

M74 West Renewable Energy Park

Other Documents

Community Benefit Statement

September 2024





Renewco
P O W E R

M74 West

Community Benefit Statement

Issue Date August 2024

Issue A1

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	Policy and Guidance	5
2.1	Good Practice Principles for Community Benefits from Onshore Renewable Energy Developments (2019) (Good Practice guidance)	5
2.2	Onshore Wind: Policy Statement (OWPS)	5
2.3	Onshore Wind Sector Deal (OWSD)	5
2.4	Draft Energy and Just Transition Plan	6
2.5	South Lanarkshire Local Economic Strategy 2022-2027 (LES)	6
3	Shared Ownership	6
3.1	Policy and Guidance on Shared Ownership	6
3.2	M74 West Limited Position	7
4	Local Socioeconomic Context	7
5	Engagement	9
6	Outcomes	10
6.1	Overarching Fund Objectives	10
6.2	Projects	12
6.3	Fund management	14
7	Conclusions and Next Steps	15

1 Introduction

This Community Benefit Statement (CBS) has been prepared in support of an application made under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 by M74 West Limited for the development of the proposed M74 West Renewable Energy Park (M74 West) on land immediately north west of Abington and approximately 4.5 km south east of Douglas, in South Lanarkshire. The application is made by M74 West Ltd which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Glasgow based renewable energy developer Renwco Power. The Proposed Development will include 22 turbines with maximum blade tip height of 200 m above ground level (agl), solar power generators, with approximately 80 MWac capacity, and a battery energy storage system (BESS) with approximately 50 MW capacity.

M74 West has the potential to provide a range of benefits for the local community, including through the future establishment of a community benefit package. The community benefit package for M74 West will reflect the latest Scottish Government guidance 'Good Practice Principles for Community Benefits from Onshore Renewable Energy Developments (2019)' (Good Practice guidance)¹. Based on a notional installed capacity for the wind farm element of the project of 165 MW, M74 West would provide a minimum of £825,000 of funding annually to community focussed projects in the local area. Calculating the funding based on the installed capacity of the candidate turbine used in the EIA would result in a minimum funding package of £725,000. However, based on developing wind turbine technology, it is possible that a higher capacity wind turbine would ultimately be delivered at M74 West. The final funding package will be confirmed once a turbine type has been selected for the project through a competitive procurement process.

It is important to note that, whilst community benefit packages are not a material consideration in determining an application for development consent under the Electricity or Planning Acts, they are widely recognised as a positive and integral part of renewable energy development in Scotland. The Good Practice guidance provides outlines good practice principles for communities and developers considering long-term priorities and action plans to create a lasting legacy from onshore renewable energy projects. In structuring community benefit proposals, this guidance recognises that communities and developers may benefit from a strategic approach.

M74 West Ltd has worked with the local community to develop this CBS and would continue to develop the final community benefit package in line with community views and aspirations. This CBS describes the fund objectives and potential projects which have been developed in consultation with local individuals and community organisations.

¹ Scottish Government. (2019). Scottish Government *Good Practice Principles for Community Benefits from Onshore Renewable Energy Developments*. Accessed 15 August 2024.
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-good-practice-principles-community-benefits-onshore-renewable-energy-developments/>

M74 West

Community Benefit Statement

The report is presented under the following headings:

- Section 2: Policy and Guidance;
- Section 3: Shared Ownership;
- Section 4: Local Socioeconomic Context;
- Section 5: Engagement;
- Section 6: Outcomes;
- Section 7: Conclusions and Next Steps

2 Policy and Guidance

2.1 Good Practice Principles for Community Benefits from Onshore Renewable Energy Developments (2019) (Good Practice guidance)

The Good Practice guidance provides the core guidance for renewable energy community benefits in Scotland. It notes that community benefit funds are a voluntary initiative and have no bearing on the planning process. Nevertheless, community benefit funds are identified as having an important role in putting communities front and centre in the development of renewable energy projects.

The guidance establishes six key principles that should guide the development of community benefit funds:

- Lasting legacy
- Trust and transparency
- Flexible approach
- Develop a community action plan
- Decisions best led locally
- Fair process between renewable industry and community

The guidance also provides advice on engagement with communities as part of the development of community benefit funds.

2.2 Onshore Wind: Policy Statement (OWPS)²

The OWPS sets out the Scottish Government's commitment to ensuring that communities are central to the development of renewable projects in Scotland as part of a just transition to net zero. The OWPS refers to the Scottish Government's Good Practice guidance which provides the framework for community benefits across Scotland. As part of community benefits for wind farm projects, the OWPS also highlights the Scottish Government's support for shared ownership, noting "we are encouraging developers to offer shared ownership opportunities to communities as standard on all new renewable energy projects, including repowering and extension to existing projects" (paragraph 4.2.17).

Alongside community benefits, the OWPS notes wider economic benefits from onshore wind including supply chain opportunities and highlights programmes to support skills in the face of shortages in the sector.

2.3 Onshore Wind Sector Deal (OWSD)³

Amongst the commitments set out in the OWSD is the establishment of a standard approach to financial management of community benefits. The OWSD also commits the sector to meeting or exceeding the principles set out in the Good Practice guidance, to collaborating with and co-ordinating community benefits with neighbouring developments, and to delivering more ambitious projects that will make a long-term strategic impact in support of a just transition to net zero.

² Scottish Government. (2022). *Onshore Wind: Policy Statement* Accessed 15 August 2024. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/onshore-wind-policy-statement-2022/documents/>.

³ Scottish Government. (2023). *Onshore wind sector deal*. Accessed 12 August 2024. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/onshore-wind-sector-deal-scotland/>

2.4 Draft Energy and Just Transition Plan⁴

The Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan sets a vision for Scotland's energy system to 2045. Part of that vision is a recognition that communities must get maximum benefit from the energy transition with community and shared ownership of renewables, and community benefit packages, being an important tool to help achieve this. The draft Strategy highlights the real and lasting difference that community benefits can make to local communities.

2.5 South Lanarkshire Local Economic Strategy 2022-2027 (LES)⁵

The vision for South Lanarkshire's LES is "to make South Lanarkshire a flourishing, green, dynamic and equitable place for all." The LES is developed around three high-level ambitions for the area:

- Employment - A well-established, accessible employability pathway enabling all South Lanarkshire residents to fully participate in the labour market.
- Workforce Skills Development- South Lanarkshire's workforce have the qualifications, skills and attributes required by employers to be more productive and prosperous.
- Health and Wellbeing – We reduce health inequalities and improve mental health within our communities.

3 Shared Ownership

3.1 Policy and Guidance on Shared Ownership

Voluntary arrangements for community shared ownership of renewable energy developments, alongside other forms of community benefit, is supported by Scottish Government policy. The OWPS notes that "community benefit from, and shared ownership of, renewable energy developments have a key role to play in engaging communities and securing Scotland's just transition to net zero" (paragraph 4.2.1). As noted in section 2 of this CBS, the OWPS also encourages developers to offer shared ownership schemes "as standard." Under the OWSD, the renewable energy industry has committed to offering community benefit packages that will meet or exceed the principles set out in the Scottish Government's Good Practice Principles for Shared Ownership of Onshore Renewable Energy Developments (2019) (the Good Practice Principles for Shared Ownership)⁶. Furthermore, the OWSD commits "the sector, Government, and other relevant stakeholders to develop practical

⁴ Scottish Government. (2024). *Draft Energy and Just Transition Plan*. Accessed 5 August 2024.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/draft-energy-strategy-transition-plan/>

⁵ South Lanarkshire Council. (2022). *South Lanarkshire Local Economic Strategy 2022-2027*. Accessed 5 August 2024.

<https://southlanarkshire.cmis.uk.com/southlanarkshire/Document.ashx?czJKcaeAi5tUFL1DTL2UE4zNRBcoShgo=Ysds shoZvxPT3m0NeZuWhqZEXyAd2%2bFrleV31b6RwOfAlYdZKgjrW%3d%3d&rUzwRPF%2bZ3zd4E7lkn8Lyw%3d%3d=p wRE6AGJFLDNIh225F5QMaQWcTPhwdhUfCZ%2fLUQzgA2uL5jNRG4jdQ%3d%3d&mCTIbCubSffXsDGW9IXnlg%3d%3d=hFflUdN3100%3d&kCx1AnS9%2fpWZQ40DXFvdEw%3d%3d=hFflUdN3100%3d&uJovDxwdjMPoYv%2bAJvYtyA%3d%3d=ctNJff55vVA%3d&FgPIIEJYlotS%2bYGoBi5oIA%3d%3d=NHdURQburHA%3d&d9Qjj0ag1Pd993jsyOJqFvmyB7XOC SQK=ctNJff55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNR9xqBuxOr1Q8Za60lavYmz=ctNJff55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNQ16B2MHuCpM RKZMwaG1PaO=ctNJff55vVA%3d>

⁶ Scottish Government. (2019). *Good Practice Principles for Shared Ownership of Onshore Renewable Energy Developments*. Accessed 5 August 2024. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-good-practice-principles-shared-ownership-onshore-renewable-energy-developments/>

approaches to support and encourage community shared ownership models, and to publishing a framework by the end of 2024” (pp9-10).

The Good Practice Principles for Shared Ownership highlights the benefits that shared ownership can provide for local communities and developers, including delivering lasting economic and social benefits, community empowerment and increasing buy-in from local communities. The Good Practice Principles for Shared Ownership provide a high level framework to guide the development of shared ownership schemes across Scotland.

3.2 M74 West Limited Position

M74 West Ltd notes the policy support from the Scottish Government for community shared ownership of new renewable energy developments and the commitments set out in OWSD. M74 West Ltd has considered the potential for shared ownership of M74 West in light of this, and is not currently offering shared ownership as part of its community benefit offer. However, this does not preclude a shared ownership model being pursued at a later date if there is particular community appetite for it and a practical framework for delivery has been established. M74 West Ltd is keeping its position under review pending the publication of a framework for delivering practical approaches to shared ownership later this year.

M74 West Ltd is committed to maximising the benefits communities can derive from renewable energy developments and is not opposed to the principle of shared ownership. However, it is the view of M74 West Ltd that, while there are recent examples of good practice, establishing shared ownership schemes remains a complex process that can place a substantial burden on both communities and developers.

As noted above, M74 West Ltd is keeping its position on shared ownership under review pending the publication of a framework for practical approaches to delivering shared ownership schemes. M74 West Ltd remains committed to best practice on community benefits and delivering on the wider commitments set out in the Onshore Wind Sector Deal for Scotland.

4 Local Socioeconomic Context

The population of South Lanarkshire was 322,630 in 2021 (5.9% of the Scottish total and 0.5% of the UK total), of which 62.9% were working age (16-64)⁷, lower than the figure for Scotland of 63.5% but similar to the UK average⁸. Between 2018 and 2028, the total population is projected to increase by 2%, compared to a 1.8% and 6% increase in Scotland and the UK, respectively⁹.

The proportion of the population that is economically active is higher in South Lanarkshire (78.7%), compared to Scotland (77.1%) and the UK (78.6%), while the proportion of people claiming out-of-

⁷ National Records of Scotland. (2022). *South Lanarkshire Council Area Profile*. Accessed 29 August 2024. <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/council-area-data-sheets/south-lanarkshire-council-profile.html>

⁸ Office for National Statistics. (2022). *Scotland Area Profile*. Accessed 29 August 2024. <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/gor/2013265931/report.aspx>

⁹ National Records of Scotland. (2022). *South Lanarkshire Council Area Profile*. Accessed 29 August 2024. <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/council-area-data-sheets/south-lanarkshire-council-profile.html>

M74 West

Community Benefit Statement

work benefits is 3.2% compared to 3.3% in Scotland and 4.3% in the UK as a whole¹⁰. Average wages are also higher - £729.60 per week for full-time workers compared to £702.40 in Scotland as a whole and £682.60 in the UK¹¹. However, life expectancy in South Lanarkshire is slightly lower than Scotland as a whole – in 2019-2021 women lived to 80.8 years old compared to 80.4 in Scotland as a whole, while males lived to 75.9 compared to 76.5 in Scotland¹².

The main sectors of employment are human, health and social work activities (18% of employment in South Lanarkshire compared to 15% in Scotland and 13% in the UK) and wholesale and retail trade (17% of employment compared to 14% in Scotland and the UK)¹³. The share of employment in construction in South Lanarkshire is 9%, higher than the Scottish (6%) and the UK (5%) averages¹⁴.

A smaller proportion of households in South Lanarkshire are considered fuel poor (22%) compared to Scotland as a whole (24%)¹⁵. These figures are expected to have increased due to the increased energy prices during 2022. In Clydesdale East (the electoral ward of the Proposed Development), around 8.8% of employment is in the sustainable tourism sector, which is higher than the proportion in South Lanarkshire (7.3%) and Scotland as a whole (8%)¹⁶.

The M74 West site lies within three data zones – Abington – Lamington, Douglas North and Leadhills and Glespin – Crawfordjohn. These data zones are characterised by an older than average population – 52.9% of the population are 50 or over compared to 42.5% of South Lanarkshire and 40.6% of Scotland, and 9.4% of the population are 75 or over compared to 8.7% of both South Lanarkshire and Scotland¹⁷. Crime rates are higher than the Scottish average, with particular issues around motor vehicle offences (861.4 per 10,000 population compared to 200.4 across Scotland) and crimes of dishonesty (282.2 per 10,000 population compared to 187.4 across Scotland), though offence rates for other types of crime are generally below the average for South Lanarkshire and

¹⁰ Office for National Statistics. (2024). *Labour Market Profile - South Lanarkshire*. Accessed 29 August 2024. <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157433/report.aspx#tabrespop>

¹¹ Office for National Statistics. (2024). *Labour Market Profile - South Lanarkshire*. Accessed 29 August 2024. <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157433/report.aspx#tabrespop>

¹² Office for National Statistics. (2024). *Labour Market Profile - South Lanarkshire*. Accessed 29 August 2024. <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157433/report.aspx#tabrespop>

¹³ Office for National Statistics. (2024). *Labour Market Profile - South Lanarkshire*. Accessed 29 August 2024. <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157433/report.aspx#tabrespop>

¹⁴ Office for National Statistics. (2024). *Labour Market Profile - South Lanarkshire*. Accessed 29 August 2024. <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157433/report.aspx#tabrespop>

¹⁵ Scottish Government. (2022). *Scottish House Condition Survey*. Accessed 29 August 2024. <https://statistics.gov.scot/data/fuel-poverty-shcs>

¹⁶ South Lanarkshire Council. (2024). *Facts and Figures about South Lanarkshire – Area Profiles*. Accessed 29 August 2024.

https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200176/sharing_information_with_you/1895/facts_and_figures_about_south_lanarkshire/2

¹⁷ South Lanarkshire Council. (2024). *Facts and Figures about South Lanarkshire – Area Profiles*. Accessed 29 August 2024.

https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200176/sharing_information_with_you/1895/facts_and_figures_about_south_lanarkshire/2

Scotland¹⁸. Given its rural location, travel times to services are generally much higher than the Scottish average – for example travel to retail facilities by public transport takes on average 38.6 minutes compared to 13.5 minutes across Scotland¹⁹. Travel distances to work are also greater than the Scottish average²⁰. Reflecting this, rates of access to a car are significantly higher than average - 80.3% have access to a car compared to 71.8% of South Lanarkshire and 69.5% of Scotland²¹. The percentage of households with access to two cars is also slightly higher than in both South Lanarkshire and Scotland as a whole²².

5 Engagement

Between February and August 2024, two in-person community consultation engagement events were held for the Proposed Development. Both events included specific information on community benefits and invited members of the public to contribute to the development of the CBS. Several meetings and a focus group were also held with local community organisations. This in-person engagement was supplemented by virtual consultation via an online form on the Renewco Power website (which is included as Appendix A) and a pilot of software developer BizGive’s new AssetFace engagement platform. AssetFace is intended to make engagement on community benefits quicker, easier, more collaborative and transparent. BizGive have partnered to with the Offshore Wind Growth Partnership to develop its AssetFace engagement platform for offshore wind projects, and Renewco Power is working with BizGive to help develop it for the onshore wind market. A Small Projects community benefit fund of £5,000 has been launched as part of the pilot of the AssetFace platform to engage the community in the platform and support improvements. Grants of up to £500 are available to support a range of local initiatives in the area. The period for applications will conclude by 31 March 2025 and, at the time of writing, eight applications have been received for

¹⁸ South Lanarkshire Council. (2024). *Facts and Figures about South Lanarkshire – Area Profiles*. Accessed 29 August 2024.

https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200176/sharing_information_with_you/1895/facts_and_figures_about_south_lanarkshire/2

¹⁹ South Lanarkshire Council. (2024). *Facts and Figures about South Lanarkshire – Area Profiles*. Accessed 29 August 2024.

https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200176/sharing_information_with_you/1895/facts_and_figures_about_south_lanarkshire/2

²⁰ South Lanarkshire Council. (2024). *Facts and Figures about South Lanarkshire – Area Profiles*. Accessed 29 August 2024.

https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200176/sharing_information_with_you/1895/facts_and_figures_about_south_lanarkshire/2

²¹ South Lanarkshire Council. (2024). *Facts and Figures about South Lanarkshire – Area Profiles*. Accessed 29 August 2024.

https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200176/sharing_information_with_you/1895/facts_and_figures_about_south_lanarkshire/2

²² South Lanarkshire Council. (2024). *Facts and Figures about South Lanarkshire – Area Profiles*. Accessed 29 August 2024.

https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200176/sharing_information_with_you/1895/facts_and_figures_about_south_lanarkshire/2

funding for a variety of local projects. However, the period for applications could be extended and the value of the fund increased to support the continuing development of the platform.

Meetings were held with the following organisations:

- South Lanarkshire Council
- Duneaton Community Council/Duneaton Community Development Trust
- Quothquan and Thankerton Community Council
- Biggar High School

The aforementioned focus group was held with pupils at Biggar High School. A note of the outcomes of the workshop is included as Appendix B to this report.

To promote engagement through the AssetFace platform and encourage applications for funding from the Small Projects community benefit, email outreach also took place with forty-three organisations. A list of the organisations contacted is included as Appendix C of this CBS.

Engagement through in person and virtual consultation methods focussed on the following three matters:

1. Overarching fund objectives
2. Projects that could be funded by the M74 West Community Benefit Fund
3. Fund management

The outcomes of the engagement are discussed in section 6 of this CBS.

6 Outcomes

6.1 Overarching Fund Objectives

Based on a review of national and local economic strategies, the Council's Community Plan and other relevant policy documents and strategies, the following five potential high-level investment priorities were identified for the community benefit fund and consulted upon with the local community at the first community consultation event in February:

- Business development and growth
- Skills and employability
- Transition to net zero
- Built and natural environment
- Sustainable and active travel

There was general support for these objectives amongst those that provided feedback – of the eight respondents, seven expressed agreement with the objectives. The one respondent that didn't agree with the objectives explained that their disagreement was based on the assumption that the Proposed Development would produce energy for England. This concern appears to relate to the principle of the Proposed Development rather than the objectives of the associated community benefit fund.

Community Benefit Statement

Whilst there was community support for the objectives, there was nevertheless concern amongst the project team that the objectives should be as accessible and easily understandable by the community as possible. It was also noted that none of the objectives clearly related to the potential for the community benefit package to deliver improvements to community facilities. On this basis, for the second event the overarching fund objectives were amended to the following:

- Education and Skills
- Health and Wellbeing
- Economy and Jobs
- Environment
- Culture and Heritage
- Facilities and Amenities

Feedback on these amended objectives following the second event in June was similarly positive, with three of the five respondents in agreement with the objectives. The same respondent that expressed their disagreement with the objectives in February reiterated their disagreement with the updated objectives on the same basis as previously. One respondent did not complete this section of the form.

The feedback form invited respondents to identify any additional objectives for the community benefit fund. The matters raised in response were:

1. Transport
2. Public transport links
3. Anything to add value to homes e.g. solar panels
4. Funding to minimise visual impact e.g. small annual payment
5. Support for elderly e.g. money for equipment
6. Financial help to run Crawford Hall
7. Reduced energy costs
8. Structural changes including improved electricity, water and waste water provision
9. Wanlockhead as a rural deprived community should benefit

In response to points 1 and 2 above, it is noted that the revised objectives consulted upon with the local community do not explicitly refer to transport issues, though sustainable transport improvements would be captured under the “environment” objective. Transport was also raised as a significant issue in the focus group with Biggar High School pupils. Given this feedback, it is considered appropriate to include a specific objective on transport within the Community Benefit Fund Objectives.

Points 3-8 are project related and will be addressed in section 6.2 below. Point 9 relates to eligibility for the community benefit fund and will be covered in section 6.3.

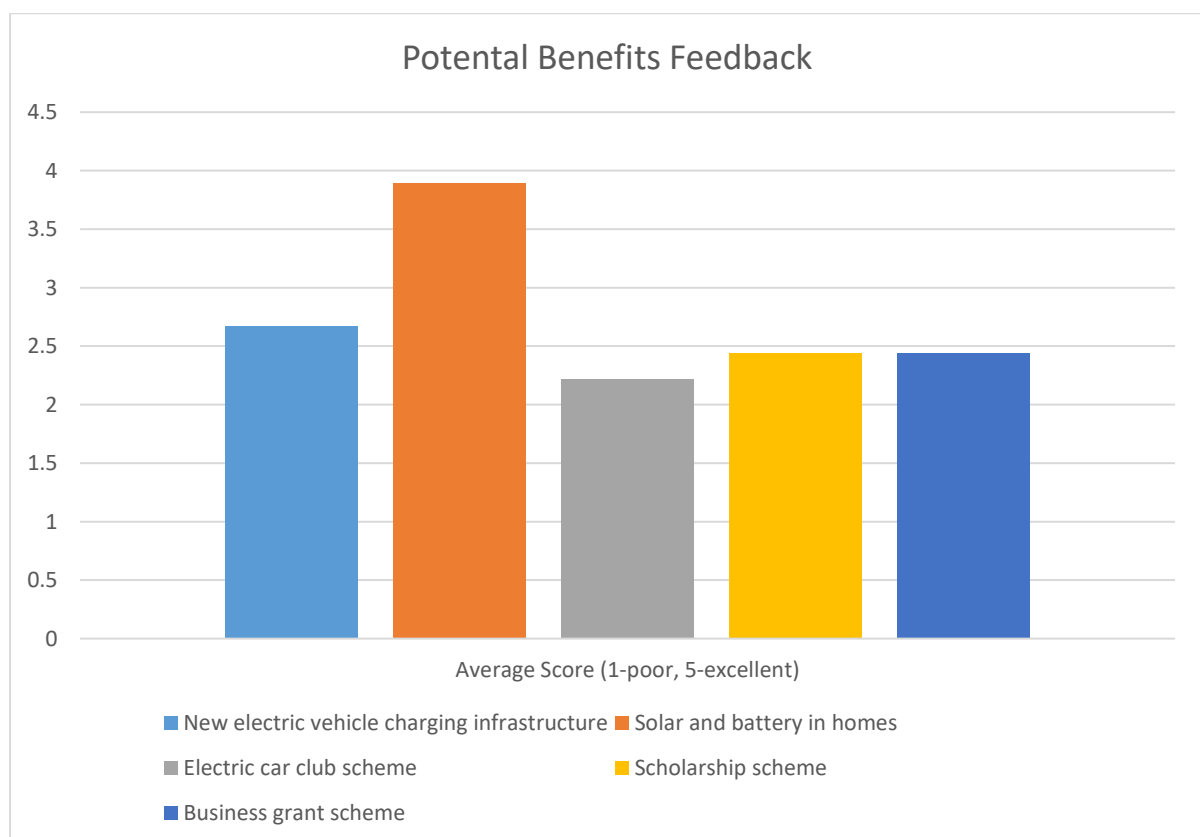
6.2 Projects

Given existing community benefit funding streams in South Lanarkshire, M74 West Ltd was aware at the outset of a need to consider alternatives to the prevailing focus on funding the capital cost of community projects such as upgrades to community halls and play parks. This view was reinforced through engagement with local community bodies who consistently noted that limitations on the use of community benefit funds resulted in funds not being spent. Furthermore, bearing in mind that a traditional shared ownership model is not currently being offered, M74 West also looked to identify alternative opportunities for community ownership of renewable energy assets through its community benefit fund.

The need to “do things differently” to ensure that the M74 West Community Benefit Fund would deliver positive change for the local community and deliver a form of community ownership, along with an analysis of the local policy and socioeconomic context, informed the initial identification of five potential projects that the community benefit fund could deliver. These projects have been consulted upon with the local community at the public events, meetings and online. The projects are noted below:

1. The installation of solar PV/thermal and battery storage in homes
2. Electric vehicle charging infrastructure
3. Electric vehicle car club scheme
4. Scholarship scheme
5. Business grant scheme

The feedback form invited respondents to score the potential projects from poor (1) to excellent (5). The outcomes of this are shown in the below graphs:



Community Benefit Statement

As illustrated above, feedback on the projects was mixed, however, the installation of solar and battery in peoples' homes was the most popular amongst respondents, whilst an electric car club scheme was the least popular. Given the relatively small number of responses the intention is to continue to consult the community on these projects via the AssetFace portal.

In addition to providing feedback on the above potential projects, the community also had the opportunity to propose other project ideas. Some of these ideas have already been noted in section 6.1 above, however, a full list of the project ideas documented through the consultation process to-date is below:

1. Anything to add value to homes e.g. solar panels
2. Funding to minimise visual impact e.g. small annual payment
3. Support for elderly e.g. money for equipment
4. Financial help to run Crawford Hall
5. Reduced energy costs
6. Structural changes including improved electricity, water and waste water provision
7. Bins for local area
8. Develop campsite e.g. toilets and bins to minimise mess and help bring people to Crawfordjohn
9. E-bikes or bikes to hire
10. Development of community ladder (e.g. food swap)
11. Crawfordjohn Community Hall - group activities held within the hall. Badminton, yoga, sewing group, heritage venture.
12. Local bus/taxi service.
13. Gardening or anything to make area more pleasing and bring more people to Crawfordjohn.
14. Funds to enhance Crawfordjohn - Wild flower planting, we already have planted many spring bulbs but more such things. Transport is a huge issue- access to a bus and provision of stops would be great.
15. Fit triple glazing to all the houses on Manse Road and give us free electricity as compensation
16. Rural transport system/public transport improvements
17. Support for community ownership of Carmichael Community Hall
18. Driving lesson vouchers
19. Travel support for young people attending after school clubs and classes
20. Improve the Broughton to Biggar railway path including maintenance
21. Funding for school trips

It should be noted that suggestions 2 and 15 are relevant to the amenity concerns of specific local residents who live close to the project site, rather than broader community initiatives that would be funded through the community benefit fund. Notwithstanding, it is encouraging to note the number and range of potential projects identified through this initial phase of community consultation. The AssetFace portal will provide an avenue for the local community to continue to suggest new project ideas, feedback on the ideas that have been submitted and then develop them into deliverable

projects through engagement with partners in the private and third sectors. M74 West Ltd will continue to use the developing AssetFace platform, alongside traditional engagement methods, to support the community in developing a suite of projects and initiatives that would deliver meaningful positive change for the local area.

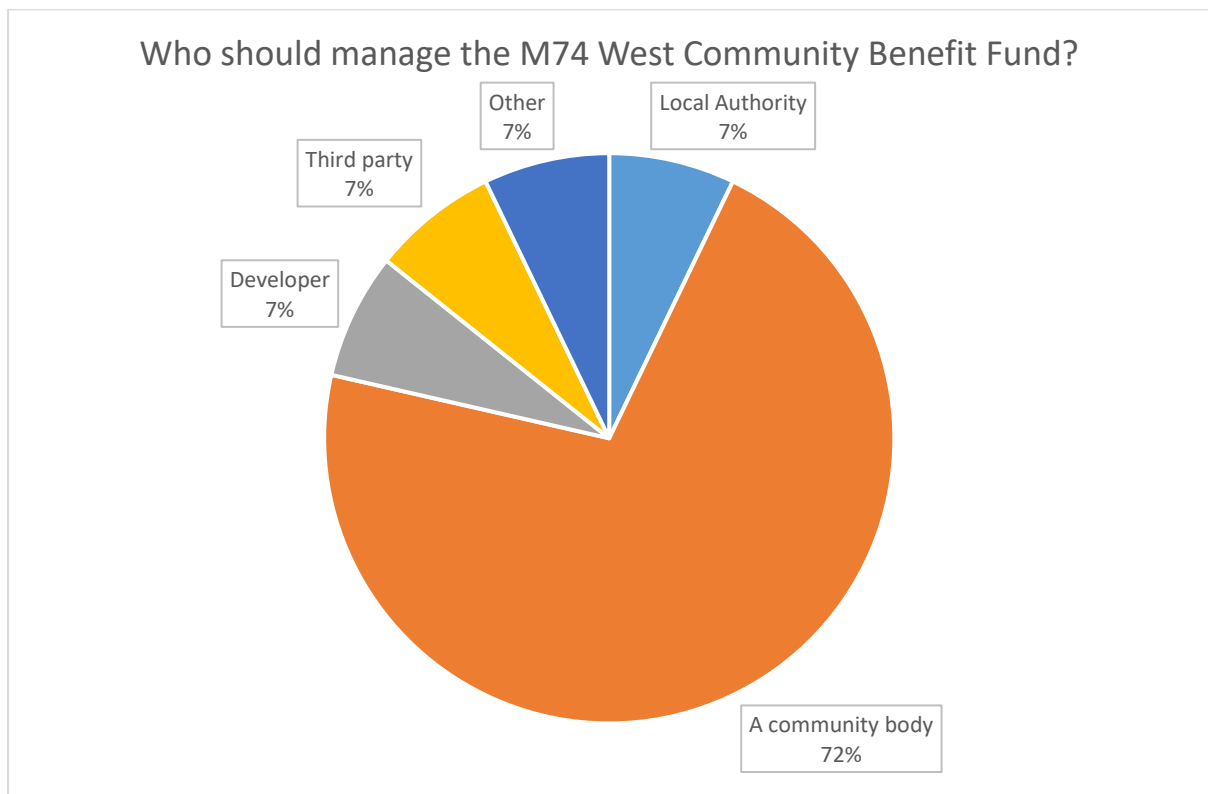
6.3 Fund Management

Making the right decisions about fund management, including who should manage the fund and which areas and groups should be eligible to benefit, is critical to the successful establishment of the M74 West Community Benefit Fund. Community feedback on this issue was therefore sought, including through the feedback form.

Informal feedback at meetings with community groups and events highlighted concerns about the Council’s Renewable Energy Fund, with a perception among some that it is difficult to access and that in some cases decisions reflected Council priorities, rather than necessarily those of communities. However, it is noted that the Council has been reviewing its Renewable Energy Fund with the aim of broadening eligibility, including by reducing match funding requirements, and funding more strategic scale projects. The ability to fund strategic scale projects is also an inherent advantage of wider Council operated funds given their ability to pool funding from multiple projects.

Oral feedback also highlighted some positive community experiences of developer managed funds, specifically the funds operated by SSE for Clyde Wind Farm. It was noted that funding applications were straightforward and decisions timely. The support provided to communities by SSE’s Community Investment Manager was also praised.

Whilst there was some positive informal feedback on developer managed funds as noted above, feedback via the form indicated that the community was generally in favour of the fund being managed by a community group, though there was also some support for alternative approaches. However, caution must also be applied to the interpretation of the findings given the relatively small number of responses:



Discussions with the Head of Biggar High School in part focused on a need for community benefit funding to be more responsive and flexible to meet the needs of the school age members of the local communities associated with the project. Community benefit funding is already being put to good use at the school, however, the time taken to submit funding applications, restrictions on how the funding is used and delays in application decisions all limit its potential. Subject to community support, a more flexible package of funding for the school agreed on an annual basis could be considered. This approach could also potentially be rolled out for other local organisations.

In terms of eligibility for funding, most respondents considered that the funding should be focussed towards communities that can see the Proposed Development and/or live close by. In contrast, most respondents did not consider that the funding should be eligible to any parts of Dumfries and Galloway or across the whole of South Lanarkshire. One respondent highlighted other factors that should be considered – noting that the Council should not be involved in managing the fund given a perceived focus on funding urban areas of South Lanarkshire while rural areas have experienced funding cuts:

What should determine eligibility to access the fund? (1-most important; 7-least important)	
1.	Visibility of M74 West
2.	Proximity to M74 West
3	Housing Market Areas
4	School Catchment Areas
5	Whole of South Lanarkshire
6	Dumfries and Galloway
7	Other

Whilst it is accepted that community benefit funding should be focussed on those most affected by M74 West, including those living close by and with visibility of it, it may nevertheless be appropriate for some projects to be eligible to people and groups across a wider area. For example, it may be appropriate to make a scholarship scheme eligible to all pupils living within an entire school catchment area to maximise the number of young people that could benefit from the scheme, particularly given the small rural population surrounding the site. It is therefore possible that eligibility could vary by project/initiative, with catchments kept under review to ensure that funding targets are met.

7 Conclusions and Next Steps

This CBS has summarised engagement to-date on the proposed M74 West Community Benefit Fund. Much work remains to be done, however this CBS highlights some of the innovative approaches being pursued to ensure that the M74 West Community Benefit Fund can meet local needs and have a substantial positive impact on the local community. M74 West Limited will continue to engage with the community, including through the developing AssetFace portal, in the coming months and years on the lead up to the establishment of the fund (assuming Section 36 consent and deemed planning permission is granted).

The Applicant also wishes to develop a legally binding Community Benefit Agreement with local community bodies and South Lanarkshire Council which will set out the key principles governing the M74 West Community Benefit Fund. Subject to the agreement of the other parties, it is intended that this agreement could be concluded prior to the determination of the Section 36 application for the Proposed Development to allow its implementation prior to construction.



FEEDBACK FORM

PRIVACY STATEMENT

By filling in this form, you are agreeing that Cavendish Consulting can hold and process your personal data in relation to this public consultation exercise.

- Cavendish will only share your personal data with the project team for planning evaluation purposes.
- Your identifiable, personal data will not be used for any other purposes without your consent.

Cavendish and the project team will use your data to:

- Send you updates about the project (where you provide us with your contact details).

- Develop a Pre-Application Consultation Report (or similar document) and Community Benefit Report about this public consultation that will be submitted to the planning authority or similar body; this will be a publicly available document. Your comments will be anonymous, and we will only identify you in these reports with your express permission.

If you provide us with your contact details, we might also contact you to ask more about the comments you've made.

Cavendish acts on behalf of Renewco Power to run public consultation activities.

YOUR DETAILS

Title (Miss/Mrs/Ms/Mr/Other):

First Name or Initial:

Surname:

Postcode:

Age Group (please circle):

Under 13 13-17 18-24 25-34 35-44
45-54 55-64 65-74 75-84 85+

YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

I do not wish to provide personal details but can confirm that I am over the age of 13


We will use these details to contact you and update you on the proposals. If you would like to be kept up to date with these proposals, please tick this box

Data Protection

We hold all personal data in accordance with the retained EU law version of the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) (the "UK GDPR"), as it forms part of the law of England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland by virtue of section 3 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, the Data Protection Act 2018, the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 as amended, and any successor legislation. Your personal data will not be transferred outside of the EU.

You can see our full Privacy Statement, Data Protection Policy, Data Retention Policy and find out how to make a Subject Access Request at the following website address cavendishconsulting.com/dp or by contacting us on 01962 893 893 / dataprotection@cavendishconsulting.com.

WE WELCOME YOUR FEEDBACK, PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSALS OVERALL:



COMMUNITY BENEFIT QUESTIONNAIRE

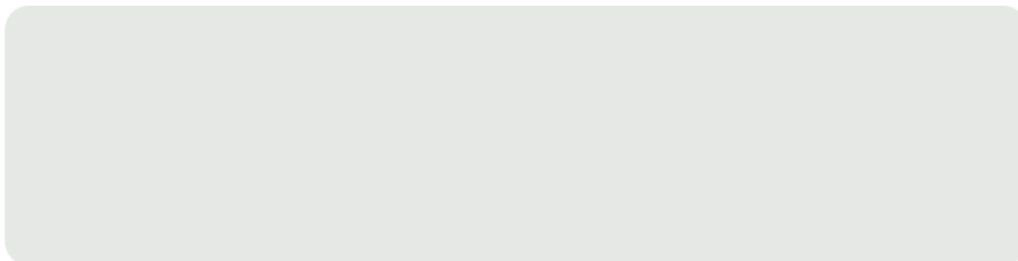
The below questions relate to the community benefit banner presented at the community engagement event on the 8th of February 2024 and available on the M74 West web page (<https://www.renewcopower.com/projects/pages/m74-west-renewable-energy-park/>). Please take the time to review the banner before answering the questions.

1. From desktop research the following high-level investment priorities have been identified for M74 West community benefit funding:

- a) Business development and growth
- b) Skills and employability
- c) Transition to net zero
- d) Built and natural environment
- e) Sustainable and active travel

Do you agree with these investment priorities? Yes/No

If there are any other issues that should be prioritised for community benefit funding please note them below:



2. M74 West Ltd is looking to bring forward an Early Community Benefit Fund of £5,000 in the coming months. Please tell us about any activities, local groups or ideas that could benefit from this fund?

3. We have identified some potential benefits that could be delivered as part of the future Community Benefit Fund we would like your view on. How would you rate the following benefits? (1 – poor to 5 - excellent)

- a) The installation of solar PV/thermal and battery storage in homes
- b) New electric vehicle charging infrastructure in your community
- c) Electric vehicle car club scheme
- d) Scholarship scheme
- e) Business grant scheme

4. Are there any other projects or activities that should benefit from the future M74 West Community Benefit Fund?

5. What organisation(s) should manage the distribution of community benefit funds?

- a) Local authority
- b) A community body, either existing or setup for the purpose
- c) The developer
- d) A third-party specialist organisation e.g. Foundation Scotland
- e) Other (please specify)

6. What are the most important factors that should be taken into account when deciding which communities can access M74 West community benefit funding (please rank from 1 - most important to 7 - least important)?

- a) Proximity to M74 West b) Visibility of M74 West c) School catchment areas
d) Housing market areas e) The funding should be available to the whole of South Lanarkshire
f) The funding should be available to areas in Dumfries and Galloway g) Other (please specify):

7. Renewco Power is keen to work with local suppliers as part of the development of M74 West. Please tell us about any potential suppliers that we should be made aware of.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TODAY AND COMPLETING THE FORM

If you would like more time to consider the questions, please print off a copy of the form and return it by **7th March** to:

C/O
Cavendish Consulting
1 West Regent Street
Glasgow
G2 1RW

Email: daisy.geissler@cavendishconsulting.com

Further information on the proposals can also be obtained by contacting Daisy Geissler at the address above or by telephone on **0141 264 2831**.

This feedback form along with more information regarding the project can be found at: www.renewcopower.com/projects/pages/m74-west-renewable-energy-park/



Appendix B Appendix B – Biggar High School Workshop Outcomes

Overview

A workshop was held at Biggar High School on the 24th of June considering community benefits that could be delivered as part of the M74 West Renewable Energy Park. Twelve pupils from across years 2-5 at the school took part in the workshop. This note provides a summary of the issues raised by pupils and some of the ways in which these could be addressed by the M74 West community benefit funding package.

Issues

Issue	Action
<p>Limitations in the availability of public transport for those living in outlying areas which makes it difficult to access facilities and services, including after school and sports clubs, concentrated in Biggar and Lanark. As a result, many pupils are reliant on lifts from friends and families which are not available in all cases.</p>	<p>Community benefit funding could be targeted at providing extra school buses and/or taxis to enable pupils from outlying areas to access after school/sports clubs.</p>
<p>Difficulties in learning to drive due to cost, a lack of examiners and distance to travel for theory tests. This also has an impact on accessing jobs, as does poor public transport provision as noted above. Also noted that travel to and from driving lessons was an issue in some remoter rural areas.</p>	<p>Community benefit package could include provision for funding driving lessons. If possible this should be targeted at people on lower incomes. Funding should give consideration to individual circumstances, including costs associated with travelling for driving lessons. Consideration should also be given as to whether funding could help deliver more local examiners and theory tests.</p>
<p>Fewer school trips are being planned and there are difficulties accessing these in some case due to cost.</p>	<p>Community benefit funding could be used to help deliver more school trips and provide additional support for young people who would not otherwise be able to access them due to cost.</p>
<p>There is scope to improve the Broughton to Biggar railway path and improve maintenance.</p>	<p>Funding towards capital works and maintenance could be provided from the M74 West community benefit fund.</p>
<p>There was support for use of community benefit funding to help householders reduce their carbon footprint and to reduce risks associated with some of the symptoms of climate change, such as increased flooding</p>	<p>Support noted.</p>

M74 West

Community Benefit Statement

Issue	Action
Participants also supported a scholarship scheme to support access to further education and training.	Support noted.

Appendix C – Organisations Contacted

Outlet Type	Outlet Name
Media (Trade)	UK Fundraising
School	Abington Primary School & Nursery
School	Crawford Primary School
School	Leadhills Primary School
School	Douglas Primary School
School	Wiston Primary School
School	Coalburn Primary School
School	Lamington Primary School
School	Coulter Primary School
School	Rigside Primary School
School	Carmichael Primary School
School	Rigside & Rural Communities Nursery
School	Biggar Primary School
School	Tinto Primary School
Village Hall	Abington Village Hall
Village Hall	Roberton Village Hall
Village Hall	Crawfordjohn Hall
Community Organisation	OutLET
Community Organisation	Biggar Music Club
Community Organisation	Bigger and District Civil Society
Community Organisation	Biggar Corn Exchange
Community Organisation	Biggar Albion Foundation
Community Organisation	Biggar Community Market Garden
Community Organisation	Biggar Youth Project SCIO
Community Organisation	Biggar and District Men's Shed
Community Organisation	Leadhills Miners' Library
Community Organisation	Douglas Community Development Company
Community Organisation	Healthy Valleys
Community Organisation	Lanark Community First Responders
Community Organisation	Crawfordjohn Heritage Venture Museum

Community Benefit Statement

Outlet Type	Outlet Name
Community Organisation	Scottish Outdoor Education Centres
Community Organisation	The Old Schoolhouse
Community Organisation	South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture
Community Organisation	Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire
Community Organisation	Community Action Lanarkshire
Community Organisation	Biggar Museum Trust
Community Organisation	Biggar Area Climate Care
Business Group	Lanarkshire Chamber of Commerce
Business Group	Lanarkshire Business Group
Facebook Groups	Abington Village
Facebook Groups	Crawfordjohn
Facebook groups	Biggar Community Scotland
Facebook groups	Roberton, Lanarkshire

