

Quantans Hill Wind Farm – initial feedback survey

Consultation analysis and response
September 2020

Confidentiality class: C1 – Public



VATTENFALL

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Preface

The views of local communities, businesses, and stakeholders are critically important in the design of Vattenfall's wind farms. When Quantans Hill wind farm was launched into the public domain on 26 June 2020 we also opened an initial online feedback survey at the earliest point possible. This survey was designed to gather the views of 'non-statutory' consultees – such as members of the public, local businesses, and other interested community groups and charities.

The survey ran from the 26 June until the 31 August using an independent surveying company called Netigate. The survey was promoted through a variety of channels, including Vattenfall's project webpage; Vattenfall's Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn accounts; through a paid advertisement in the Dumfries and Galloway What's Going On website (DGWGO.com); and by emails to community representatives and other local interested stakeholders.

This document summarises the feedback we have received to date and identifies a number of themes and issues which we will explore in further detail throughout the site design process and in our subsequent communications.

Vattenfall will continue to explain our proposals for Quantans Hill wind farm to local stakeholders and seek feedback over the course of the next year. A more detailed project virtual exhibition will be launched, including the option for webinars and virtual meetings, we will produce project newsletters, and more online consultation will take place. When safe to do so, and in line with Government guidance, we will also hold more traditional face-to-face engagement, such as public exhibitions.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who took the time to fill out the survey. 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. About the respondents

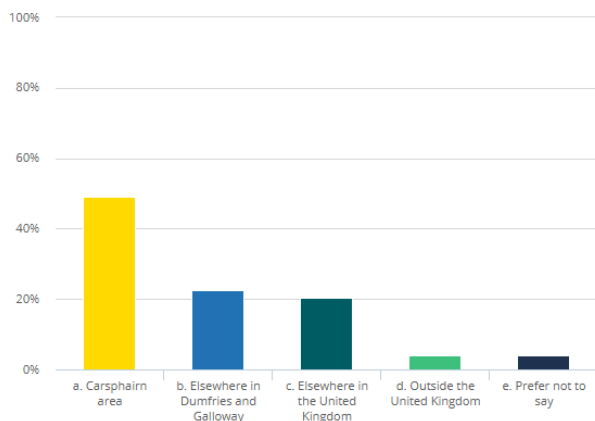
1.1. Introduction

We received 60 individual responses to the questionnaire, with technical steps taken to prevent multiple answers being submitted by the same respondent. Of the 60 people responding, 49 went on to complete every question.

We are pleased with this level of feedback for an initial questionnaire, which provides a good start to understand public attitudes. However, it is clearly a small sample size, although the number of people directly affected by development of the wind farm is itself relatively small, however in the future we hope to get more responses from a broader cross-section of society, including a more balanced age demographic, more local residents, but also more local businesses and people further afield such as potential visitors to the region.

We wanted to understand our respondents: what age they were; whether they lived locally; and in what capacity they were responding. We asked these questions to try and understand how our survey was being picked up and whether certain types of respondent were over- or under-represented and what that might mean for how we approach future surveys.

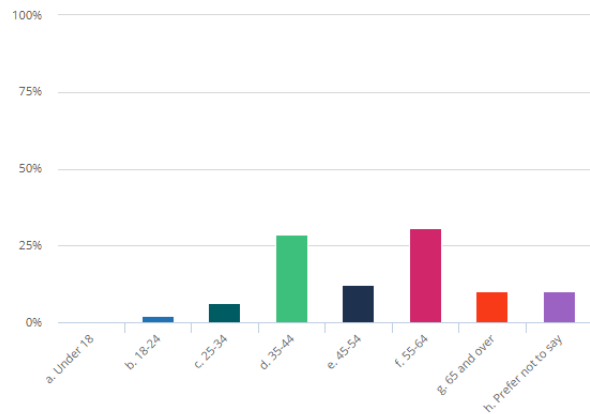
1.2. Where did respondents live?



71% of respondents told us they lived in Dumfries and Galloway. This includes just under half (49%) of total respondents who lived in the immediate vicinity of the wind farm in the village of Carsphairn. 20% of respondents were from elsewhere in the UK, 4% preferred not to say, and 4% were from abroad.

We are pleased the survey reached people locally and in the broader region. We want to continue to receive even more views from people living near to the proposed wind farm but would also like to increase participation from those elsewhere in the country, for example people who might visit as tourists, have an interest in the area's culture and heritage, or business representatives who might provide services for the wind farm.

1.3. Age demographics



The majority of respondents to our survey were older, with 53% telling us they were over the age of 45. The largest responding part of the spectrum was 55-64 (31%) and 10% were over 65. We are encouraged to see this as we had received concerns from local residents that virtual engagement, which will be particularly important in an age of Covid-19 related social distancing, may shut out older residents who might be less comfortable with online activities.

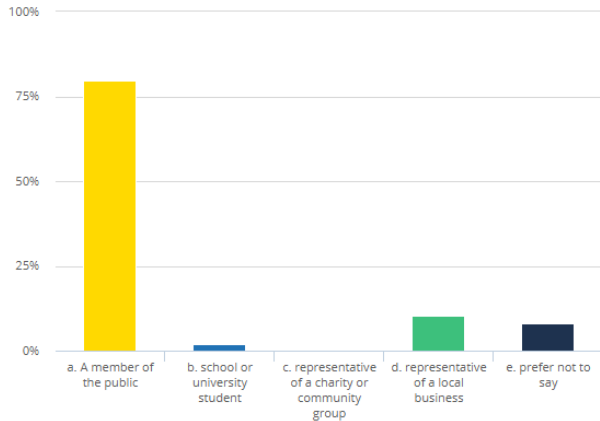
At first glance this does not appear to be the case, but we want to continue to make sure older people are aware of the scheme and providing their views as well as finding ways to reach out to those who may feel less comfortable with virtual engagement.

We are disappointed that younger age groups did not engage with our survey. Particularly concerning was the fact that very few respondents under the age of 24 (2%) took part in the survey and there were no responses from children under the age of 18.

We will endeavour to do more in the future to engage with younger members of the community and have a programme for engaging with schools underway, as well as an alternative platform for digital engagement which is designed to reach younger individuals who may engage

less with more traditional forms of social media. 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 have an important voice in the debate which needs to be heard.

1.4. Type of respondent



Most respondents to our survey (80%) identified as members of the public. Whilst this is welcomed, as the area is rural with most immediate neighbours to the scheme being private individuals, we need to find other ways to engage with groups, especially charities and community groups,¹ and, as mentioned before, schools and younger people. 10% of respondents represented local businesses, which is encouraging and something we are keen to build on given the considerable potential for Quantans Hill to support the local economy.

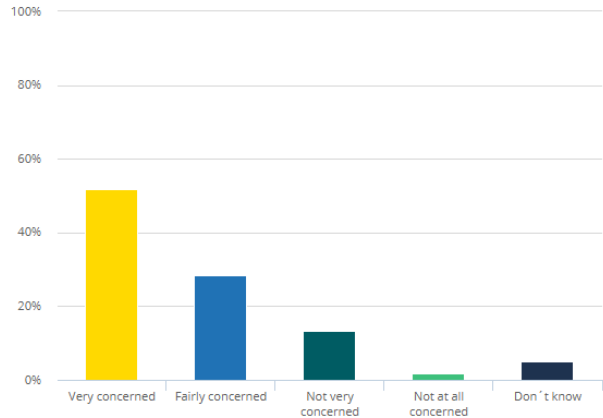
2. Views on energy and climate change

Before we asked questions about wind farms in the region, we wanted to understand general attitudes to climate change and energy to see if there was a difference between general positions as opposed to more localised issues.

2.1. Concern about climate change

¹ Vattenfall has engaged directly with Carsphairn Community Council on Quantans Hill, as well as other nearby affected community councils.

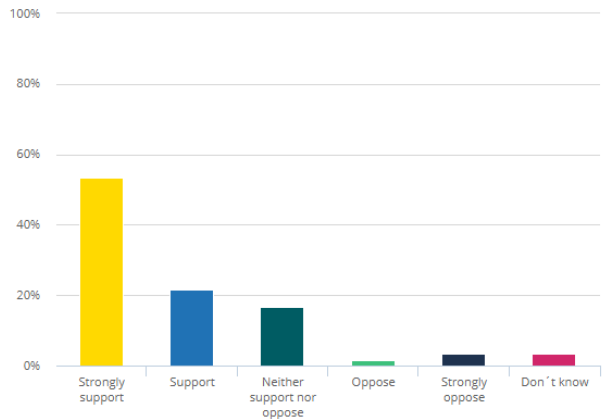
We asked: how concerned are you about climate change, sometimes referred to as 'global warming'?



Our respondents were generally concerned about climate change – 80% of people felt they were 'very' or 'fairly concerned'. This is very much in line with 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 survey that 81% of their survey sample were concerned (either 'very' or 'fairly') by climate change.²

2.2. Attitudes towards renewables

We asked: leaving aside the Quantans Hill wind farm project for a moment, generally do you support or oppose the transition towards renewable energy?

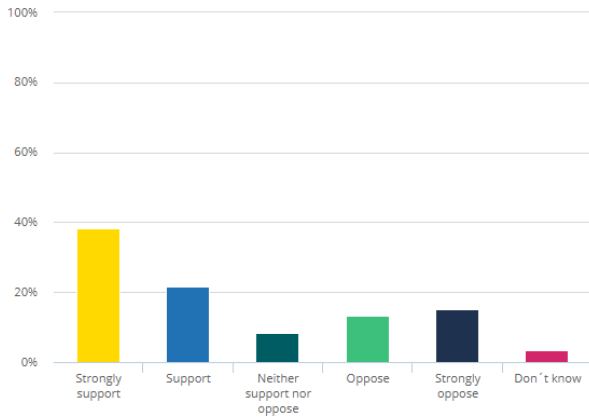


Specifically leaving aside Quantans Hill, 75% of respondents were either supportive or unconcerned about the use of renewable energy in general, with the largest cohort being strongly supportive (53%).

² BEIS, Public Attitudes Tracker (June 2020, Wave 34, UK)

Respondents to our survey were generally in line with Government polling on this topic (80% in favour), although slightly less supportive.³

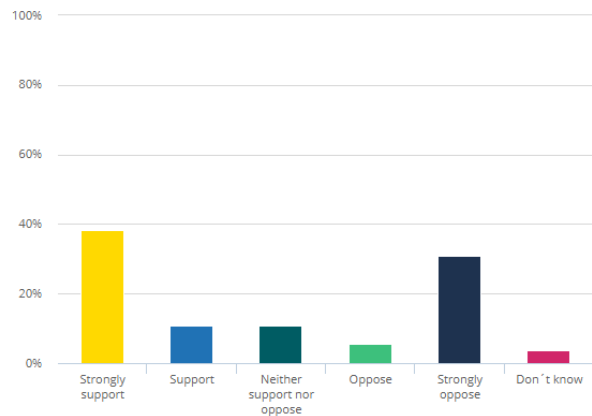
We also asked: leaving aside the Quantans Hill wind farm project for a moment, generally do you support or oppose the transition towards renewable energy?



We are aware that onshore wind can be a divisive issue and people can often have ‘favourite’ renewable technologies (e.g. onshore wind, offshore wind, solar, and hydro). Whilst this does appear to be the case for our respondents, we note that there are high levels of support for onshore wind generally with 68% either supporting onshore wind or stating indifference, with the largest single cohort being those who ‘strongly support’ its development (38%). There is an interesting discrepancy here between our survey and other public attitudes questionnaires, with the Government survey reporting 93% support for onshore wind.⁴

Although we did not ask whether respondents supported the Quantans Hill wind farm specifically, as we felt there was not yet enough information in the public domain on which people could base an informed opinion, we did want to understand whether there was general support or opposition to more wind farms in the region.

We asked: do you support or oppose the development of wind farms in the region?



It is clear 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, 60% of respondents either supported more wind farm development in the region or were neutral on the subject with the largest single cohort strongly supporting more development (38%). The second largest cohort, however, were strongly opposed (31%).

We note that this is a little different from the only other local polling on onshore wind of which we are aware which has been carried out recently. In 2019, the Conservative Environment Network found that 71% of people living in the Dumfries and Galloway Westminster Parliamentary constituency supported onshore wind.⁵ This particular survey is not representative of the area as it targeted voting age people who reported as having voted for the Conservative party in the 2017 general election. Nevertheless, we believe it is an interesting point of departure for discussing regional views as the Conservative party has traditionally been more sceptical of onshore wind than, for instance, the SNP or Labour party.

2.3. Why do people support wind farms in the region?

We asked: if you support the development of wind farms in the region, please tell us why.

The word cloud below summarises the 27 individual responses we had to this question which, we hope with our analysis and a number of anonymous responses presented in full below, will help readers to understand typical views expressed.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Conservative Environment Network, *Support for Electricity Sources by Constituency* (Published June 2019).



2.4. What concerns do people have about wind farms in the region?

We asked: do you have any particular concerns about the development of wind farms in the region?

As above, our word cloud below summarises the answers submitted with our own analysis and a selection of typical views repeated in full.

Although there was a wide range of reasons presented, common themes were that:

- Wind farms are needed to combat climate change;
- They bring benefits, with respondents generally pointing to the economic and jobs benefits;
- Wind power was preferable to alternative forms of power generation (e.g. nuclear) or that wind power is better for energy security; and
- The area has good natural wind resource and a small population compared to other parts of the country.



There were a range of views presented, including:

- A common theme that the area supported 'too many' wind farms already, sometimes this was coupled with concerns around cumulative visual impact;
- Concerns around the tourism industry;
- Concerns about the impacts on local residents, especially noise and house price value; and
- Reference to construction traffic and disruption locally caused by previous development.

"The development of wind farms in the area has introduced both high and low skilled jobs in an area of low socio economic potential. I have seen wind farms provide employment to numerous men who were previously employed in the mining industry in the area, and wind farms have attracted young professionals and graduates such as engineers, ecologists, and environmental specialist to the area. Without wind farms both the high and lower earners whole not have had the potential for work in the area and would have had to travel out with the area. Wind farms provide the potential for these people to be able to work at home." – Anon. Submitted 30 July 2020 09:59:41

"It's great the region can contribute to fighting climate change." – Anon. Submitted 26 June 2020 23:31:43

"Good wind. Low population. Economic benefits to the community.." – Anon. Submitted 26 June 2020 23:31:43

“Too many. We support energy from renewable sources, who wouldn't, but our area is literally inundated and we don't want any more. So many upland views now have windfarms, different developer's projects running into each other resulting in huge conglomerations of turbines, industrialising the previously unspoilt landscape apart from vast Sitka spruce plantations but that's another story.” – Anon. Submitted 29 August 2020 17:36:52

“Poor construction practices leading to pollution or safety issues. Need also to ensure enough habitat management area to offset impacts from infrastructure.” – Anon. Submitted 29 July 2020 09:33:36

“We have been tolerant and have been unindated [sic] with wind farms in this area. Enough is enough. We are being systematically raped of our rights to a peaceful life and the aspirations we had when we moved to the area.” – Anon. Submitted 3 July 2020 16:09:12

“Causing problems to local home owners caused by proximity to homes and the noise or strobe effects that they can create, exaggerated through the proposed extreme height of 250m. Visual effects on the landscape will also be unacceptable particularly to the landscape of cairnsmore of carsphairn, as was proved by the last application becoming unviable after turbines were deemed not acceptable in this area..” – Anon. Submitted 22 August 2020 20:17:26

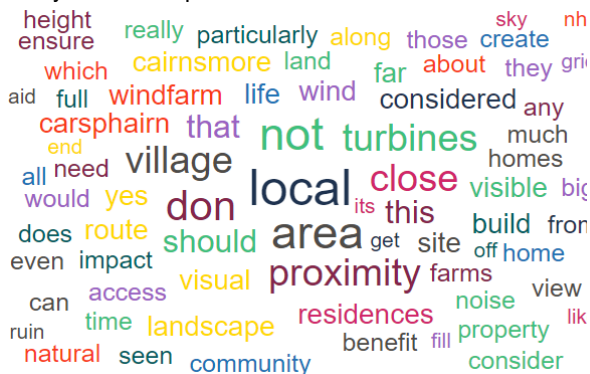
“Yes move it somewhere not as visible for all the village and people specifically the tourists we are trying to encourage to the area.” – Anon. Submitted 24 August 2020 16:18:52

“Much smaller turbines and no home should have noise levels elevated. The windfarm should provide material benefit to the neighbouring community. Community benefit does not get anywhere near those who are blighted..” – Anon. Submitted 3 July 2020 00:08:26

2.5. Specific design issues for Quantans Hill wind farm

We asked: thinking specifically about Quantans Hill, are there any issues you would like us to take into account in its design?

We wanted to know from people if there were any early concerns we could take into account in our design of the wind farm. The word cloud below and analysis aims to provide an overview of feedback.



Very few responses focussed on specific things we could take into consideration and many respondents used this section to reiterate points made in the two

preceding sections. Where specific design issues were mentioned they were about:

- a. Proximity to homes to the development;
- b. Concerns around the grid connection route for the wind farm;
- c. The proposed tip height of the development at 250m; and
- d. Visibility from nearby upland viewpoints, with the Cairnsmore of Carsphairn being mentioned specifically

There are a range of legitimate concerns and questions about the wind farm development raised here and in other places which are answered in a 'Frequently Asked Questions' document available on the project website.

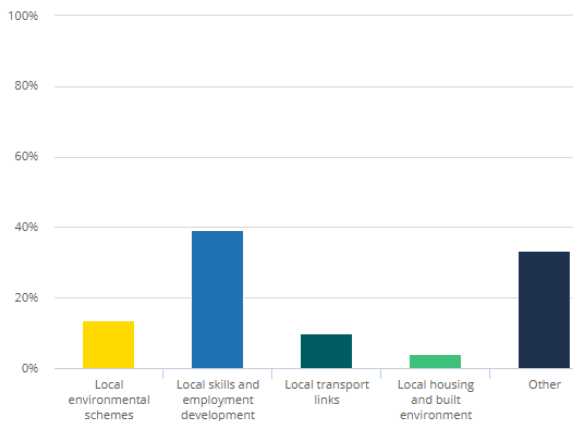
3. Community investment and shared ownership

3.1. Focussing community investment

We asked: if Quantans Hill wind farm is to go ahead, please tell us what you think is the greatest priority for community investment.

As part of Quantans Hill wind farm, Vattenfall will commit to offering substantial levels of community investment in line with Government guidance. If the wind farm is built to its maximum extent, as outlined in the project’s scoping report, this community investment fund could be worth up to £18.9 million over the life of the wind farm.

Vattenfall is exploring ways in which Quantans Hill, and its sister scheme in Dumfries and Galloway called Whiteneuk, could focus community investment. Our questionnaire presented some options based on our understanding of local needs expressed in publicly available documents and in discussion with local stakeholders.



Of the options presented, local schemes to help skills and employment and improvements to the local environment were clear favourites.

Although there were a large number of suggestions logged under ‘other’, these were generally comments aimed at the efficacy of community investment schemes, generally that they didn’t tend to provide tangible benefits to local people, that there was already ‘enough’ community investment going into Carsphairn from other wind farm schemes, or a restatement of opinions previously offered in other sections. Some ideas which were presented included:

- a. Improving attractions for tourists, such as pathways and cycle routes;
- b. Improving mobile phone signal or digital connectivity;
- c. Better transport within the region, especially for younger people without cars.

We will continue to consider the options for community investment in more detail and will consult

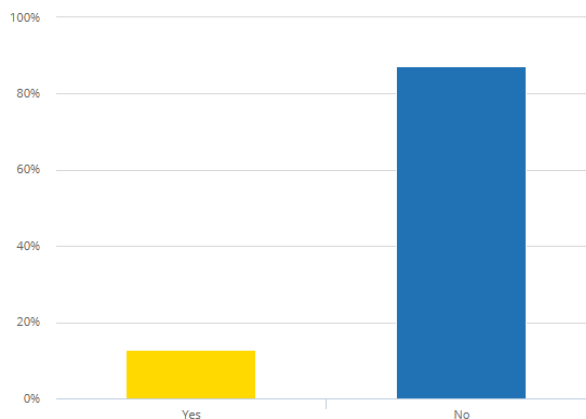
specifically on a community investment package over the course of the next year.

3.2. Shared ownership

We asked: would you or the local community group you represent be interested in investing in shared ownership of the wind farm?

Vattenfall is prepared to offer some form of shared ownership in the development of Quantans Hill wind farm. This could involve capital-at-risk investment by local individuals, organisations, or businesses in the wind farm’s construction as well as sharing the risks and rewards of the wind farm’s performance.

Although there is some appetite for shared ownership at this early stage, we note that this is limited and only 13% of respondents expressed interest.



We will continue to discuss this with the community and keep in mind whether there is sufficient appetite for Vattenfall to take this forward into more detailed design and discussion.

4. Conclusions and next steps

We found this survey exercise to be extremely useful and informative. Although we are only at an early stage in the scheme’s design, we have been encouraged to continue development of Quantans Hill due to the level of concern about climate change and support for renewables, onshore wind, and further onshore wind development in the region.

We acknowledge that the sample size was small and not demographically representative. We will work hard to

increase stakeholder participation in consultation and responses to develop a fully rounded picture.

We also recognise that there are those who feel strongly against the development. In some cases, we will not be able to win people round as views can be entrenched and strongly held, particularly on the subject of landscape impact. These views, whilst entirely legitimate, are often subjective and contrasting, with people expressing both approval of what wind farms stand for and look like in the landscape whilst others find them distasteful.

There are a range of valid and legitimate concerns around, for instance, local wildlife, noise, and construction impacts. We believe most of these can be acceptably mitigated through the considered and sensitive site design in which we take pride. We will, of course, take all concerns raised into account in the wind farm's design and will report back and try to provide comfort where we can in both a Frequently Asked Questions document and in the detailed Environmental Impact Assessment Report which will accompany our application to Scottish Ministers to construct the wind farm.

We will continue to work with the communities concerned and other interested stakeholders over the course of the next year until we submit our planning application, which we anticipate will be in the last quarter of 2021.

There will be a raft of public engagement coming this autumn and winter, including:

- a. A virtual public exhibition space;
- b. Webinars with the team;
- c. Meetings with community councils and other groups;
- d. Project newsletters;
- e. Further surveys and questionnaires; and
- f. Subject to Covid restrictions, face-to-face engagement and at least one public exhibition.

In the meantime, Matthew Bacon (Senior Project Manager) and Carol Kane (Regional Liaison Officer) welcome the opportunity to speak to you. They can be reached at QuantansHill.Windfarm@vattenfall.com.

