

Tormsdale Wind Farm - Community Benefit Fund Questionnaire. Open Responses

Fieldwork 26th November - 18th December 2024

1. What do you think are the three biggest challenges or priorities in your local community? Challenge 1 - please provide details.



ResponseID	Response
9	gfwsyhn
17	Too many wind farms
18	Keeping people in the area
19	1. Affordable power for low income no benefits households Cheap electric goes south while we all pay premium prices
21	Poverty; lack of local services; depopulation
22	Main issues are the condition of the roads. The public transport is poor and needs addressing. The hospital in Thurso and Wick need equipping with more equipment and doctors to prevent local people having to go to Inverness for treatment.
24	1. Halkirk playpark needs done up ASAP, people with kids are having to travel at least 7 miles to get to a half decent play park. The children deserve better. 2. Walking round Halkirk is a challenge as to do the loop around hoy passed the pumping station you have to walk along the main road with cars passing at 60mph very rarely slowing down. 3. Speeding through the village.
25	Lack of healthcare Lack of services Lack of maintained roads and infrastructure
27	Pot holes - council can not keep up physically and financially
29	Transport

ResponseID	Response
31	Energy prices.
32	Lack of public transport
33	Lack of affordable housing for locals
40	Getting children outside to play. Play park is not good and lacks equipment. Needs modernising. Also a skateboard park which allows kids to play on bikes, scooters and skateboards would be great for halkirk children. Outdoor activities keeps children bodies to be healthy, keeps minds healthy, helps with socialising and creativity. There is nothing in village to allow children to do this
42	Withdrawal of health care to central regions, no access to NHS dentists, maternity is poor with dependency on Inverness.
43	1 To many windfarms
44	Higher education access by location and cost. The area needs teachers, doctors and other NHS staff but training for these areas are not available locally.
46	Delapidated , town centre with no appeal for locals or visitors.
47	Lack of social resources for children and teenagers. There is not a suitable play park for young children in the village, although a new park has been approved, nothing has been done. There's nowhere for teenagers to go with activities or workshops for them to take part in
48	Cheaper electric
50	Depleted medical services at our hospitals and doctor surgeries. The wonderful facolility at Caithness General is not fully utilised for the residents of Caithness especially babies and new mums
51	Transport links , condition of roads cost of air travel
52	Lack of jobs outside of Dounreay. The area needs more opportunities for it's young people than sitting at Dounreay doing very little for high salaries.
54	Affordable homes for rent
55	Poverty - working people and the elderly have seen their standard of living drop with many now finding it hard to male ends meet
58	Lack of educational and future employment opportunities for youth. Poor Internet provision for homes and business. Long term employment
59	Fuel poverty Cost of living Roads

ResponseID Response

60	Depopulation (ageing population and outward migration [especially of young people]) Which leads to: Challenges in terms of social sustainability and infrastructure. Such as transport, housing (people per household is dropping so houses exist but are filled by fewer people, not opening up new housing despite depopulation) , healthcare etc. High quality, well paid employment. Median salary is below national average.
61	The roads and pavements need to be upgraded. Better walkways along the river walk, even old swing bridge across river Thurso at Braal Castle reinstated
63	Lack of interest from Highland Council, NHS, Government. All public services are failing and Caithness is being forgotten/
64	Stopping the wind farm developers from totally ruining the county.
69	Tourism Community events Roads
75	The lack of fit for purpose community spaces
77	Education is underfunded. It's reaching crisis levels. Please fund work in schools and for schoolchildren, especially making funds available to Head Teachers, Parent Councils, Pupil Councils and voluntary organisations which support the work of schools.
80	Transport - crumbling infrastructure, lack of reliable public transport
81	Community spaces - indoor and outdoor - are lacking in Caithness. There are many interest groups (cultural, craft, sports) but not enough spaces to accommodate them.
82	Roads in poor condition, for example the road from Halkirk to Loch More via Westerdale
83	Fuel poverty, low income resulting in poor private housing, homes that need essential improvements. No public transport, no disabled facilities, no youth facilities. Travelling 120 for a hospital appointment.
84	Fuel and food poverty
85	Lack of funding opportunities. Public facilities, such as swing parks and piers, face difficulty in raising money to fulfil regenerate work and are left to raise huge volumes themselves. John o Groats playpark is an example as they are trying to raise over £350k all reliant on the work of volunteers.
87	Access to arts and culture
88	Social engagement Our community has fractured and social groups no longer mix as much as they used to. There simply isn't the activities that attract multi generational audiences to gather and benefit from the social connections that many of us grew up with.
93	Nothing

ResponseID	Response
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96	Poor health service, including dentistry.
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2. Challenge 2 - please provide details.



ResponseID	Response
9	rynrdwsy
18	Keeping money in the community
19	2. Community support for people and households struggling to maintain a surviveable standard of living
22	What details stupid question.
25	Do the research yourself
27	Public transport reliability - our 1 flight destination gets cancelled frequently, trains are often cancelled or terminate before getting to their destination and the bus can also be unreliable.
29	Sports facilities and recreational activities
31	Old cold houses.
32	Local hospital appointments
33	Visitor attractions not well developed eg compared to Orkney

ResponseID Response

40	If a child has a hobby like golf or swimming for example there is not the specialist coaching needed to take the child to the next level. Often need to travel to Aberdeen or Glasgow to get this. The cost of travel and equipment is often more than many parents can afford. Hobbies are vital for children's development and builds resilient adults. Many funds are geared for community groups rather than individuals who need help with funding sport or dance hobbies
42	The constant comparison with Inverness for Highland Council services e.g the recent publications on swingparks show a huge number of players to close in Caithness whilst only one or two in Inverness are affected, and the endless stretches of road that doesn't get gritted.
43	2 to many windfarms.
44	Facilities for older people , that are accessible to all, not just those who are referred by doctors. Centres similar to Laurandy in Wick- help with loneliness, provide rest bite for carers and employment.
46	Poor local facilities such as shops, social care, hospital and maternity services and animal welfare centres. All centralised to Inverness.
47	Pot hole on every street are horrendous and never get properly fixed. Some get filled, not all, but not to the standard where they remain fixed, they just reappear within a few months
48	The price of electricity should be cheaper because we have to visually accommodate these monstrosities.
50	High streets looking and feeling very run down with out of town retail parks killing our high streets. Empty buildings mot being creatively re activated for housing, leisure and industry
51	Burecracy , to many layers of government, council
52	Infrastructure. The area needs better transport, IT links, education and health services to stop population drift.
54	Healthcare-lots of families traveling to Rigmaire for short simple appointments
55	Infrastructure - the area is tired and no longer looked after. Pavements aren't fit for purpose, weeds everywhere, street lighting unsafe
59	The roads are horrendous and causing damage to vehicles. The cost of living is higher for us in the north. Fuel poverty is all over yet our country will be full of stations and turbines
60	See previous I.e social infrastructure.
61	Sportcentre for the young people, maybe an all weather pitch

ResponseID Response

63 Transport, the railway should be a fantastic asset, but it's so slow, so often cancelled, you just can't rely on it. Bus travel unfortunately is no use for anyone who wants to travel in an evening, so rural people can only apply for certain jobs and rural children miss out on after school activities.

64 Living within sight and sound of the destructive turbines.

69 Caithness has no sense of cultural identity. We are a gap between Inverness and Orkney. Caithness needs something to "put it in the map" Roads are in a poor condition due to heavy infrastructure use.. Caithness has very few local events compared to what it used to have .

75 There's significant issues around reliable public transport

77 Health & health care is also a priority. Please fund Caithness hospital departments to enable more patients to be treated more quickly in Caithness without having to travel to Inverness. And please fund any voluntary organisation supporting people's health.

80 Cost of living - high energy bills, food costs

82 Lack of footpaths along the River Thurso

83 Low income fuel poverty

84 Social isolation

85 Lack of funding equity. Communities which are outwith the bounds of community benefit funds lack access to numerous high volume pots of funding, causing social divides between small areas. Reay, Halkirk, Dunnet all have access to large pots of money from renewable projects, whereas villages like Castletown have access to none. As a student, I have access to grants to attend University, whereas somebody who lives 5 miles away does not but still faces the same challenges of attending University from a rural background.

87 Access to training and development

88 Opportunities for young people. The market is small, low paid and if not employed by Dounreay largely low skilled. This is not a fair reflection of the education level of our youth and we can be better placed to accommodate projects and developments that retain our talent at good levels of pay and career progression.

96 Few career prospects or apprenticeships for young people.

3. Challenge 3 - please provide details.



ResponseID	Response
9	stym
19	3. Support to 3rd sector / voluntary health care providers who fill the gaps left by poor NHS services.
22	Don't understand another stupid question
25	.
27	Lack of jobs - almost all young people leave to uni and don't come back because of the lack of jobs, other than engineering or hospitality there's not many options
29	General facilities, such as local shops/amenities
31	Ripped off by foreign investors including England.
32	Enticing young folk to stay in the area
33	Lack of investment in leisure facilities including footpaths, cycleways (eg National Cycle Route 1 pretty much unknown)
40	Many pensioners now struggling with cost of living so no longer able to afford social events or outings now which results in depression, worsening mobility and life enjoyment so a fund that would be aimed at this age group in the village would be excellent. It could help fund flower arranging, bowling, trips to historic houses etc
42	Rural isolation

ResponseID Response

43	3 to many windfarms.
44	Leisure facilities, other than swimming pools, gyms or cinema. Eg bowling alley. This provides employment and safe space for all ages
46	Poor access for locals and visitors. ie pathways, roads and cycle paths.
47	School heating system is controlled by Inverness and it is dependent on the weather they have at the time, not what the weather is locally. It gets much colder here than Inverness
50	Lack of investment in our infrastructure - we need our roads fixed properly and maintained going forwards.
51	Health services
52	The attitude of a significant minority of the population needs to change from a "What am I getting?" To a "What can I do to help?"
54	Poor public transport
55	Amenities - our parks are unkempt, volunteers sort the boating pond - shops closed in the town
60	See previous. I.e., employment.
61	Playparks for children and toddlers.
63	Proliferation of wind farms, power stations, power lines, and now the new battery farms. I'm pro renewables, and a big supporter of wind farms and the necessary infrastructure. But even I can see that Caithness does not need any more and is now just being used to provide power source for the central belt.
64	Gettin gthe government to see that Caithness should not be a dumping ground for developers looking to maximise profit at the cost of our landscape and peatland heritage.
69	Caithness needs a cultural project to put it in the national map. A project that people would recognise and associate with Caithness.
75	The pressure on the third sector to provide services not offered elsewhere and the lack of financial security across the third sector.
77	Community facilities to meet as a group are struggling in Caithness. Please help those who run buildings for community group use to be able to afford to let groups use them at a reasonable cost. (Churches, community halls, British Legion, Libraries, Scouts, Guides, Boys Brigade etc)
80	Healthcare - difficulty accessing local services

ResponseID Response

82 Too much regeneration of coniferous woodland

83 No public transport

84 lack of infrastructure for young people, eg the old arcade/ bowling ally that was never reinstated. created boredom in young people which leads to unsociable behavior in the town

85 Climate Change. Our land is changing - we have more extreme weather events, and are left isolated in rural communities more and more. Work to both adapt to become resilient to these changes and work to mitigate further challenges should be a priority. Community benefit funds should both support the community financially but also support through work to develop Local Place Plans and control through Shared Ownership.

87 Access to healthcare

88 Maintaining our population. Too many see the only options are to leave the county to further their goals and ambitions. This need not be the case

96 No clothes or shoe shops.

4. Please tell us a bit more about the type of projects you would like to see funded/supported?



ResponseID	Response
9	utrtfgme,8645a36
17	We have enough wind farms - there is plenty funding already available to the area.
19	Financial support for volunteer organisations that provide essential care to the community but struggle with funding day to day running costs
22	Better facilities at the local hospitals to prevent the 2 1/2 hour trip to Inverness. Road surface improvements. Better public transport.
25	Subsidised electricity as the land is being blighted by turbines yet we have the most expensive electricity rates.
27	Reduction in energy costs for residents of the local community. Improvement/upgrades to public transport services in the area ie increased flight reliability, better flight links ie Wick to Edinburgh. Upgrades to rail network. Improvements to road network ie potholes, widening/improvements to nc500 route/access/facilities for tourists (this will reduce negative impact of tourists on locals)
29	Outdoor access - such as walking
31	Free energy.
32	There has to be a community bus service which suits local folk

ResponseID Response

33	More facilities to encourage folk to get outside and to appreciate the Caithness environment
40	Should be encouraging environmental by funding for solar panels for local residents.
42	Educational bursary that isn't means tested and fully funds the course you want to do.
43	Take your pittance and go elsewhere, maybe out to sea ,.
44	Development of the Caithness Rural Transport service. This is a great service for those who don't live near a bus route or those who need a bit of extra help. Providing a "rural route" to town would allow people to meet up, socialise, attend appointments etc. Letting people to continue to live in their own homes is better for them.
46	Cycle paths. Improved walking trails Town centre refurbishment
47	Job/apprenticeship opportunities for young people. Sports and social facilities for all. Play park for young children. Improved road infrastructure, improved school facilities, doctor surgery relocated with appropriate parking, money put back into the community for local events like fireworks night, Xmas lighting, gala week. Community support for elderly people
50	There is a gaping hole for qualified medical staff - a properly managed programme of sponsorship for encouraging local people to gain sponsorship to gain medical qualifications which come back to the county will improve ongoing medical provision -
52	Low cost accommodation which has to be for folk in the area, not holiday let's.
54	Sports facilities, Sports groups
55	Relief of poverty Infrastructure improvements Amenities improved
58	Long term development with the investment in employment to encourage youth into work and stay in communities.
59	Fuel subsidies
60	A portion should be used for traditional community benefit activities but the majority should be used to match fund larger initiatives, of greater cumulative impact, with other funders in the area.
63	I hope when you said 'high street' in the list you meant Halkirk high street and not the towns of Wick and Thurso? Living in rural Caithness is significantly more difficult and expensive already compared to living in town. Rural people have to live listening to the wind farms and dealing with the additional traffic and damage to the roads and landscapes, the people of Thurso and Wick do not. Please do not ring fence portions of this community benefit specifically for Wick and Thurso High Streets.

ResponseID Response

64	There is no such thing as a Communnity Benefit fund. It is simply a tiny carrot to persuade people that what you are doing is not as bad as it really is.
69	Cultural projects and events like galas and festivals
75	The third sector can offer solutions to many community issues but is not supported enough to do so. Funding organisations to deliver projects, employ project officers and development officers would make a considerable difference across the landscape. We need more recognition of what the third sector offers our communities - including the business community. When communities are a nicer place to live, work and visit, the spirit overall is better. Attracting people to move here is easier, empowering people to open shops in the high street is easier if people care about their towns and villages again. Singular projects without any consultation are much more likely to fail. Community organisations built on trust and run by local people who know the needs and wants of a community are far more likely to be sucessful. I'd love to see a significant fund available for a community hub, particularly in Thurso. This could be a space designed by those who will use it. It could include sports and leisure facilities, childcare provisions, cultural and social provisions, and a revenue provision to ensure continued operation. This kind of space would support many of the issues faced by those who live in Caithness & North Sutherland and reduce social isolation. Furthermore, a transport system to connect communities to the space so it's as inclusive as possible is essential. A Hub and transport system of this nature should be environmentally friendly and community owned/run.
77	Anything that addresses or curbs antisocial behaviour especially in young people. Perhaps the local police need your support? To do projects in and out of schools.
80	Lower energy bills to compensate for the glut of renewable projects in the county
82	Encouraging people to enjoy local environment eg wildlife watching, walking, cycling
83	They are all good ideas but there needs to be a focus on rural areas too. We are the ones in the proximity of the farms yet never see any benefit. I've yet to see any benefit to Halkirk or Spittal (except the village hall which is not in use 95% of the time). Payment to reduce electricity to those living nearest. Also financial help for a holiday or break for carers.
85	Support given to communities, businesses and individuals should all be against a backdrop of sustainability. For both retention in the local community, and to develop resilience communities that can face challenges.
87	Arts and culture Young people Public transport community / shared ownership
88	Music and social groups

5. Please use the space below to leave final comments to make regarding the potential for a Community Benefit Fund.



ResponseID	Response
9	dy6t6,8e5
18	It's a joke all this wind farms and battery farms and not a thing coming back to the community
25	As with all developments there will be no tangible benefits for caithnessians
27	We have enough funds that cover charities and community groups. We need money that can contribute to fixing the real issues in our community. Orkney Council has a massive pot because of its arrangements made with oil companies historically amd the council have been able to coordinate the money appropriately to benefit the council services. Windfarms in caithness have not had the same impact due to the ring fenced nature of funds
31	Needs to be in the community that is affected, not Halkirk who gave plenty. Should only benefit those in say a 4 mile radius. Sick of red tape accessing these so called benefits. What are the benefits? Unless you live in England who are now just stealing our energy, same as they did OUR oil.
32	As long as those in charge of the fund are clear with the funds go to the correct section
33	Nothing further
40	People who live in our community should be part of the panel so decisions are made by those who live in the area

ResponseID Response

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| 42 | Please do not use the Caithness Chamber of Commerce. They treat the applicants terribly, offer no support, have no understanding of community development and charge a shocking amount for a management fee. If you insist on using them, I hope the management fee is paid as a separate arrangement by the wind farm and does not reduce the value of the funds, and you should build in a review after a set period to enable change. |
| 43 | Get stuffed |
| 44 | Caithness needs employment opportunities at all levels. We need to encourage those who go away to university to come back to help Caithness. The area needs to more than just survive we need the area to thrive in all areas. The benefit fund should possibly be ring fenced so there is a legacy rather than spending on short term gains. Caithness doesn't need for example an all weather pitch in all villages but there needs to be access to everyone and support in getting people to these things |
| 46 | Use it wisely without preconceived ideas. Listen to the locals!! |
| 47 | A Community Benefit Fund is by definition, a fund to benefit the community and as such that is what the community wants, yet at present we do not see an awful lot of this happening. Yes there is funding given that may benefit some individuals but I do not see May projects in place that would benefit the entire community and these are the projects I would like to see implemented. Visible improvements that people notice on a daily basis |
| 50 | Our beautiful county needs to be conserved and promoted carefully - we all need electricity but we are merely custodians of this land and have to stop raping it for the financial benefit of big companies and consider the long term benefits that can be gained in giving back to the communities educating and enabling the future custodians to preserve our history with pride and integrity |
| 51 | Any community fund has to be available for the whole community of Caithness not just the local community council of development. Community funds should be used to support an air ambulance in Wick to get emergency cases to appropriate centres quickly |
| 54 | Splash the cash! |
| 55 | Community funds are best decided on and managed by the local community not a business driven organisation like the chamber of commerce. Local panel should be used. Focus must be on community. Do not let us by making it a Highland wide benefit those of us living in Caithness are making the sacrifices, not those living in Inverness or further afield |
| 58 | No further investment into village halls as they have benefited greatly from previous benefit funds. Directly assisting youth into education/study or employment to help provide job security and job satisfaction this encouraging local Long term employment. |
| 59 | It should benefit the local area round it. Not wide spread |

ResponseID Response

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| 60 | You have a chance to break the mould of traditional community benefit here and set a precedent for other funders. The old model is old and outdated. |
| 63 | I don't know what the old Caithness border is so couldn't opt for that one. I notice you conveniently left off any option other than Caithness wide so that when you launch this fund you'll be able to say you did so with the consent of the community! Pat on the back for you! One final thought, I apply often to the existing funds including those managed by the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber is business focussed and no doubt does a great job of managing business funds. However as a community fund manager I feel I must tell you that they do not work well with community groups. I would recommend you decide how much you want to use annually towards business or economic purposes and let the Chamber do that, and decide how much you want to set aside for community groups and ask Foundation Scotland to step in and manage that bit. |
| 64 | The only real community benefit would be a reduced electricity bill for those living within sight of the turbines - and this is never going to happen because it would affect your profit. |
| 75 | Community ownership isn't explained effectively enough to communities to allow them to feel empowered enough to take the step. Where is there information on how communities can get involved with shared ownership and explore the costs involved and how these costs might be reached by any interested group? |
| 77 | Thanks for consulting. Just please ensure that there is actually benefit to the community and that distribution of funds is not just a box ticking exercise. Thanks |
| 85 | I think the question on this form around the boundaries of Community Benefit Fund is deceptive. The difference between the old Caithness County Council Border and Caithness should be further clarified. As a young person, I do not know the difference and little exists online to clarify. |