carbon footprint	Local schools	Countryside access
Leisure facilities	Drumclog Church & WRI	Multi-play surfaces at Gilmourton
Nature reserves	Sandford Community Council	RSPB Rural Stewardship Scheme
Adams Trust, Strathaven	Community ownership of a turbine	Improve Old Mill, Strathaven
Improve Strathaven Town Centre	Avon Angling Club	Tree planting
Children's Groups	Allotment scheme	Stonehouse Development Trust
Heritage Group	Girl Guides	

Along with the feedback received from question 6 Banks Renewables will take responses into account when working on community benefits package that will be provided to the local community if wind farm is granted planning permission.

2.17 Question 8:

*What key issues should we address in developing our proposals for the Kype Muir wind farm?*

Underground connections	Traffic Issues	CO <sup>2</sup> capture
Site access issues	Wildlife	Forestry removal
TV signals	Community Benefit	Proximity to houses
Historic sites and monuments	Protection of waterways	Proximity to towns and villages
Wind speed	Spring water supplies	TV reception
Property values	Drainage issues	Noise issues
Cumulative impact	Impact on SPA	Countryside access issues
Wildlife	Community benefit	Use of local contractors where possible

Banks Renewables will take these comments into account in the design iteration process that the proposals will go through in the lead up to submission of the planning application to try and address these concerns where possible.

2.18 Other comments received:

Comments received	Banks Renewables Response
I have a private spring water supply and I want it safeguarded	A fully hydrology and hydrogeology will be undertaken of the site to assess the impact upon the water environment on and surrounding the site. If proposals are found to have a detrimental effect on private water supplies alternative methods of supply will be put in place.
Information on future phases might be helpful	At this stage there are no plans for future phases, are concentrating on ensuring an acceptable scheme is proposed on the current site that address the issues raised during this consultation process.
Everything appears positive	Welcome these positive comments.
Access needs to be clearly thought out	Prior to submission of the application a Transport Assessment and Access Study will be undertaken to ensure that the proposed access route is suitable.
We are being surrounded by wind farms in Strathaven	Kype Muir is located in an area of search for wind farms that has been identified by South Lanarkshire Council, however are aware that this is a point of concern for local residents.

Would like contractor involvement/local work for local tradesmen	Reasonable endeavors will be taken to ensure that construction contracts, where possible, are granted to locally based companies.
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## STAGE TWO EXHIBITION

2.19 The second stage exhibitions were held at the end of the development process to present the finalised development proposals to members of the public. Although views of attendees were sought, the exhibition was more about informing people of the development proposals rather than seeking their comments to feed into the development (which was the main aim of the stage one exhibitions).

2.20 The exhibition presented details of the application for 26, 132m turbines at Kype Muir and included information on why Kype Muir was selected as a suitable site by Banks Renewables; visualisations to convey what the proposed development will look like for a range of viewpoints ; information on potential noise generation; and set out the benefits associated with the proposed development. A copy of the exhibition material can be found in appendix 2 of this report.

2.21 The second round exhibitions were held at the following venues:

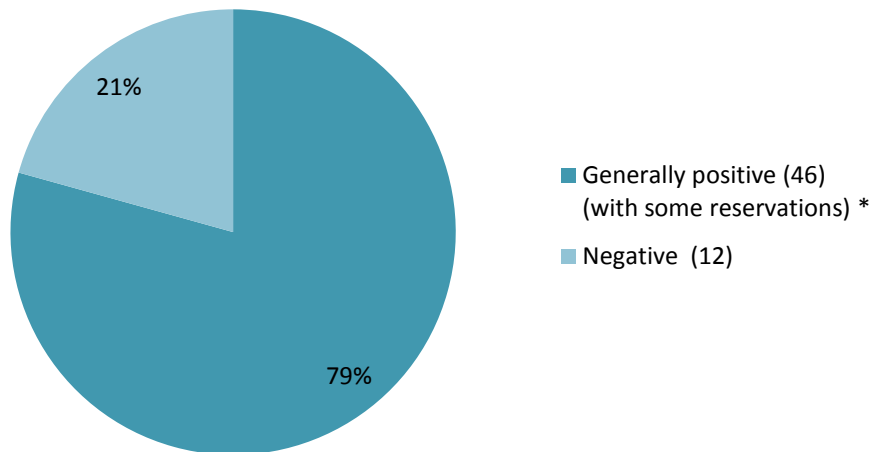
- Stonehouse Public Institute on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2011
- Jubilee Hall, Lesmahagow on the 30 March 2011
- Village Hall Sandford on the 31 March 2011
- Village Hall, Gilmourton on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011
- The Strathaven Hotel, Strathaven on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2011

### Exhibition feedback

2.22 Over the 5 exhibitions 120 people attended with 80 leaving their comments on the proposals.

2.23 A general summary of the comments sheets and letters was as follows<sup>2</sup>:

<sup>2</sup> Not all questionnaires were 100% completed by all participants. Figures are representative of the number of responses to the specific question.



\* Unless outright opposition was expressly stated on the comment form, comments are treated as 'generally positive with some reservations'. These reservations are then laid out in the table and will be responded to accordingly during the progress of the application.

2.24 The outcome of the public response was considered to be very promising with less than a quarter of responses being negative.

2.25 The main issues that were recorded on the comments sheets are summarised below along with the number of people mentioning the issue in their response and Banks Renewables response to the concerns raised where appropriate.

### Stage Two Exhibition Comments Sheets

2.26 Question 1:

*Do you have any comments on the proposal?*

Comments	Number of respondents
In favour of clean energy supportive of your proposals	20
Supportive of this specific proposal	13
Negative visual impact	8
Cumulative impact	7
Well presented exhibition	4
Happier with fewer turbines	4
Key aspects of concerns have been addressed by Banks	2
Concerned about lack of wind	1
Looking forward to details of community benefit	1
Better than the trees	1
Wind power unreliable	1
Happier if turbines were made in Scotland	1

Traffic concerns	1
Agree with renewable energy but not clearing trees	1
Will there be a Visitor Centre?	1
Drop height of front turbines	1
No steel pylons to carry cable to Coalburn	1

Banks Renewables welcome the positive comments and support for proposals. Main issues appear to be cumulative and visual impact. We have taken these issues into consideration in the design iteration. Furthermore, are located within a broad area of search for wind turbines.

2.27 Question 2:

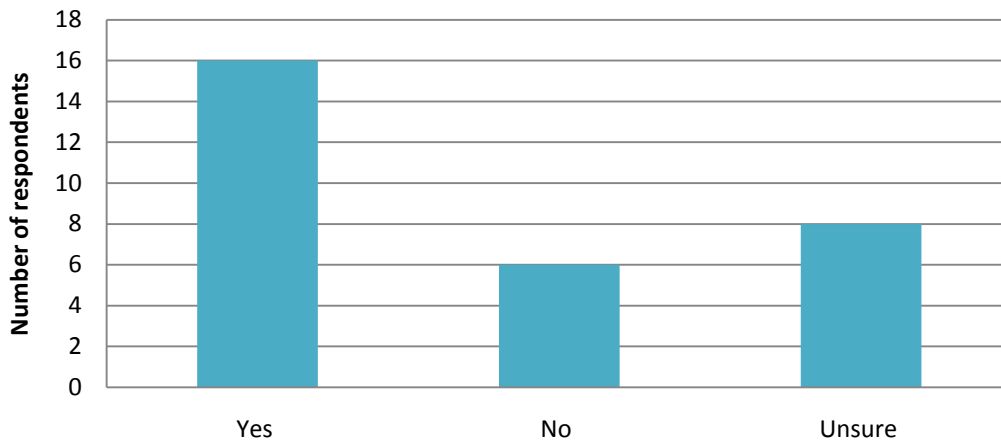
*If the proposed wind farm gets planning permission and a Community Benefit Fund is established to fund local priorities or projects, what would you like to see addressed?*

Issues would wish to see addressed	Number of respondents
Community projects	31
Energy costs/heating your home	31
Roads	27
Environmental projects	27
Sports facilities	20
Public Transport	19
Unemployment	15
Regeneration	12
Arts/Culture or entertainments facilities	12
Anti social behaviour	8
Access for walking/cycling/horse riding	5
Jubilee Hall restoration	1
Facilities for younger people	1
Strathaven Airfield	1
John Hastie Museum/Town Mill to be handled by community instead of SLC	1
Help to rebuild Sandford Primary School	1
Cheap electricity for houses at Lambhill	1
Play parks	1
Apprenticeships	1

Banks Renewables will take these responses into account when developing the community benefits package that will be put in place if permission is granted for the wind farm.

2.28 Question 3:

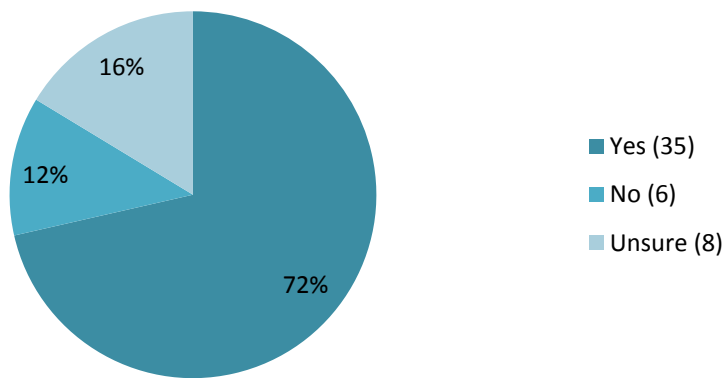
*Does the issue of unemployment affect/concern your family?*



The response to this question highlights that unemployment is an issue in the local areas. Job creation associated with the wind farm could assist in addressing this local concern.

2.29 Question 4:

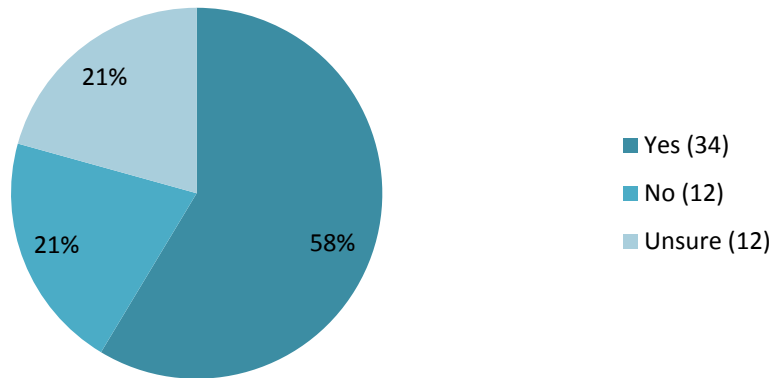
*Would you like to see further opportunities for training or further education?*



Banks Renewables are currently working with South Lanarkshire College and South Lanarkshire Council to identify if there is scope for providing specific courses and apprenticeships linked to development of the wind farm.

2.30 Question 5:

*Do you support the proposals for the Kype Muir Wind Farm?*



Banks Renewables welcome the positive response, with more than half of respondents supportive of the proposals.

2.31 Question 6:

*Any other comments?*

Comments Received	Number of comments received	Banks Renewables Comments
Concerned about private water supply	3	Hydrology Assessment concluded that proposed development will not have an impact on private water supplies
Concerned about access route	1	Access route has been fully assessed
Will removal of trees cause flooding in Strathaven?	1	Development will not increase flood risk
Training opportunities should be offered to local people	1	Proposals being developed with South Lanarkshire College to see if this can be provided
Parking should be made available at Lambhill to help access for cycling g/walking	1	Informal parking will be available on the newly created access road to the site
Getting connected to Broadband supply	1	Cannot provide
Community Investment opportunities	1	Community Benefits Package will be made available to local communities. It will provide access to funding for community developments in the local area.

### **3. MEETINGS**

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- 3.1 Throughout the engagement process Banks Renewables attended and always offered to meet with local residents, interested parties and statutory consultees to provide as much information as possible about the proposals.

#### **LOCAL RESIDENTS**

- 3.2 As part of the initial community baseline work the properties closest to the proposed development, “sensitive properties”, were identified. These properties have subsequently been visited on a one to one basis to provide them with information about the proposed wind farm and address their specific concerns where possible. Banks Renewables wished to ensure that residents closest to the site heard about the proposals from the company in the first instance and provide them with a point of contact for any future queries they may have.

#### **COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

- 3.3 A series of meetings have been held with the 4 community councils within the vicinity of the proposed development:
- Sandford and Upper Avondale Community Council (statutory community council for the proposed development);
  - Strathaven Community Council;
  - Stonehouse Community Council; and
  - Lesmahagow Community Council.
- 3.4 At the initial meetings, which took place in the autumn of 2009, Banks Renewables staff presented the initial proposals for a wind farm at Kype Muir and invited questions and feedback. As with the stage one exhibition we did not have much detail of the scheme at this stage and as such the consultation was very much focused on the principle of a wind farm development at Kype Muir, rather than the details of the scheme. As the proposals have developed through the design process we have sought to keep the 4 Community Councils up to date with the scheme.
- 3.5 A series of meetings was held with the 4 Community Councils, at the same time as the second round of exhibitions. The aim of these meetings was to provide them with information and answer any questions on the scheme. The opportunity was also taken discuss the community benefits package that will be associated with the wind farm if approved.
- 3.6 Throughout the determination process we will continue to liaise with the 4 Community Councils and seek to address any questions or queries they have regarding the planning submission. Furthermore we are hoping to work with them to deliver the community benefits package.

#### **OTHER INTERESTS PARTIES**

- 3.7 In addition to meeting with the community councils in the vicinity of the proposed development meetings have taken place with a range of interested parties within



the local area to develop our understanding of the local area, provide interested parties with information on the proposed development, address any question or queries that they have and gain their views on the proposals. Meetings have taken place with the following groups throughout the consultation period:

- Stonehouse Development Trust;
- Strathaven Air Field;
- Lesmahagow Development Trust; and
- Kype Angling Club.

3.8 Banks Renewables have offered to meet with all the local councillors and MSP for the area. Meetings have taken place with those willing to meet to provide them with information of the Kype Muir Wind Farm:

- Cllr MacInnes; and
- Cllr Campbell

## **CONSULTATION WITH KEY CONSULTEES**

3.9 Throughout the development process leading up to the submission of the planning application for Kype Muir meetings have been held with a number of the key consultees:

- South Lanarkshire Council Planning Department

Regular discussions have taken place with South Lanarkshire Planning Officers regarding Kype Muir and progress of the scheme. Their recently published Renewable Energy Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) has been taken into account in the design iteration process.

- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)

A number of meetings and series of written correspondence has taken place with SNH over the past year and a half regarding our proposals for Kype Muir. This has involved discussions on the landscape and visual (including agreeing viewpoints), ecology and ornithology assessments.

- Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)

An initial meeting took place with SEPA at the scoping stage. The comments that they provided at this stage have been taken into consideration in the development of the scheme and the scope of the Environmental Statement.

- Historic Scotland

Following concerns raised in their scoping response a meeting took place between Banks Renewables and Historic Scotland to provide them with further information on the proposed development and allay their initial concerns. Since the scoping layout the development footprint has reduced,

increasing the separation distance between the proposals and features of historical interest.

- Forestry Commission

Discussions have been on going with the Forestry Commission in relation to the Control of Woodland Removal Policy and how this is addressed at Kype Muir. Along with SNH and South Lanarkshire Council they have been introduced to the draft habitat management plan (HMP) and the proposals it contains for replanting a proportion of the site with native woodland while creating priority habitats on the remainder of the felled areas.

- Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), Defence Estates and NATS

Discussions have being on going for a number of months with the CAA, Defence Estate and NATS regarding the proposed wind farm development at Kype Muir, the potential impact it may have on aeronautical issues and the potential mitigation measures that can be put in place to avoid the proposed development having a significant impact on aviation interests.

3.10 Discussions with the consultees (not only those set out above) will continue throughout the determination process.

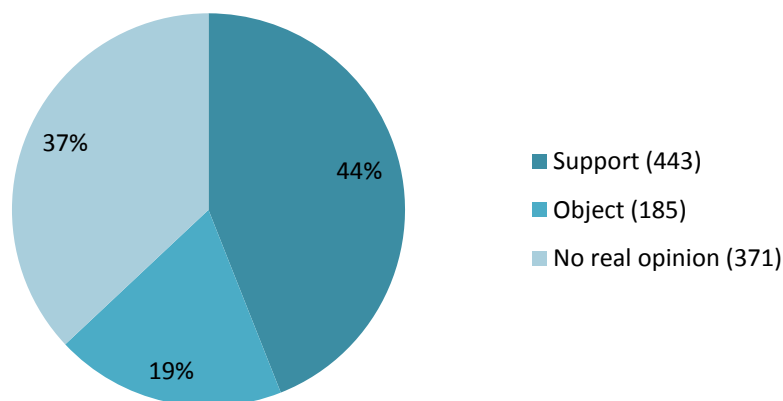
## 4. TELEPHONE SURVEY

4.1 In March 2011 Banks Renewables commissioned On Net Communications to carry out a telephone survey of residents within the 4 community council areas (Sandford, Strathaven, Stonehouse and Lesmahagow). A series of 7 questions were asked (copy of questions can be found in the telephone survey evaluation report – appendix 5) to ascertain their opinion and views with regards to the planning application for 26 wind turbines at Kype Muir. Prior to carrying out the survey the 10,000 leaflets providing details of the scheme had been distributed in the local area.

4.2 5710 calls were made in connection with the questionnaire with 999 surveys being completed, which represent a 99% confidence level. The majority of the calls, 599, were made to Sandford and Strathaven reflecting their proximity to Kype Muir, with the remaining 400 split evenly between Stonehouse and Lesmahagow.

4.3 Overall the results were extremely positive:

- 44% questioned supporting the wind farm proposals;
- 37% having no real opinion/do not really care (but most noteworthy not objecting); and
- Only 19% objecting to the wind farm proposals.



4.4 When broken down into an area basis, in all 4 communities the number of people supporting or having no really opinion greatly outweighs those that object to the proposals.

	Sandford	Strathaven	Stonehouse	Lesmahagow
<b>Support</b>	39%	43%	44%	50%
<b>No real opinion</b>	41%	34%	46%	35%
<b>Object</b>	20%	23%	10%	15%

- 4.5 In addition to ascertaining local resident's opinion on the proposed development, the questionnaire asked questions in relation to local priorities and projects that people would wish to see addressed. When asked to rank priorities in order the creation of local jobs and education opportunities was seen to be of most importance. Banks Renewables are proposing to use this information in the development of the community benefits package for Kype Muir.
- 4.6 A full copy of the independent report of the telephone survey results can be found in appendix 6 along with the script issued to those undertaking the questionnaire.

## 5. ALTERATIONS AS A RESULT OF ENGAGEMENT

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- 5.1 By engaging with the community in the early stages of the development (pre-scoping and design freeze) we have been able to incorporate community and stakeholder feedback into the final proposals. At the scoping stage Banks Renewables were proposing up to 45 turbines with a maximum tip height of 140m. Through the design iteration process this has been reduced to the current proposals, 26 turbines with a maximum tip height of 132m. (The full design iteration process is set out in the Design Statement which accompanies the planning application.)
- 5.2 One of the main concerns raised in the initial round of consultation was cumulative impact and the number of wind farms surrounding Strathaven. The main change between the scoping and proposed layout is the dropping of the turbines in the western proportion of the scoping layout. This increased the separation distance between Kype Muir and the recently consented Dungavel Wind Farm so wind farms no longer appear right across the ridge line, thus reducing the appearance of cumulative impact. Furthermore, it reduces the visual extent of Kype Muir, especially when viewed from the north. This alteration to the layout also takes into account South Lanarkshire Councils recently published Renewable Energy SPG.
- 5.3 When these changes were presented at the second round of public exhibitions, members of the public welcomed these changes, feeling it was an improvement to the scheme. This is reflected in the increased support for the proposals in the second stage exhibitions.
- 5.4 The feedback that has been received from local residents in terms of community needs and where community benefits would best be focused has been taken into consideration and will continue to be taken into account in shaping the community benefits package that will be provided if the application is successful.

## 6. CONCLUSION

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- 6.1 Banks Renewables have found the community engagement process for Kype Muir an extremely useful exercise as it has provided the project team with a lot of invaluable information that has been used to shape the design process. Issues and concerns that were raised at an early stage in the consultation process, where possible have been addressed through the design iteration and environmental assessment process.
- 6.2 The results of the consultation exercised are extremely positive, with all demonstrating the level of support for Kype Muir Wind Farm within the local communities.
- 6.3 In line with Banks Renewables “Development with Care” philosophy submission of the planning application to the Scottish Governments Energy Consents Unit will not signal the end of our programme of engagement. Throughout the determination process and construction and operation phases Banks Renewables will keep in contact with all the key stakeholders.