Doraville Wind Farm proposal

Public Information Event, 23 March 2017

Overview

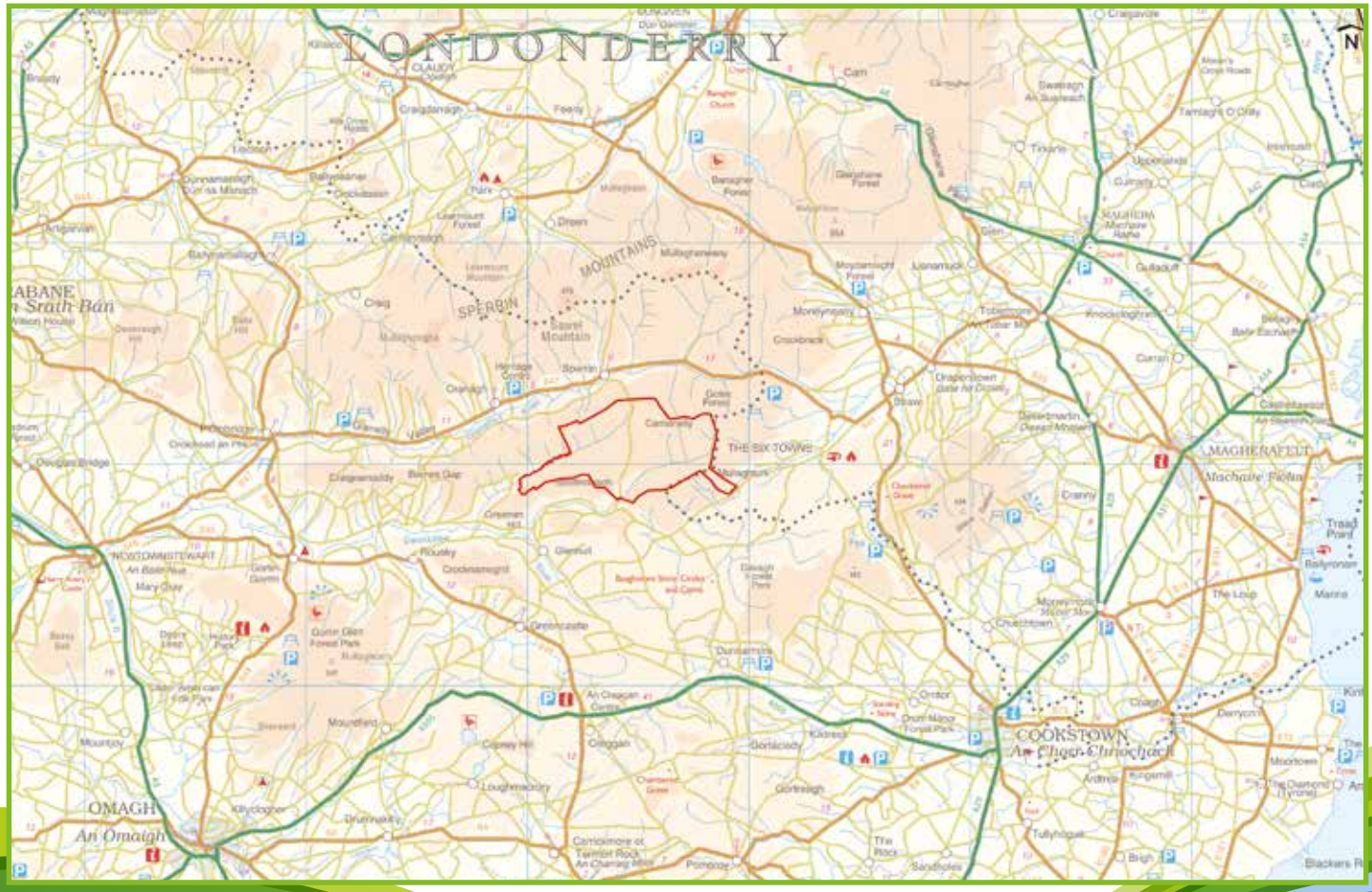
This exhibition

This is an information event for the local community on the proposed wind farm at Doraville. The purpose is to present the Environmental Statement (ES) addendum layout and supplementary information in response to consultation feedback and concerns raised from the ES that supported the Application submitted to the Northern Ireland Planning Service in December 2015. Members of the project development team are on hand to discuss the proposals and explain the next steps in the planning process.

Site location

The site lies within the Sperrin Mountains of County Tyrone and is situated over the head of two valley systems, Glenlark River and Coneyglen Burn.

The entirety of the site is within the Omagh District Council area, but it borders Cookstown, Magherafelt and Strabane District Councils.



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About us

- SSE is Northern Ireland's second largest energy utility and leading provider of renewable power.
- Our energy supply business, SSE Airtricity, provides greener electricity, natural gas and energy-related services to home and business customers across Northern Ireland.
- SSE is also the third largest energy generator by capacity in the all-island Single Electricity Market, with over 1,800MW of thermal and renewable energy generation in operation.
- We currently generate over 120MW of renewable energy at our wind farms in Northern Ireland, enough to power roughly 100,000 homes, with a further 131MW in construction or planning.
- Since 2008, SSE has invested over half a billion pounds in the development of Northern Ireland's sustainable energy infrastructure, helping to green our economy and secure Northern Ireland's energy future.
- We're also proud to have contributed over £1 million in funding to communities close to our wind farms in Northern Ireland, including more than £250,000 in scholarship funding for local students.
- In 2015, we announced a 10-year naming rights partnership with Northern Ireland's premier entertainment venue, The SSE Arena, Belfast. Through our SSE Reward programme, our customers can access exclusive ticket presales, special customer lounges, and 'money-can't-buy' experiences for shows at the Arena.
- In June 2016, it was announced that SSE Airtricity would be the commissioning supplier of natural gas to domestic and small commercial customers for the new Gas to the West distribution network, further securing the company's position as Northern Ireland's leading provider of natural gas.
- In March 2017, SSE completed the development of a 1,400-panel solar photo-voltaic array on the roof of the Odyssey Complex, home to The SSE Arena, Belfast. The 420 kilowatt peak (kWp) array will generate enough renewable energy from the sun to offset roughly 200 tonnes of harmful carbon emissions annually.
- SSE employs around 250 people directly in Northern Ireland and is proud to be an accredited Living Wage employer. Additionally, the company has created hundreds of jobs, and supported local supply chain businesses, through the construction of our wind farms.

The proposed development

Location

The Development is located approximately 20km north-west of Cookstown in County Tyrone and approximately 12km to the west of Draperstown, which is located in County Derry/Londonderry. The village of Broughderg is situated 2km to the south of the site on the Broughderg Road, which links Draperstown to Greencastle. Greencastle is located 10km to the south west of the Doraville site.

The development

Background

At the community consultation events held between September and December 2014, the design featured 43 turbines, which was reduced to 36 following the consultation. The work undertaken following the submission of the Environmental Statement (ES) in December 2015 has resulted in a further reduction of turbines from 36 to 33, with the deletion of turbine numbers 21, 24 and 25. A further seven turbines have been repositioned.

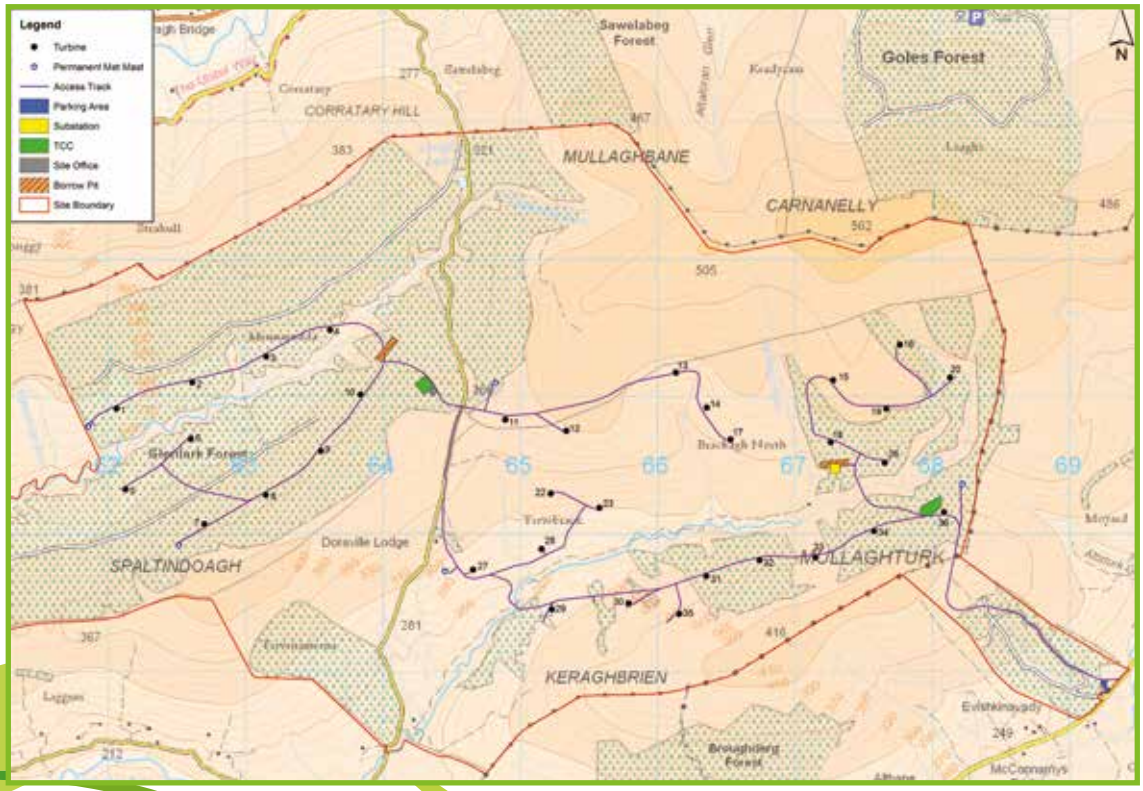
SSE has also updated the turbine specification to accord with current available models and to optimise energy generation. The new proposal is made up of 10 turbines with a maximum tip height of 136m and 23 turbines with a maximum tip height of 149m.

The Addendum design

As well as proposing 33 turbines, each with a generating capacity of around 3.6MW, other elements will include hardstandings, crane pads, external transformers, underground cabling, new access tracks, borrow pits (small onsite temporary quarries), met masts (for measuring wind speed) and an on-site electricity substation and control building.

Power generated by the turbines would be transferred via underground cables to the onsite sub-station which would then be connected to the grid at a point yet to be determined.

Proposed Addendum Site Layout



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Design Evolution

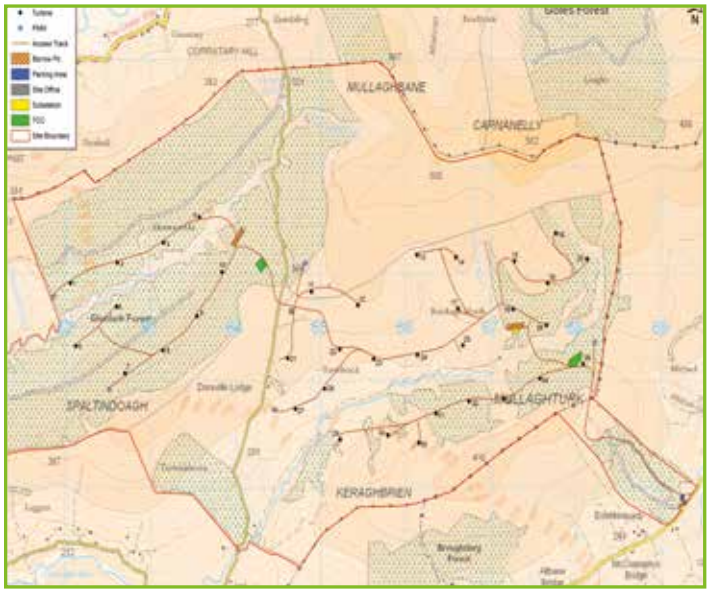
The Doraville Wind Farm design has undergone a significant layout design iteration, as a result of consultation feedback from the Environmental Statement (ES) submission and supplementary information on likely significant environmental effects. Since the submission of the ES on 7 December 2015 a number of comments have been received from statutory consultees and the design layout has subsequently been revised.

ES Site Layout (2015)

The key considerations for the ES design were related to the visual impacts, peat depths and protected habitats (e.g. Owenkillew ASSI/SAC, active peat). The two key changes from the 43 turbine layout to this layout, in landscape and visual terms, were as follows;

- Removal of further turbines from the western slopes of Carnanelly and eastern end of the Glenlark River valley; and
- Further pulling back of turbines from the ridgeline of Mullaghturk.

In this layout, the two main development areas – the upper Glenlark River valley and the upper Coneyglen Burn valley – are retained as these are considered to provide the most suitable areas for development in landscape and visual terms, due to the enclosed valley landform.



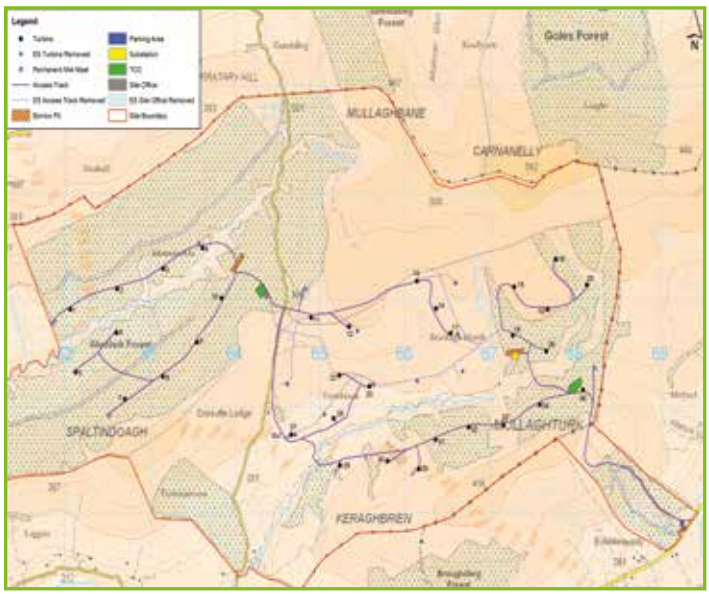
Proposed ES Addendum Site Layout (2017)

The 33 turbine ES Addendum site layout was produced following extensive public consultation and consultees feedback from the ES.

Summary of the Design Changes
There are a number of design changes proposed by SSE. These have mainly occurred to address issues relating to, but not confined to, landscape and priority habitats.

Design changes include:

- Removal of three turbines (T21, T24, T25) and associated access tracks.
- Re-positioning of seven turbines (T4, T12, T14, T17, T23, T27, and T28) and associated access tracks.
- Change in tip height so that proposed development comprises of 10 turbines with a maximum tip height of 136m (previous 126.5m) and 23 turbines with a maximum tip height of 149m (previously 140m).
- Proposed new site office that will be positioned adjacent to the temporary construction compound between T10 and T11.
- One new stream crossing.



The development process

Consultation

Process

Formal Publication

Site selection
A thorough review of potential wind farm sites in Northern Ireland resulted in Doraville being identified as a suitable site for a wind farm.

Scoping
In August 2013 a Scoping Report was submitted to statutory and non-statutory consultees, including local Community Councils, to obtain feedback and help define the scope of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

Scoping Report

Environmental baseline studies
Desk based assessments, consultation and field studies have been completed which identified the current (baseline) environments for the EIA. This information was used to design the layout of the site.

Public Exhibition
The final ES site design was presented to the public ahead of the application being submitted.

Preparation of the Environmental statement (ES)
The impacts of the proposed design are assessed using the baseline information collected and various guidance and good practice guidelines and the findings are presented in an ES.

Submission of application
The application was submitted to the Department for Infrastructure in June 2015 with a supporting Environmental Statement submitted in December 2015. Copies were made available to view for the local community at 5 different locations.

Section 26 Application and Environmental Statement

Consultation period
A statutory period of consultation is undertaken by the Department for Infrastructure for the proposed development. Consultees, interested parties and the public have the opportunity to comment on the proposed development.

Comments are made directly to the Department for Infrastructure

Consideration of the Application
The Department for Infrastructure is considering the application against planning and energy policies, together with consultee and community feedback. They provide a view on the application and consult with the Minister for Infrastructure. The Department will either issue a notice of opinion or initiate a Public Inquiry to consider the planning application. If a notice of opinion is issued the applicant and/or Council can request a Public Hearing.

WE ARE HERE

ES Addendum Report

Determination of the Application
The Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) will hold a Public Hearing or Public Inquiry to consider the planning application. The PAC will make a recommendation to the Minister for Infrastructure. The Minister will issue the decision.

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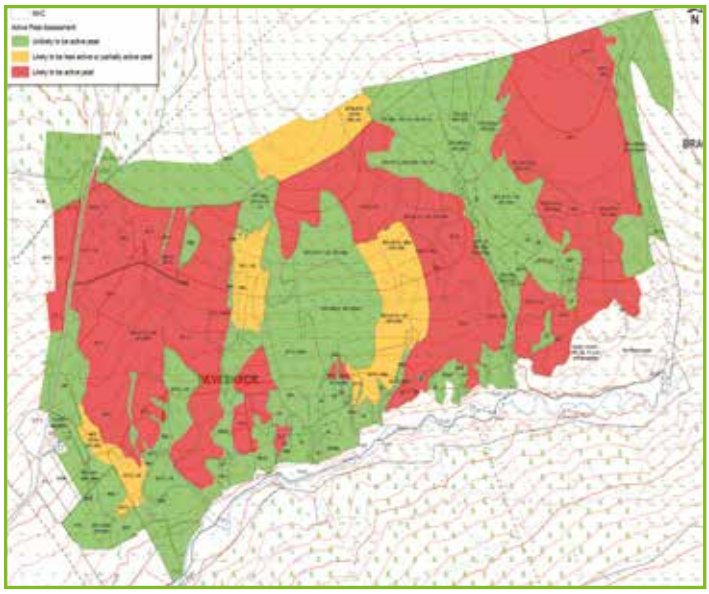
The Environmental Impact Assessment

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken for the Doraville Wind Farm. This is a process which identified and assessed the likely significant effects of the development and which has informed the design of the wind farm from an environmental perspective.

Findings in the Environmental Statement (ES) were submitted to Department for Infrastructure as part of our planning application. Appropriate measures to avoid, reduce or remedy significant environmental effects were presented within the ES. Following on from the design changes, the ES Addendum will report any changes to the findings of the ES. The ES Addendum report will be made available to the public at the time of submission and throughout the consultation period for the application.

Some of the key changes from the ES findings are summarised below.



Ecology

In response to concerns raised by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), the methodology for the Active Peat Assessment (APA) has updated in the addendum. The area has been reassessed on the ground for active peat and data on a large number of additional species has been collected.

The outcome of this exercise has been the preparation of a traffic light coloured constraints map, which shows the active peat, partially active peat and non-active peat across the areas assessed. This has been used to finalise the design layout, which has responded progressively to the active peat findings in an iterative way.

Cultural Heritage

A site visit was held on 9 September 2016 to discuss a request by the Historic Monuments Division for further information. The scope of the further information was agreed at this site visit. It was agreed that operational impacts on the settings of a number of assets would be reassessed. This included additional viewpoints on the road approaching Beaghmore Stone Circle complex – from the south, from the car park, and from the knoll to the south of the monument; and a Photomontage of the view across the complex from the south-west corner. The updated assessments and new photo-montages will be included in the addendum submission.

Landscape and visual assessment

The appearance of the wind farm has been a primary consideration throughout the project development. Key considerations in the design of the application layout were:

- Avoid/minimise visibility of turbines from Glenelly Valley road
- Avoid the appearance of turbines standing on the sensitive Sperrin skyline ridges, particularly in views from the south
- Avoid the placement of turbines on the scenic upland parts of the site (e.g. the higher slopes of Carnanelly and Mullaghturk)
- Ensure a balanced and cohesive layout from key viewpoints (e.g. residential views, Beaghmore Stone Circles)

The proposed changes to the wind farm layout may alter its appearance. The main changes to the appearance of the wind farm are likely to arise from:

- The proposed change to the height of the turbines
- The proposed change to turbine locations
- The proposed removal of turbines

Changes in the appearance of the wind farm have been considered as a high priority throughout the layout revision process.

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Civil Engineering and Roads

The proposed site is situated on Carnanelly Mountain between Glenlark Forest and the Broughderg Road. Access can be achieved via national primary and secondary roads to the main site entrance on the Sixtowns Road.

An unclassified public road passes north/south through the western part of Doraville, connecting the Davagh Road to the south with the Corramore Road to the north. The updated road proposals maintain the original details of no construction or maintenance HGV vehicles being permitted to access the site from the Davagh Road or Corramore Road end of the unclassified public road. The updated road proposal though does now include a length of the unclassified public road being upgraded to form part of the access track layout for accessing the different areas of the site.

Turbine Delivery Route

At an early stage in the assessment of the proposed wind farm development, it was necessary to establish a viable Turbine Delivery Route (TDR). This is due to turbine component delivery vehicles being significantly longer than standard heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and therefore exceed normal design standards for public roads.

As submitted in the Environmental Statement (ES) multiple routes are being considered, but at present the best option appears to be:

- Belfast Harbour to M2 and then onto the A6 Toome bypass;
- South-west onto and along the A31 from Castledawson roundabout junction off the A6;
- Onto Union Road within Magherafelt, continue along Union Road onto Hospital Road;
- Right turn onto Magherafelt Road (B42), continue along B42 to Tobermore;
- Follow B41 to Draperstown;
- Second exit at roundabout within Draperstown onto B47;
- At Labby continue straight on onto Sixtowns Road;
- Continue along Sixtowns Road, through The Six Towns and Bealnamala Bridge; and
- At Mullaghshuraren turn right onto Mullaghturk access (to be upgraded as part of the Development).

Opportunities and benefits

Tourism Grant Aid Scheme

The importance of tourism and recreation in the Sperrins to the local councils and to the community is clear. SSE wants to support this work by helping to improve the facilities that will encourage more visitors to visit and stay in the area bringing knock-on benefits to local businesses. In the Environmental Statement we set out a number of possibilities to this effect.

We are committed to creating a new investment fund, the Doraville Area Grant Aid Scheme, which would be available to local communities. This is designed to support area access, tourism promotion, the development and enhancement of recreational facilities and the local economy.

We have developed a number of priorities for this £1m Grant Aid Scheme, and we set out a number of possibilities where we can potentially provide additional benefit. These include:

- The provision of information boards and a picnic area at Beaghmore Stone Circles;
- The development of a folklore and heritage trail for Doraville and the wider area;
- Banks stabilisation on the Coneyglen Burn;
- Support for further development of visitor facilities which could include mountain biking and walking trails, changing facilities and a cultural centre.

£1 million Doraville Grant Aid Scheme to support tourism & recreation

Doraville Wind Farm proposal

Opportunities and benefits

Our approach

We recognise that our consented projects bring with them many local opportunities through the construction phase and into the operational phase of the project.

Local businesses will have the opportunity to provide their services which might include accommodation or the supply of sundries, materials, labour or equipment. To ensure that local businesses have the best chances of becoming part of the project supply chain, if consented, we will hold a 'meet the buyer' event before we begin construction which will be advertised in the local press. These events allow interested businesses to meet our contractors and to discuss the opportunities that they might benefit from.

In 2013 we became the UK's largest accredited Living Wage employer ensuring that our 21,000 employees receive at least the Living Wage and we are rolling this out to our contractors so that everyone involved in working with, or for, SSE is paid at least the Living Wage.

Regional Fund

The SSE Airtricity Scholarship was set up through the SSE Airtricity Regional Fund in 2014 to promote learning and skills development in the communities close to its wind farms in Northern Ireland. The fund aims to acknowledge the importance of education in the lives of young people and their families, whilst recognising the substantial financial commitment involved.

Providing scholarships assists students to gain the qualifications required to build strong careers. This means increased skills, wages and tax revenues – benefitting not just their home communities, but Northern Ireland as a whole. These flow-on effects of further education ensure a lasting impact from SSE Airtricity's funds for those directly supported and their communities, now and throughout the lifetime of the wind farm.

For all new wind farms in Northern Ireland, SSE Airtricity pays £5,000 per MW installed capacity, of which £2,500 goes to the Community Fund and £2,500 goes to the Regional Fund.

Case study: The SSE Airtricity Slieve Kirk Wind Park Regional Fund

Around £80,000 is allocated each year from the Slieve Kirk Regional Fund to provide students with 50% of their tuition fees for the duration of their course. The scholarship is targeted at full- and part-time students from the counties of Derry-Londonderry and Tyrone, with priority given to those living close to Slieve Kirk Wind Park, attending either the University of Ulster or South West College.

In 2016, 29 students received scholarships to enrol in a wide range of Foundation, Bachelor and Master Degree level courses, such as Wind Turbine Engineering and Civil and Environmental Engineering. The scholarship focuses on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects in a bid to help fulfil employment demands in these fields in Northern Ireland.

Darren Toner lives close to Slieve Kirk Wind Park and received the SSE Airtricity Scholarship in 2016 for a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering (Hons), specialising in Clean Technology. Reflecting on the impact the scholarship has made to him, Darren said: "The support from SSE Airtricity has been great and has already made such a difference to my time at university. Most importantly, it has allowed me to really focus on my studies. On top of that, the prestige associated with receiving a competitive scholarship from SSE Airtricity will really benefit me progress professionally too, from helping get an internship to applying for a job once I complete my course."

Opportunities and benefits

Community Fund

Meet Anne Reynolds, SSE Airtricity Community Development Officer

"The SSE Airtricity Community Fund has supported some excellent projects around our wind farms – the results speak for themselves. We're helping transform cold and expensive-to-run schools, clubs and halls into modern and comfortable energy-efficient centres, with a lower carbon footprint and reduced running costs."

SSE Airtricity is Northern Ireland's largest provider of wind power and since 2008 we have been supporting community projects close to our operating wind farms.

For all new wind farms in Northern Ireland, SSE Airtricity pays £5,000 per MW installed capacity, of which £2,500 goes to the Community Fund and £2,500 goes to the Regional Fund.

The SSE Airtricity Community Fund provides voluntary funding annually to support energy efficiency and sustainability projects to community groups. All communities within a 12-mile radius of the wind farm are eligible to apply for the funds however priority is given to those within a 3-mile radius.

Examples of projects funded to date include:

• Insulation and double glazing for schools, sports clubs and community halls • Replacement of windows and doors • Energy efficient pitch lighting for sports clubs and sports halls • Installation of solar lighting • Composters for community projects • Rainwater harvesting systems • Installation of an energy efficient electric heating solution

In response to concerns about a desire for lower energy costs locally, SSE is proposing to deliver a significant energy efficiency programme which will be available to residents living within 3 miles of the wind farm through the Community Fund. This programme will deliver a range of measures to improve the energy efficiency of homes and help reduce energy and heating costs. Measures may include loft and cavity wall insulation, installation of double glazing, and replacement of inefficient boilers and radiators. We will undertake Energy Audits in participating households to identify the optimum improvements which can be made from the range of measures available.

"The Two Castles Boxing Club continues to go from strength to strength – we perform better than any boxing club of comparable size across the whole island.

The part SSE Airtricity has played in this success cannot be underestimated, as without our modern facilities funded through the wind farm funds, we would not be attracting new members, and indeed could not train them properly in the facilities we had."

John Gallagher, Chairman,
Two Castles Boxing Club

£1.4m+
granted to rural communities in Northern Ireland since 2008

450+
projects supported since 2008

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What happens next?

Further environmental assessments have now been completed and we intend to submit the Environmental Statement (ES) addendum to the Department for Infrastructure in Spring 2017. The submission will be advertised in the press and on our project website notifying interested parties of the opportunity to make representations and the process for doing so.

There will be a consultation period during which interested parties are able to make comment on the application which is known as the statutory consultation period. Following this the Department will assess the application against planning and energy policy. All consultee representation will be considered, including comments from the local community.

Commenting on our proposal

The consultation period for formal representations will open once the application is submitted and advertised. Representations on the application should be made directly to the Department for Infrastructure at:

planning@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

or by post to:
DfI Planning, First Floor,
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street,
Belfast, BT2 8GB,
Northern Ireland.

Keeping in touch

Please take the opportunity at this exhibition to speak to our project team and ask questions about the proposal.

Alternately, please visit the project website or contact the Community Liaison Officer for more information.

Vicky.boden@sse.com
Brendan.scott@sse.com

We will keep the project website up to date with the latest information and downloadable documents

The project website
ireland.sse.com/doraville