



Stonehaven & District Community Council



Extra Business Meeting

Court House

Stonehaven

Tuesday 21st January 2025 (7:00pm)

SSEN's Electricity Infrastructure proposals for Stonehaven and surrounding area

Agenda

Chairperson's Welcome:

Roll-call

Apologies & Declarations of Interest

19:00 to 19.10 - Introductions / Meeting Format

19.10 – 19.15 - Survey Results – Quick Overview

19.15 to 19.30 - SSEN

19.30 to 19.45 - Save Our Mearns

19.45 to 20.00 - Community Benefit

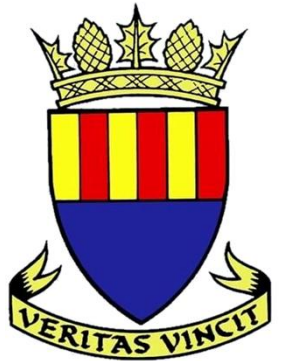
20.00 to 20.30 - Q&A – General Questions / Comments From Public

20.30 to 21.00 - Q&A – SDCC Members Questions / Members Deliberation

Date of Next Meetings:

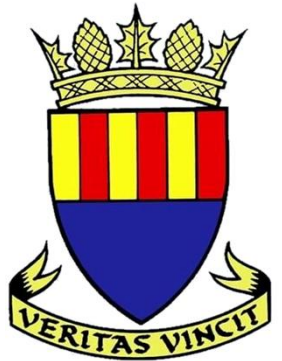
Agenda Discussion Meeting: Tuesday 4th February 2025 @ 7pm

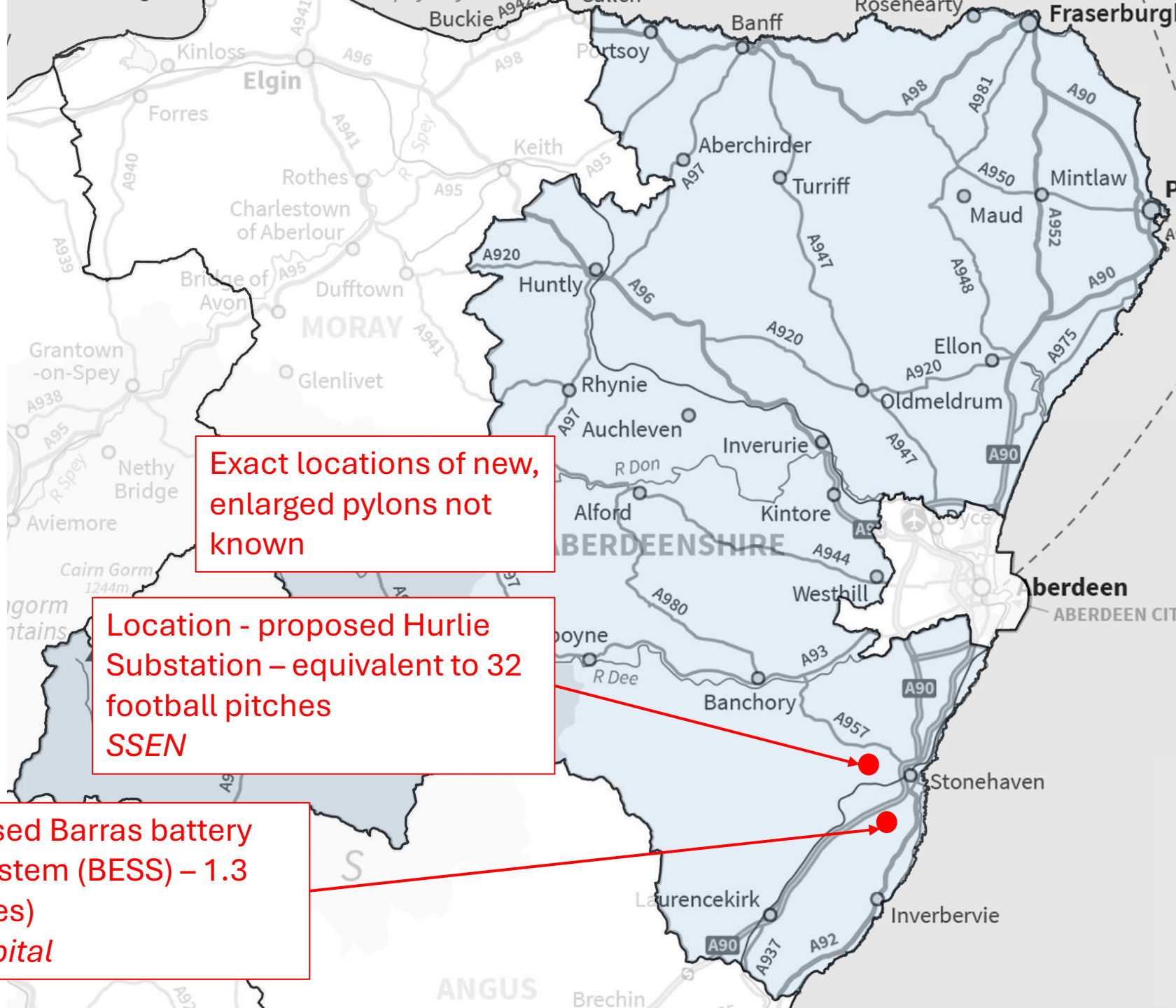
Business Meeting: Tuesday 11th February 2025 @ 7pm



What is being proposed?

- The proposed substation at Hurlie is expected to be one of the largest in the UK. It will replace a previous proposal at Fiddes, which was cancelled due to community opposition.
- If approved by Aberdeenshire Council it will be 205,500m² (equivalent to 32 football pitches).
- The proposals also involve the construction of new extremely high pylons in the surrounding area, generally between 57 and 65 meters tall (between 188 and 215 feet).





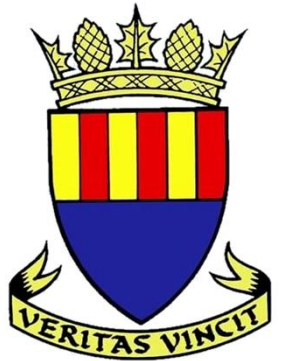
Exact locations of new,
enlarged pylons not
known

Location - proposed Hurlie
Substation – equivalent to 32
football pitches
SSEN

Location – proposed Barras battery
energy storage system (BESS) – 1.3
hectares (3.2 acres)
Green Switch Capital



Location of Proposed Hurlie Substation



What is being planned?



Pylons

What is being planned?

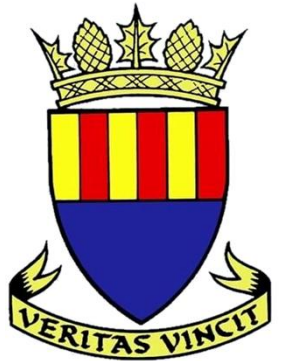
Substation



Stonehaven & District Community Council Survey on Electricity Infrastructure Proposals

Friday, January 17, 2025

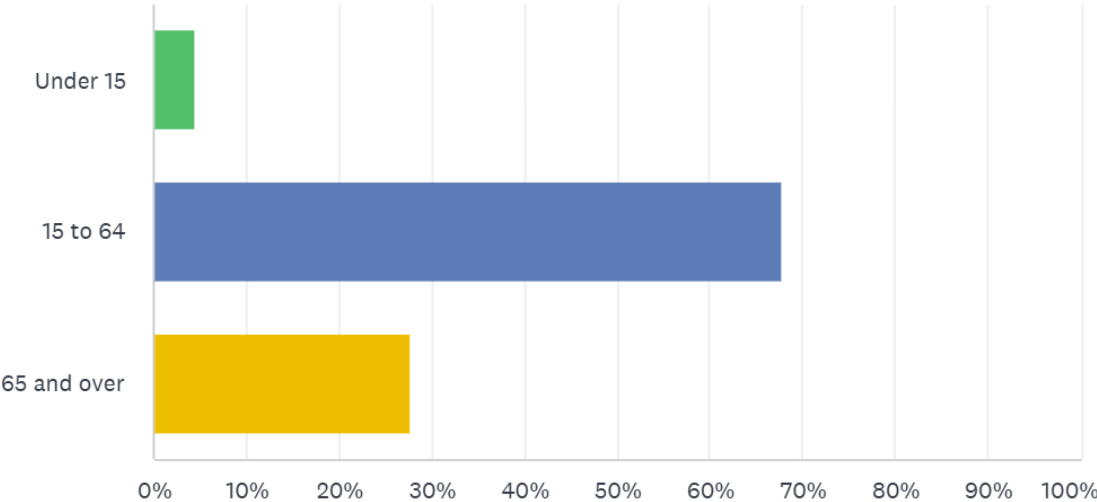
- Date Created: Saturday, December 14, 2024
- Complete AB39 Responses: 306



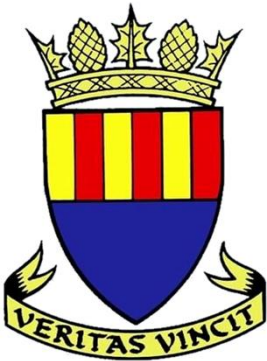


Could you tick the box that best describes you?

Answered: 310 Skipped: 0

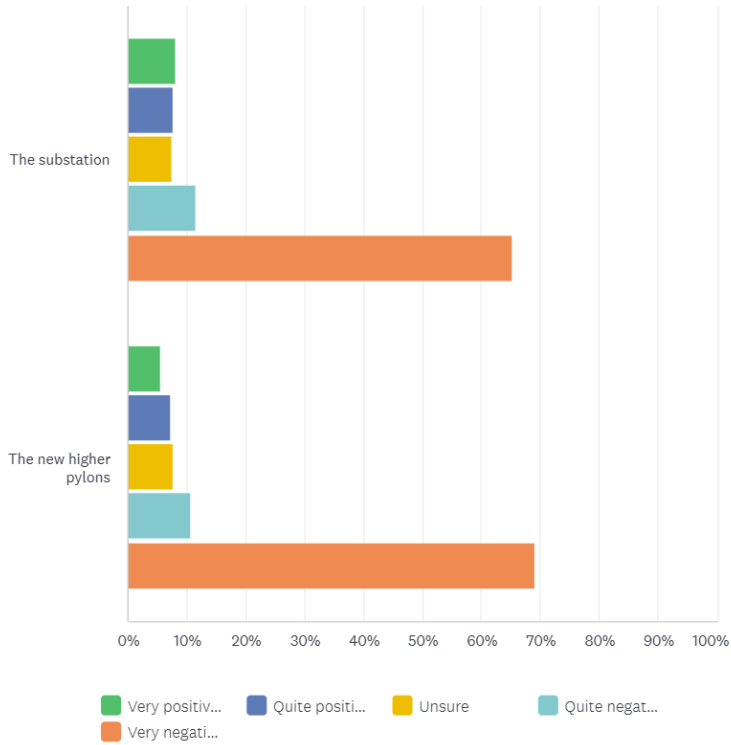


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 15	4.52%	14
15 to 64	67.74%	210
65 and over	27.74%	86
Total Respondents: 310		



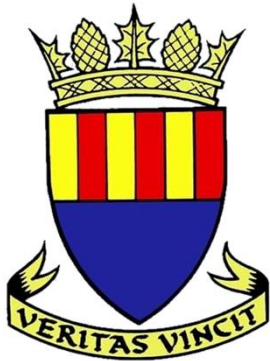
SSEN plans to increase the scale of its infrastructure taking electricity from windfarms in the north east of Scotland, to export this south. The main impacts in the Stonehaven area including the building of a substation in Fetteresso woods covering 205,500m2, and constructing pylons up to 65 metres in height. Can you provide your views by ticking the boxes below?

Answered: 310 Skipped: 0



	VERY POSITIVE (COMPLETELY SUPPORT THE PROPOSALS)	QUITE POSITIVE (SUPPORT THE PROPOSALS)	UNSURE	QUITE NEGATIVE (OBJECT TO THE PROPOSALS)	VERY NEGATIVE (COMPLETELY OBJECT TO THE PROPOSALS)	TOTAL
The substation	8.06% 25	7.74% 24	7.42% 23	11.61% 36	65.16% 202	310
The new higher pylons	5.61% 17	7.26% 22	7.59% 23	10.56% 32	68.98% 209	303

[Comments \(125\)](#)



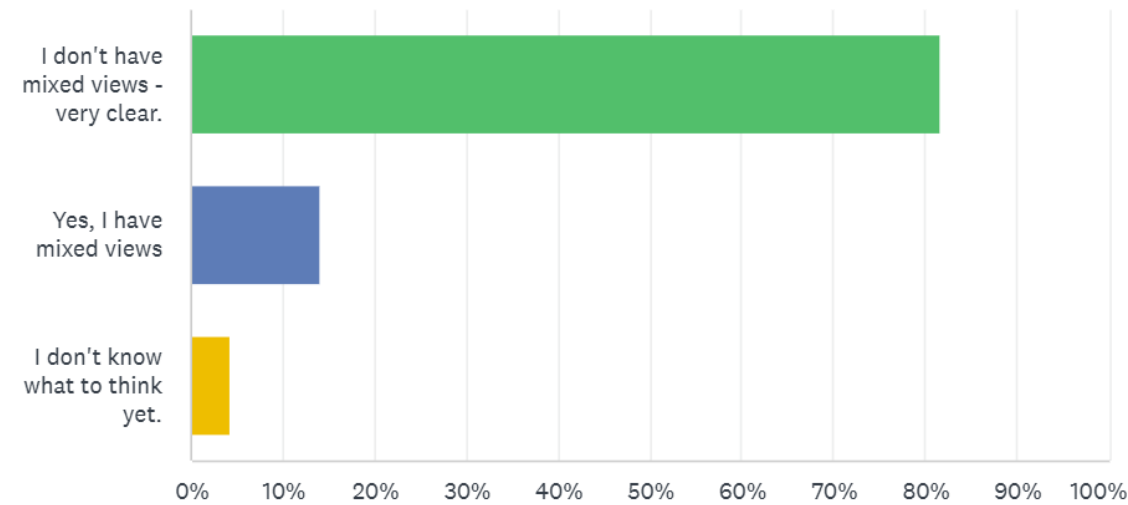


Customize

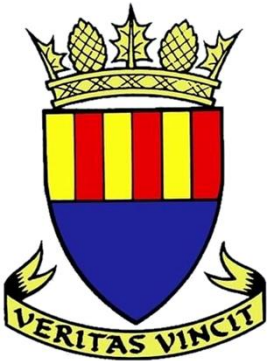
Save as ▾

Can you indicate below if you have mixed views about the proposals, or are clear? (you will be able to comment more after this question)

Answered: 306 Skipped: 4



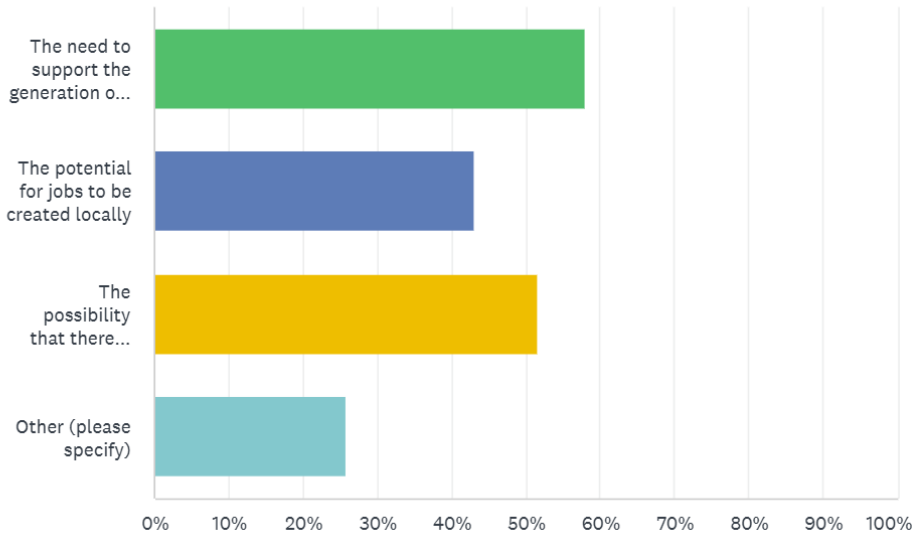
ANSWER CHOICES ▾	RESPONSES ▾	
▼ I don't have mixed views - very clear.	81.70%	250
▼ Yes, I have mixed views	14.05%	43
▼ I don't know what to think yet.	4.25%	13
TOTAL		306



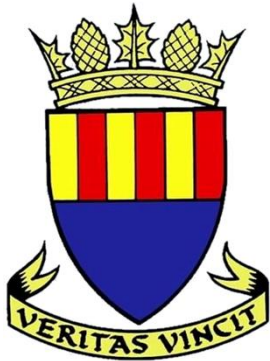


If you are supportive of the proposal, could you indicate why below? It is understood that people who support the project may also have concerns, and these can be expressed in the next question.

Answered: 93 Skipped: 217

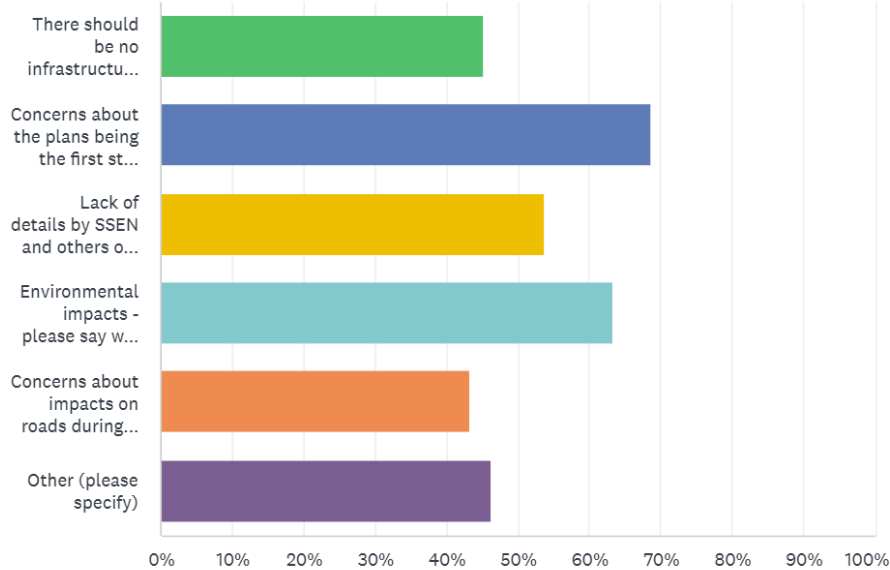


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ The need to support the generation of new renewable electricity	58.06%	54
▼ The potential for jobs to be created locally	43.01%	40
▼ The possibility that there could be financial benefits for the impacted communities e.g. Stonehaven and the surrounding district	51.61%	48
▼ Other (please specify)	25.81%	24
Total Respondents: 93		



If you do not support the proposals, or have concerns, could you indicate why below?

Answered: 272 Skipped: 38

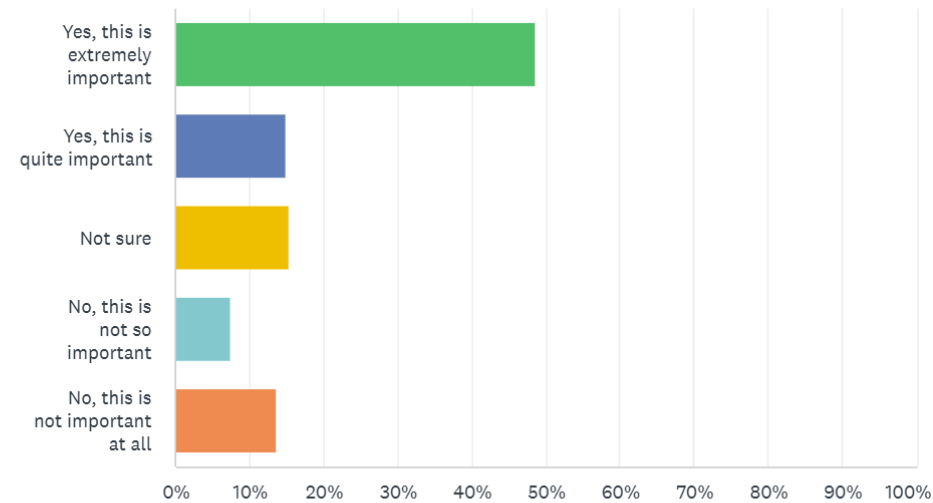


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
There should be no infrastructure impacting communities here without significant financial benefits to compensate for this	45.22% 123
Concerns about the plans being the first step in a much larger development (still not specified)	68.75% 187
Lack of details by SSEN and others on future plans	53.68% 146
Environmental impacts - please say what these are in the comment box below	63.24% 172
Concerns about impacts on roads during the construction phase	43.38% 118
Other (please specify)	46.32% 126
Total Respondents: 272	



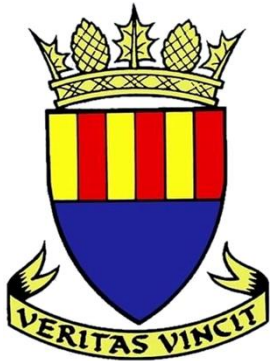
Do you think Aberdeenshire Council and others should negotiate on behalf of Stonehaven and other impacted communities to create a community wealth fund?

Answered: 294 Skipped: 16



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Yes, this is extremely important	48.64%	143
▼ Yes, this is quite important	14.97%	44
▼ Not sure	15.31%	45
▼ No, this is not so important	7.48%	22
▼ No, this is not important at all	13.61%	40
TOTAL		294

[Comments](#) (103)



Example comments

#013: I am concerned about the removal of forest/green land and the impact this will have on nature and wildlife in the area.

#21: There should be no infrastructure impacting communities here without significant financial benefits to compensate for this. Precedent has been set by windfarms in this area and the funds are hugely valuable.

#25: Obviously the environmental impact will be huge given that these plans are for a larger area than previously planned for. The visual impact cannot be ignored or underestimated tourists come here in part for the views, not to look at rows of pylons and battery plants.

#308: This proposal needs to be recognised for what it is - the first step in multiple planning proposals that are going to feed in to it. An overall master plan should be provided by SSEN so that the council and local people can understand what the real long term development is going to be instead of this piecemeal approach. If this were a new industrial park or whole town being planned then it would not be done in this way.

#309: As any wealth fund will have to be channelled through organisations, it is highly likely most funds will go to communities least impacted, as those most impacted are primarily scattered rural households. Priority should be given to using any fund for ameliorating the impacts of the development eg working with surrounding landowners to develop new footpath and cycling routes and improve biodiversity.

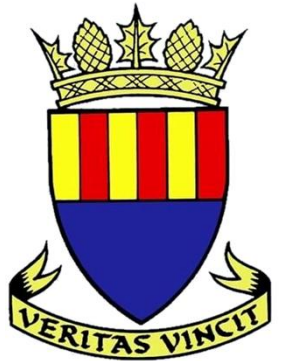


SSEN



Questions to SSEN

- Why has SSEN, partners and others submitted so many separate planning applications for substations, battery storage infrastructure etc without showing communities in a clear, meaningful way the overall and detailed design of the proposed infrastructure, along with pylon locations, to allow us to understand the overall (cumulative) impact of the proposals?
- We are not aware of any approach for joint community ownership, and/or community wealth funds associated with the proposed infrastructure. Why has SSEN not approached communities such as Stonehaven, and others, with the same approach as that adopted in Shetland?
- Why did the planning application for the substation in Stonehaven district get submitted just before the Christmas holidays, a period which made it difficult for people to come together and consider the proposal?





Save Our Mearns

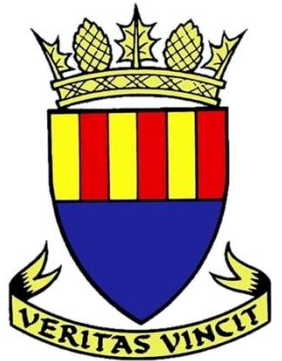
Community Benefit



Why is a community wealth fund important for Stonehaven?

- Electricity is being generated in the northeast of Scotland
- The infrastructure to transport this energy is being built on land down the east and northeast coast benefitting others
- The impacts on scenery, wildlife, roads, is taking place in the east and northeast
- We are facing incredibly serious impacts in terms of our wellbeing and the inequity of the current situation – **there is no Net Zero dividend for our communities at the moment**

A meaningful fund recognises the above and provides compensation for the impacts – to help the community to invest where investment is needed

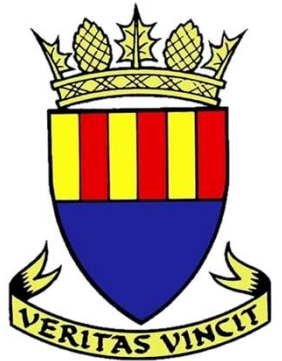


How significant can a community wealth fund be?

In the 1970s, an example is the Shetland fund:

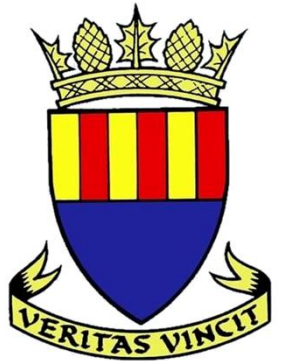
- Created to compensate the community for the impacts of oil and gas infrastructure in the 1970s, It has generated hundreds of millions of pounds for the community
- It is based on a % of the oil and gas generated within a defined area

In recent years in Shetland, SSE has engaged with the local community to create the Shetland Community Benefit Fund, **with more than £2 million pounds annually** being paid into this fund.



Current situation with SSEN in Stonehaven

- There is no meaningful engagement by SSEN with communities to be partners in future developments. What has been discussed so far, with the SSEN Local Fund (here), is trivial by comparison – small grants for projects, in a small fund owned entirely by SSEN.
- There is no meaningful engagement to address the inequitable visual, environmental and social impacts being foisted on to our communities

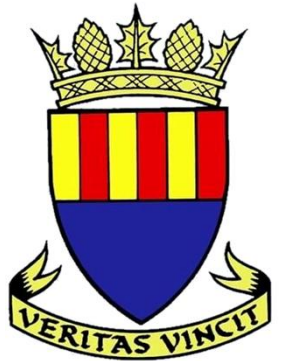


Other examples for Stonehaven

- The Craigneill Windfarm development (Stonehaven district) has committed to setting up a community benefit fund to the value of £5,000 per installed MW (index-linked) to benefit Stonehaven – with community ownership.



- Since the proposed SSEN substations, battery storage infrastructure (others) and pylons will be taking energy from offshore windfarms these should therefore be considered exactly the same as a wind farm, presenting the same kind of impacts on communities as any onshore windfarm.



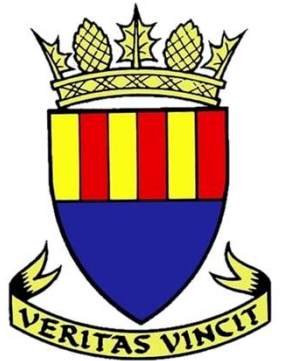
The Potential

- We are aware that with the impacts of inflation, the £5,000 per MW value should now be reconsidered, with £7,000 per MW now considered to be comparable to the initial sum (with some developers proposing community benefit funds even more than this (per MW)).
- Would there be value in SSEN and its offshore partners engaging more constructively than it has been to date?



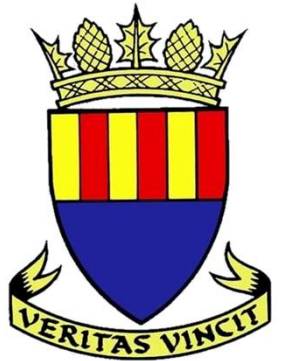
Who will benefit from the proposed infrastructure?

- SSEN is a multinational with shareholders – the shareholders will benefit from the profits made by building the proposed infrastructure i.e. companies like JP Morgan, Canadian pension fund etc
- The government will be able to demonstrate that they are delivering against net zero targets
- Construction companies will benefit by building the infrastructure, and then move on
- Those landowners negotiating deals - confidential sums of money to allow infrastructure to be built on their land, or pass over it



Who will not benefit from the proposed infrastructure?

- The vast majority of people in the east and northeast – who will have no benefit from the energy being generated in our region and transported out of the region
- Low carbon energy will be provided mainly to householders and businesses outwith the areas being affected
- Future generations, our children, will not benefit



What can we do about this?

We can demand that our elected representatives, who will vote on the planning application :

- **Reject the application** on the basis that the community has not been compensated fairly for the impacts

If the application is being considered:

- The application can only be allowed on the basis of a condition – that a community wealth fund be created, to be negotiated with SSEN

