

BRORA COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting

Tuesday 16 August, 2022

1900-2100hrs

Brora Community Centre

Chair:- Russell Rekhy

Attendees:- Russell Rekhy (RR), Diana Royce (DR), Margaret Mackintosh (MM), Lynn Paterson (LP), David Andrews (DA), Ruwan Uduwera-Perera (Sec) (RUP)

Guests: Sandy Crawford; Bernard Doherty; Charlotte Gibson; Sue Greenbank; David Lawson; June Lawson; Ellen Lindsay; Caroline McMorran; Muriel Mowat; Richard Mowat; Cllr Lesley-Anne Niven; Christina Perera; David Perry; Meg O'Reilly; Michael O'Reilly; Dominic Turner; Jull Turner
;

Apologies:- none received.

	Item	Action	Responsible member	Review Date
1	Welcome and apologies For SSE Renewables: Andrew Hagan; Richard Hearnden; Gordon McIntosh; Greig McIntosh; Jade O'Hara*; Yasa Ratnayeke. *NB Since the meeting, Jade O'Hara, has been replaced by Gareth Shields, Stakeholder Engagement Manager for SSE PLC, Glasgow.			

BRORA COMMUNITY COUNCIL

<p>2</p>	<p>Police Update Not presented</p>			
<p>3</p>	<p>Minutes of last meeting Not presented</p>			
<p>4</p>	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>1. SSE Presentation – Industrial Hydrogen Plant at Gordonbush Windfarm</p> <p>Following the exhibition in the Scout Hall in April, SSE Renewables have revised its plan. The proposal to have batteries for storage of electricity on the site has been taken out of the planning application.</p> <p>The means of electrolysis has been changed from lye to a polymer electrolyte membrane (PEM).</p> <p>The number of vehicles will be reduced from eight in each direction, daily, to 4 or five; however, the size has been increased and these will be articulated, 44 tonne tanker/trailers, each more than 14 metres long. Transports will be daily, except for Sunday. They will not be escorted.</p> <p>The water supply is currently under review. The source needs to be sustainable environmentally and ecologically and take into account the private water supplies in the area.</p> <p>Timescales: beginning of 2023 - submission of Planning Application; autumn 2023 - begin construction; mid-2024 operational.</p>			

BRORA COMMUNITY COUNCIL

SSE is submitting noise, habitat and hydrology, reports as well as an Environmental Impact Assessment deemed necessary by Highland Council.

Health and Safety Executive will take six months to reach a conclusion.

SSE will be sending a pamphlet to every household in Brora and hosting another Public Exhibition during the autumn.

Gordon McIntosh advocated for the Aberdeen Renewable Energy Group. Andrew Hagan promoted hydrogen for heavy vehicle usage.

Matters raised by members of the public

Members of the public raised their concerns about the proposed project and asked questions, which focused on:

- health and safety;
- environmental damage;
- infrastructure and road unsuitability;
- SSE's inexperience with the hydrogen technology;
- lack of local usage for hydrogen take-off;
- water abstraction and discharge with impacts on peatland;
- lack of any data on blast zones and other critical H&S issues;
- the amenity value of the Strath to local people and visitors alike;
- inappropriate industrial development in a remote and rural area;
- damage to private water supplies due to abstraction of groundwater;
- dangers to wildlife and ecology;
- threats to livestock on unfenced common grazings;
- pre-existing damage to road, caused by the last SSE windfarm construction;
- inadequate reinstatement of verges and road surface following last SSE windfarm construction;
- that no comparison can be made between Aberdeen and Strath Brora;

BRORA COMMUNITY COUNCIL

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSE's lack of openness and transparency thus far in the process. <p>SSE gave assurances that they have “deep pockets” to address all concerns; but they were “not here to give guarantees about anything.”</p> <p>SSE agreed to make all data from the necessary reports available, in advance of the public exhibition.</p> <p>SSE agreed to speak to Highland Council about the inadequate repairs to the road surface and unsuitable reinstatement of verges.</p> <p>Jade O’Hara agreed to a meeting in advance of the public events.</p>			
5	<p>Reports</p> <p>Local Councilors Due to the recent Highland Council elections, there is no report from the local councillors.</p> <hr/> <p>Community Council Sub-groups Nothing to report.</p> <hr/> <p>A N Others Nothing to report</p>			
6	<p>Correspondence Nothing to report</p>			
7	<p>Micro Grant request RR said this matter would be heard in private after the meeting was concluded. SSE ‘Legacy Fund’</p> <p>There is a mechanism in the original Memorandum of Understanding that enables the communities of Brora, Helmsdale, Golspie and Rogart, if in agreement, to draw-down some of</p>			

BRORA COMMUNITY COUNCIL

	<p>the later years of the 25-year Community Fund in advance, to support large projects that needed funds greater than the usual £20k limit.</p> <p>± Subsequent to the meeting a letter had been received from Helmsdale Community Council which has a number of projects that have taken many years to get to the point where their completion is hopefully imminent, but recent inflation is resulting in a series of cost increases that are making everything much harder.</p>			
8	<p>Treasurer's Report Not presented</p>			
9	<p>Community Feedback Nothing to report.</p>			
10	<p>Planning Issues Focused on Gordonbush 'Green Energy' Proposal.</p>			
11	<p>AOCB</p>			
12	<p>Date, time and venue of next meeting TBA</p>			