APPENDIX 2-2

COMMUNITY REPORT

Community Report

Glenard Wind Farm

Co. Donegal

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1 INTRODUCTION

FuturEnergy Ireland (the Developer) is seeking planning permission from An Bord Pleanála to construct and operate a 15 turbine wind farm project on lands at Glenard in Co. Donegal.

FuturEnergy Ireland's active engagement with the local community began in summer 2019 during the early stages of project design. The objective was to ensure the views and concerns of all members of the local community were considered as part of the project design and the Environmental Impact Assessment process.

National guidance on community engagement and consultation for wind energy developments is set out under the *Wind Energy Development Guidelines* (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2006) and states:

"While it is not a mandatory requirement, it is strongly recommended that developers of a wind energy project should engage in active consultation and dialogue with the local community at an early stage in the planning process, ideally prior to submitting a planning application."

This was further addressed in the *Preferred Draft Approach to Wind Energy Development in Ireland* (June 2017), which stated the following in respect to planning applications for wind farms:

"Planning applications must contain a Community Report prepared by the applicant which will specify how the final proposal reflects community consultation. The Community Report must also outline steps taken to ensure that the proposed development will be of enduring economic benefit to the communities concerned."

The *Draft Revised Wind Energy Guidelines* (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2019) has retained this position, stating the following:

"In order to promote the observance of best practice, planning authorities should require applicants to prepare and submit a Community Report with their planning application and a condition on any subsequent planning permission should require developers to carry out the development in accordance with the approved Community Report."

This Community Report outlines the engagement and liaison with the community local to the area of the proposed wind farm.

2 BACKGROUND

In December 2021, Coillte and ESB established a new joint venture company owned on a 50:50 basis called FuturEnergy Ireland. The company's ambition is to develop more than 1GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030 and make a significant contribution to Ireland's commitment to produce 80% of electricity from renewable sources by the end of the decade. The Coillte Renewable Energy portfolio and the project team have transferred into the new company, including the Glenard Wind Farm project.

Both Coillte Renewable Energy and ESB (now FuturEnergy Ireland) have a long history of working with local communities across the country. This experience has generated an inherent understanding of the communities in which we operate. We aspire to work with the communities surrounding our renewable energy sites to build projects that are good for us as commercial companies, good for our neighbours, and that contribute to meeting national and global climate change objectives.

Coillte Renewable Energy and ESB (now FuturEnergy Ireland) have developed a large number of wind farms in Ireland over the past decade and has learnt many valuable lessons in relation to working with local communities and the importance of including local people in decisions that affect them. The FuturEnergy Ireland community engagement model focuses on the following:

- Detailed and systematic engagement with all close neighbours to the project (within 2km of Glenard Wind Farm) from a very early stage of project design.
- Open, transparent dialogue and communications.
- Creating opportunities for two-way dialogue on key issues.
- Empowering local communities to be part of project discussions that affect them.
- Ensuring the local community has access to all relevant information as soon as it is available, in a format that is easy to understand.

This approach focuses on the residents of dwellings within 2km of the initial 16 turbine layout as these individuals will live closest to the development and will therefore be most sensitive to any potential impacts. In the past, engagement commenced when a project was almost fully designed and prepared for planning submission. In more recent projects, including Glenard Wind Farm, we start engagement in the early stages of layout development.

In order to build better projects, the Developer recognises the imperative of enabling meaningful engagement between the project team and local residents. It is imperative that this engagement goes beyond mere information provision. Through open, transparent dialogue this engagement must move towards a more collaborative approach to infrastructure design that is of national interest yet has the potential to have a local impact.

What are the benefits of our approach?

- Actively engaging in the conversation helps to raise awareness and provides insight that can ensure successful project outcomes for everyone.

- Active and open dialogue with our community stakeholders is essential for the success of our projects. It is through two-way dialogue that the Developer can responsibly partner with local communities.
- The Developer is committed to strengthening partnerships with local communities.
- Public support is achieved by actively working with communities towards mutually desirable goals. Meaningful communication with stakeholders creates trust and mutual respect, as well as a shared understanding and vision of what a successful project can look like.
- Timely, proactive, open and honest communication is a cornerstone of our Engagement Charter. This approach helps to minimise possible adverse impacts on our neighbours and instead helps to achieve positive social, economic and environmental outcomes.
- In line with national policy, the Developer is committed to meaningful consultation, which brings about constructive local dialogue, as well as mutual trust and understanding.

3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES

In order to implement this approach, the Developer has resourced this project with staff dedicated to the project from the outset. The following key personnel have been involved in Community Engagement on the Glenard Project:

Owen Diver & Emmet Mc Laughlin are the Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) for the project. Owen and Emmet's role is to ensure project communications are distributed to the local community and act as the main point of contact for the community to discuss any queries or concerns that they might have. Owen Diver has worked with Coillte in all aspects of forestry during a 40-year tenure. He has vast experience of forestry and liaises with the community in relation to all Coillte operations throughout the Inishowen Peninsula.

Emmet Mc Laughlin has worked in the renewable energy and land surveying sector for over 12 years. He has consented and constructed several renewable energy projects including onshore wind farms, hydroelectric schemes and solar farms throughout Ireland and the UK. Emmet is also the project manager for the project.

Anne Walsh is FuturEnergy Ireland's Stakeholder Manager for the Glenard project. Anne has worked on both large and small-scale electricity generation projects throughout Ireland for over 25 years and has been involved in the establishment of a successful community recreation project in Sliabh Bawn, a Coillte-operating wind farm in Co. Roscommon.

MKO Planning and Environmental consultancy has prepared the planning application and Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) on behalf of FuturEnergy Ireland. MKO is the project lead for a large multidisciplinary project team. MKO is also responsible for the design process and is heavily involved in the statutory and community consultation aspects of the project. Over the past 11 years, MKO has gained significant expertise and experience as the lead planning and environmental consultant on projects in the renewable energy industry, having been involved in more than 1GW worth of renewable energy developments to date in Ireland.

4 SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CARRIED OUT

Emmet Mc Laughlin and Owen Diver were appointed as Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) for the project in Spring 2019. Based on the initial layout and dwelling distribution, the CLOs focussed on residents living within 2km of the site as these are closest and most sensitive to any potential effects caused by the proposed development. The 2km zone was identified by taking the initial developable area layout and applying a 2km buffer. Within this area all dwellings – lived in, vacant and with the potential to be occupied – were mapped. As the design progressed, a "buildable" or more accurate developable area was established. This defined 2km area was used as the basis for continuous engagement with near neighbours.

Initial engagement:

Engagement began in Spring 2019, when both CLOs worked together calling to all houses within the 2km zone with the first introductory newsletter. This was before any detailed design work had been initiated.

We believe it is important to give out the accurate, up-to-date information in print to each household in a timely manner (within approximately three days), to ensure all local households received this at the same time. CLOs were on hand to discuss any queries, comments or concerns that residents may have had with regards to the project and to take back queries and concerns to the project designers. These initial conversations and questions highlighted important topics such as landscape concerns, noise and concerns over interruption to TV & internet services that helped to inform the contents of the second newsletter.

The CLOs also worked on Saturdays and some evenings in an effort to meet residents unavailable during weekdays. The project team made arrangements to talk with some local residents individually at their request and also met with a couple of smaller groups.

A second project newsletter was distributed in Summer 2019. This contained a map of the site and information on environmental assessments being undertaken.

The project team created a low-call number and project email address to aid communications. These were included in all project newsletters.

All communications issued contained the contact details of members of the project team. Householders were invited to make contact if they had concerns or questions. The project team, specifically Project & CLO Manager Emmet Mc Laughlin, followed up on all issues raised in correspondences and any significant issues raised at the doors and all issues raised in correspondences.

Notes were left in the letterboxes when nobody answered the door on more than one of the calls, explaining that we had called again. Contact details were provided for the householder to make contact if they wished. Householders were told how they would be kept informed in future, as far as possible, as well as how to contact the project team with any queries.

The project team succeeded in meeting with approx. 95% of households within 2km. The remaining householders were sent a letter that contained an invite to contact the team if they wished.

A project website, www.glenardwindfarm.ie, also launched in Spring 2019 and all materials circulated to this point in the local area were uploaded to this site. The project website also included contact details for any queries.

Throughout 2019 the CLOs engaged on a one-to-one basis or in small pods with people on specific issues such as noise, set back distance and shadow flicker.

Next Phase Engagement

Following the introduction of the Government's Covid restrictions in March 2020 most of the subsequent engagements with the wider community went online, for example, community briefings took place via online webinars. A webinar with a project update occurred November focused on the community benefit fund and a further webinar in in December 2020 outlining the project status, turbine layout, the current layout and further details on the Community Benefit Fund and how it is proposed to be structured and operated under the Government guidelines.

Three webinars took place between the autumn & winter of 2021 as the project became more defined and further sessions regarding Community Benefit Fund undertaken. A number of break out groups were formed out of these webinars and the project manager met with some family pods to address specific concerns with the final layout of the project strictly in accordance with the Government's Covid-19 restrictions and guidelines .

In January 2022, a detailed 32-page brochure (Newsletter 3) with the final 15 turbine layout map was hand-delivered by the CLOs to the vast majority of homes within a 3km zone. This included information about the site and the proposed development, site layout map and information on the Community Benefit Scheme. It also included information on the planning process, the site design process, information on key aspects of the environmental studies, some of the environmental benefits associated with the proposed project and a guide to the what happens next.

At all stages of the consultation process, individual calls and emails received by the project were responded to either in person, by phone or by email as they arose.

Online virtual tour and information platform

Covid-19 restrictions prevented an in-person public consultation event, however an informative online project exhibition was developed with the assistance of Innovision, a virtual platform specialist. This Virtual Tour went live in January 2022 and is accessible from the project website homepage, www.glenardwindfarm.ie

The Virtual Tour includes an introductory video from Futurenergy Ireland, a turbine layout map, detailed information on archaeology and cultural heritage assessments, ecology field surveys, noise assessment, photomontages, aquatic ecology and all project information issued to date.

Webinar

Unfortunately, an in-person public consultation event was not possible due to Covid-19 restrictions. Instead the project team hosted a number of Community Information webinars during November/December 2021 prior to submission. A hard copy of all the webinar presentations was offered to anyone who could not attend the online event, or anyone who wanted to receive a copy.

A summary of all community engagement is set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1– Summary of Community Engagement for Glenard Wind Farm (2019 to 2022)

Quarters	Engagement
Q2 -19	Owen Diver & Emmet Mc Laughlin Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) appointed to work part-time on this project.
Q2 -19	Newsletter 1 delivered to more than 200 properties within 3km by the 2 CLOs (see Section 9.1). This involved door knocks, and call backs when nobody was home. Notes left when direct contact failed, with a phone number for contact purposes. A dedicated project low-call number and email went live.
Q2 -19	The launch of a dedicated project website to facilitate communications locally and with the wider public: www.glenardwindfarm.ie Website content includes information on project design, studies being carried out and expected timelines. It also includes the CLOs' contact details, and copies of the newsletters uploaded when they were issued. Householders invited to monitor the website for updates.
Q3 -19	Newsletter 2 delivered door to door again by the CLOs (see Section 9.1). This included evening and weekend calls to properties when nobody was home during the day in an effort to reach out to all.
Q1 20	Initial Covid-19 restrictions put in place nationally.
Q2-Q4 - 2020	Targeted phone calls and outdoor meetings in strict adherence to public health measures undertaken in an effort to maintain contact with residents within the 2-3km zone
Q4 -20	Community Webinar followed by a Q+A session
Q1-3 – 21	Following public health protocols Targeted phone calls and outdoor meetings in strict adherence to public health measures undertaken in an effort to maintain contact with residents within the 2-3km zone.
Q4 -21	Multiple online meetings outlining the final project layout, including sessions on community benefit.
Q1-22	Trueview Exercise with a number of interested locals whereby the wind farm was displayed as a model using an iPad. This was taken to the residents' homes so they could get a sense of the scale from different viewpoints and from their specific properties. Photomontage stills also

	undertaken at these locations and an individual montage provided for each household that requested this.
Q1-22	A detailed 32-page brochure (Newsletter 3) with the final 15 turbine layout map was hand-delivered by the CLOs to the vast majority of homes within a 3km zone. This included information about the site and the proposed development, site layout map and information on the Community Benefit Scheme. It also included information on the planning process, the site design process, information on key aspects of the environmental studies, some of the environmental benefits associated with the proposed project and a guide to the what happens next.

Table 2 sets out the number of occupied dwellings located within 3km of the proposed turbines.

Table 2 – **Occupied Dwellings Within 3 km of Proposed Turbines**

Distance from Turbines	No. of Dwellings	Cumulative Total
750 - 1000 m	**6**	**6**
1000 – 2000 m	**22**	**28**
2000 – 3000 m	**41**	**69**

A summary of the key issues raised during the course of engagement is set out in Table 3 .

Table 3 – **Summary of Key Issues Raised During Community Engagement**

Topic	Issue Raised
Turbine Noise	Potential effects on residential amenity. Potential effects on health associated with wind farm noise / low frequency noise / infrasound. How will the Developers ensure that the wind farm will not breach noise limits / impact upon residential amenity? How will the project be cumulatively assessed in terms of noise?
Health Concerns	How will the Developer ensure that there will be no health impacts associated with the operation of the wind farm?
Visual Impact	Negative impact on residential amenity - direct views from residents' homes (windows) to turbines.

Topic	Issue Raised
	Scale of the turbines is very large. Will I be able to see what the proposed wind farm will look like from my property in advance of planning being submitted? Enough wind farms in the locality already. Concerns over visual impact of red aviation lights at night-time.
Local Concerns & Consultation Process	How does the Developer take on local concerns, and are these actually taken into consideration?
Shadow Flicker	How can the Developer ensure that shadow flicker won't occur?
Disruption to Wi-Fi / TV signals	How will the Developer ensure that the project won't impact on signals (WiFi and TV) and how will this be rectified if any disruption occurs?
Access to Wind Farm	How will the Developers limit access to the wind farm once operational; will barriers be installed? Concerns over antisocial behaviour at night.
Who are the Developers / Landowners?	Who are the local landowners involved in the project?
Construction Traffic and Noise	Potential effects arising from use of local roads during construction – large trucks on narrow roads, how will this be managed and who is liable for any potential road damage? Will there be a liaison officer or individual point of contact during the construction phase?
Property	Potential effects on ability to obtain planning permission for a dwelling in the future.
Community Benefit Fund	How would the Community Benefit Fund structured? How much will the Community Benefit Fund be worth / when would it start?
Recreation	Will there be a recreation aspect associated with the wind farm such as walking trails?

Topic	Issue Raised
Water Quality	Will there be disturbance to local groundwater / aquifers / water quality during the construction phase / operational stage? Who will enforce regulations / monitor water quality? Who will be liable should a pollution incident occur?
Peat/Landslides	What is the likelihood of peat slide as a result of the wind farm, how has the designers assessed this?

These themes were discussed throughout the engagement process and the project team answered them in a transparent and open manner as far as possible. Ultimately not all themes could be or were addressed to the satisfaction of all, but the project team remains open in trying to find fair and equitable solutions for all, including sharing information sources at our disposal. All of the above themes are also addressed clearly in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

It is to be noted that the CLOs were treated with respect , and while some neighbouring households were not pleased with what they heard, we were thanked at times for bringing the information to them. The long timeframe for this engagement has allowed people to digest the information, consult, discuss among themselves and reach out to the project team on any items that they felt needed further clarification.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions on public meetings, where requested further liaison/communication was carried out individually or in small groups outdoors in line with the public health policy in place at the time. This allowed the project team to engage directly with local residents and address their concerns or queries regarding the project design, which was beneficial to all parties.

5 INFLUENCE OF ENGAGEMENT ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE WIND FARM DESIGN

As outlined in Section 4 above, the main concerns of local residents include impacts relating to wind turbine noise, visual impacts, shadow flicker and associated impacts on residential amenity, the structure of the Community Benefit Fund, ecological impacts, peat stability and impacts on telecommunication signals.

5.1 IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH NOISE AND VISUAL IMPACTS

Noise and visual impacts were addressed as part of the layout design process. A decision was made early in the design process to ensure that a minimum distance of 700 metres would be maintained between nearest inhabited dwellings and turbines. This is more than the current recommended setback of 500m as set out in the Wind Energy Development Guidelines (WEGs) 2006. The setback of 700m also complies with the Draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines (WEGs) 2019 which are not, as of the time of writing this report, official policy and may change in the final form. The Draft WEGs recommend a minimum setback of 4 times the tip height of proposed turbines to protect residential amenity – this would equate to a minimum setback of 692m based on proposed tip height of 173m. The final turbine layout actually maintains a minimum setback distance of 740m from inhabited dwellings.

Various configurations and layouts were examined as part of the initial design considerations, which included layout with 11, 14, 15, and 16 turbines. Based on a detailed visual impact assessment and ecological constraints taken into consideration as part of the environmental impact assessment, a 15 turbine, 173m tip height layout was deemed to be the most suitable and provides a balance between efficient use of the project site area and consideration of visual impacts on the local and wider area. In the case of Glenard, designing a project layout that 'fitted' within a landscape already absorbing wind turbines was an overriding consideration from early in the design process. This was important feedback taken on board from 2019 community engagement as well as initial assessments from the project's Landscape and Visual consultant. Conversations with local residents on maximising setback distances from properties influenced the layout along with the environmental constraints of the site.

A number of residents requested images of what the wind farm would look like from their particular location. The photomontages prepared for the project are not intended to show the view from every dwelling but to be representative of local, regional and sensitive views in a wide area around the development site. In these cases, where the photomontages did not cover a particular cluster of dwellings, informal images were prepared and issued to these residents to help them get a sense of what the project might look like from their location. Furthermore, within the Glenard Virtual Tour an interactive photomontage viewer presents 19 viewpoints. Residents can judge the visual impact of the project from these selected locations; www.glenardwindfarm.ie.

Potential noise emissions from the proposed development and the potential effects on local residents were an important consideration in the design of the turbine layout. The 15 turbine layout was subject to a detailed noise impact assessment and it was determined that the proposed layout would meet the noise requirements set out in the Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006 and relevant current guidance and best practice. The noise assessment also involved working with community members in order to compile the background noise levels. To do this, noise monitors were placed at local residences surrounding the project Study Area.

A review of the literature relating to health effects associated with wind turbine noise finds no evidence of any significant health effects associated with low frequency noise or infrasound. There is no evidence to support increased likelihood of significant health issues associated with noise sensitive medical conditions.

Further details on this can be found in the Noise and Vibration Chapter, Population, Human Health and Material Assets Chapter and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Chapter of the EIAR.

5.2 IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH SHADOW FLICKER

Concerns were raised directly with the CLOs from numerous households about the potential impact of shadow flicker from the turbines. Shadow flicker was considered as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment process. The proposed layout can conform with the Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006 of maximum 30 minutes of shadow flicker per day or 30 hours per annum at any sensitive receptor through the management of the turbine operations during periods when there is a potential for shadow flicker.

Further to this, in accordance with emerging best practice and the draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2019, the project is committed to elimination of shadow flicker through the daily management of turbine operations.

Further details on this can be found in the Shadow Flicker Chapter of the EIAR.

5.3 IMPACTS ON PROPERTY VALUE

Concerns were raised about potential impacts on the value of properties surrounding the site area, both to the CLOs and the project team. There are several wide-ranging international studies that consider potential effects of wind farms on nearby property values. Based on our review of available papers, we have not identified any peer-reviewed evidence in Ireland that indicates wind farms have a significant impact on property value. In other parts of the world, the vast majority of studies indicate that there is no evidence to support the claim that a wind farm has a negative impact on local property prices.

Much of the research data emphasises the specific context of an individual wind farm, which makes engaging with local communities all the more important. The specific location, the quality of the community engagement programme and the level of net community gain in the form of a benefit fund and/or near neighbour scheme have been cited as important considerations.

Impact on property values is discussed in further detail in the assessment of Population and Human Health Chapter of the EIAR.

5.4 COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND

Concerns were raised with the CLOs regarding the structure and administration of any proposed Community Benefit Fund. The Glenard Community Benefit Fund will be designed and established based on RESS Community Benefit Fund Good Practice Principles as published by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communication in July 2021. RESS (Renewable Electricity Support Scheme) is a policy initiative to deliver on the Government's Climate Action Plan and has specific requirements in relation to providing local support for those living close to wind farm developments. An important feature of RESS is that all projects must establish a Community Benefit Fund to be used for the wider environmental, social and economic wellbeing of the local community. It is accepted that those living in closest proximity to the project should be priority beneficiaries and that is why some of the fund is designated for Near Neighbour payments. However, it is important that broader community benefits apply as well.

The scheme mandates all RESS projects to establish a Community Benefit Fund worth €2 per MWh (megawatt hour) of generated electricity for any future wind farm. Therefore, the project owners are required to contribute €2 per MWh annually into a community fund for the RESS contract period i.e. the first 15 years of operation. In addition, FuturEnergy Ireland commits to continue contributing to the Community Benefit Fund for the remaining duration of the project operation at a rate of at least €1 per MWh. The total fund per annum will depend on the final power output of a successful project which is influenced by a number of factors including:

1. Number of wind turbines.
2. Capacity and availability of energy production of those turbines.
3. Quantity of wind.

The Glenard Wind Farm, if constructed as proposed, means that the project could provide more than €350,000 per annum to the Community Benefit Fund, depending on the size of the permitted scheme and the wind resource, which varies from year to year, for the first 15 years of its operational life. {Insert how much potentially would the fund be worth once the additional €1/MWhr is added for the remaining period}

RESS guidelines for the annual distribution of this fund are as follows:

- A minimum of €1,000 shall be paid to each household located within a distance of a 1 kilometre radius from the nearest turbine.
- A minimum of 40% of the funds shall be paid to not-for-profit community enterprises whose primary focus or aim is the promotion of initiatives towards the delivery of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goals 4, 7, 11 and 13, including education, energy efficiency, sustainable energy and climate action initiatives.
- A maximum of 10% on administration.
- The balance of the funds shall be spent on initiatives successful in the annual application process, as proposed by clubs and societies and similar not-for profit entities, and in respect of Onshore Wind RESS 1 Projects, on “near neighbour payments” for households located outside a distance of 1 kilometre.

The Developer remains fully committed to facilitating an equivalent annual Community Benefit Fund if the project does not enter into or qualify under a future RESS process.

How the fund works

The Government’s ‘Good Practice Principles for Community Benefit Funds’ provides full details on how the fund is to be governed and requires local community participation in all decisions in regard to how the funding should be used. The fund is open to individuals, and not-for-profit groups such as community and voluntary groups, charities, social enterprises and clubs and societies. High quality administration, local where possible, is also a key expectation. Further details can be found at https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/5f12f-community-projects-and-benefit-funds-ress/

It is envisaged that, should the project receive a positive planning outcome, the project team and the local community will work together to develop an appropriate local structure that would design the Glenard Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund. This group will make decisions on funding allocations and, with the assistance of an administrator, manage the fund, ensuring transparency and good governance.

5.5 IMPACTS ON LOCAL ECOLOGY

Concerns were raised about potential impacts on local ecology and habitats in the site area, both to the CLOs and the wider project team. Detailed site surveys and assessments were undertaken to consider potential impacts on all aspects of biodiversity including habitats, mammals, bats, birds, etc. The initial survey findings informed the layout design such that potentially sensitive areas were avoided in the initial layout. More detailed surveys were undertaken following from the preliminary infrastructure layout designs and amendments were made to the layout to avoid sensitive areas, insofar as possible. Based on these assessments, it is considered that there will not be significant impacts on biodiversity in general and no further changes to the layout are required.

Ecological enhancements will also be provided throughout the wind farm site as set out in the Biodiversity Management and Enhancement Plan which includes over 7 hectares of peatland restoration.

5.6 IMPACTS ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Concerns were raised directly with the CLOs about the potential impact on WiFi / television signals at certain properties that have a line of sight to transmitter towers. The Glenard project is being designed with all existing radio, internet and television receptions in mind and all telecommunications providers were consulted on the proposed layout. All telecommunications links in the area were avoided by design. The Developer commits to rectifying any issues with signal reception at individual dwellings if the need arises. This is uncommon due to the new digital transmission format, but solutions are relatively simple and straightforward.

Further details on this can be found in the Material Assets Chapter of the EIAR.

6 POTENTIAL ENDURING BENEFITS OF THIS PROJECT

Glenard Wind Farm has the potential to bring significant positive benefit to the local community. The project will create sustainable local employment, contribute to local authority annual rates and provide a local community benefit fund in line with the new Renewable Energy Support Scheme. The fund will remain in place for the duration of the project's RESS period and provide direct funding to those areas surrounding the project.

6.1 COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND

There are two important Government policy developments that will influence the establishment of future community benefit funds. The first is the Renewable Energy Support Scheme, and its terms and conditions which have been published by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications. The second is the updated Wind Energy Guidelines (WEGs), which have yet to be released. Both policies specify Government requirements on community benefit funds for renewable energy projects. FuturEnergy Ireland can confirm that these important policies will be fully adopted and integrated in our design and establishment of the Glenard Community Benefit Fund.

6.2 COMMUNITY INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

What is meant by Community Investment?

The proposed Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) states that future renewable energy project proposals should enable the possibility for local communities to invest in projects in a meaningful way and directly gain from the financial dividends that an operational project can provide. In response to this, FuturEnergy Ireland has been working hard with external agencies to develop workable models of Community Investment.

At the time of writing, the details of a Community Investment Scheme continue to be worked through by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications. We look forward to its publication in due course and promoting this innovative offering to the community.

6.3 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

It is estimated that the proposed project will create more than 120 jobs during the construction phase. The operational phase of the wind farm will support more than 35 jobs although the number of local jobs during the operational stage is likely to for 2-3 wind turbine technicians. During construction, the supply of services and materials to the development will create additional employment in the region. In addition, there will also be income generated by local employment from the purchase of local services i.e., travel and lodgings.

6.4 RECREATION

It is proposed to use the wind farm access tracks and existing forestry and farm tracks and paths as recreational amenity trails for community use. This includes the installation of associated signage and information boards, and the repurposing of the bellmouth entrance (needed for turbine delivery) to the wind farm as a permanent trail-head car park.

7 ONGOING LIAISON AND CONTACT

Different phases are detailed below with varying levels of engagement anticipated depending on project activity levels. A dedicated Community Liaison Officer for the project, who is contactable by email and telephone, will underpin all of the engagement below. These details will remain on the project website, which will be in place for the duration of the project. As the project progresses, regular updates will be posted here.

Post Grant of Planning Permission and 12 months pre-construction
During this period, a number of key community-related activities will continue to move forward. The first is a participatory design process for the Glenard Community Benefit Fund (CBF). Approximately 12 months before the project commences construction, the team will start a process of reaching out, initially to residents, to bring together a small group who are interested in working on the design and structure of a community-based entity that would ultimately run the Community Benefit Fund. When the project receives planning approval, plus a positive grid and Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) outcome, this process will then start with a scoping exercise followed by a series of facilitated workshops. It is hoped that representatives involved in existing local development initiatives will be stakeholders in this process and will therefore contribute to this strategy.

The second piece of work is to explore the potential for community investment in the project as outlined in the Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS). This is likely to follow on from the CBF workstream and is predicated by the release of clear guidance on this initiative from the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications.

Pre-Construction and Construction Phase
Six months before construction starts, the project team will initiate the formation of a liaison group. The project team will meet with this group on a monthly basis to prepare for the construction phase and monitor activities during construction. This group will develop plans to ensure effective communication with residents directly impacted by construction activities and deliveries, especially traffic planning, to minimise disruption.

The Glenard Wind Farm project will also engage with local suppliers prior to the construction phase to outline the project's future needs and promote the use of local suppliers and service providers wherever possible. This may take the form of a "meet the buyer" event.

Operational Phase
The project will propose annual meetings with the liaison group to update them on project performance and address any issues identified. The Community Liaison Officer will also be available throughout this period to directly address any issues raised by local residents. As stated above, the project website will also be maintained as a method of providing regular, up-to-date information. There will be regular updates on performance of the Community Benefit Fund and regular calls for proposals for funding.

Decommissioning Phase
A year before decommissioning the project begins, the team will engage with the established liaison group and with all residents within the 2km zone to outline the decommissioning plan and address any issues identified at that time.

8 CONCLUSION

As outlined throughout this Community Report, there has been pro-active engagement on the project throughout the planning design phase to date. We fully recognise, however, that the development of a proposed wind farm is a long and complex process and that there is ample time to jointly develop our community offerings with our near neighbours and other stakeholders,We look forward to the opportunity to progress these community offerings after the planning adjudication and decision phases, should the project receive planning consent.

9 PROJECT LITERATURE

9.1 NEWSLETTERS AND WEBINAR

All of the newsletters, brochures and webinar information are accessible in the Latest News section of the project website https://www.glenardwindfarm.ie/