

# Report

Report to:	<b>Community and Enterprise Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>6 February 2024</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>Community Benefit Funds Middle Muir - Connect2Renewables Programme Extension</b>
----------	---

## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ seek approval for the community benefit from Middle Muir Windfarm to continue to support the Connect2Renewables employability programme

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that it be approved that the funding support for the Connect2Renewables Programme be extended for a further 5-year period to 2028 and that the contribution to the programme be increased to a maximum of £174,453.

## 3. Background

3.1. At the Enterprise Services Committee of 17 January 2017 approval was given for the use of Community Benefit funds generated from Middle Muir Windfarm operated by Banks Renewables. This approval included an allocation of £127,500 or 50% of the Community Benefit income per annum to the Council to deliver Connect2Renewables (C2R) employability programme with the remaining 50% administered through the Council's Renewable Energy Fund (REF) grants programme. This agreement with the operator and committee approval was to operate until 2023 with further allocations to the C2R programme to be subject to review and agreement.

3.2. The windfarm is located between the villages of Douglas and Crawfordjohn and comprises of 15 turbines. In 2017, this generated £255,000 of community benefit and with inflationary Retail Price Index this has increased to £348,906 in 2023. The eligible area for use of Community Benefit from the funds is shown within Appendix 1.

3.3. The C2R employability support programme delivers help to unemployed people and/or individuals who require support for skills development within the eligible area of the wind farm to get into work or study. The fund has been used for 5 categories of support listed below:-

- ♦ **Employment incentive programme** - where an employer receives a wage subsidy for up to a year to employ a resident from the local area.
- ♦ **Pre employment support grant** - a grant of up to £200 to help move people into work and overcome barriers.

- ♦ **Grant towards college living costs** - a grant of £500 to a local resident starting college/university for the first time who needs additional support.
- ♦ **Tailored funding** - funding to remove barriers to college or employment which can include a contribution to such things as computer training, tools, PPE, driving lessons or lifeguard training for the local leisure centre.
- ♦ **Non-financial support from staff** - this can include guidance and links to partners and CV advice.

3.4. In early 2023 Banks Renewables commissioned a study on the outcomes of the Community Benefit Funds and specifically C2R which are summarised below.

<b>The number of people supported by the C2R employability fund since 2018</b>	<b>Middle Muir</b>
Supported into a job through the employment incentive programme	35
Pre-employment support grant	30
Grant towards college living	51
Tailored financial support	56
Non-financial employment support	171
<b>Totals people supported</b>	<b>343</b>

3.5. The report concludes that the initiative has been a success and has had significant benefit to the target groups within the area. As such, both Banks Renewables and the Council's Employability Service believe the C2R programme should continue.

#### **4. Connect2Renewables continuation.**

4.1. Following agreement with Banks Renewables and the Council's Employability Service, it is proposed that the Middle Muir C2R programme is extend for a further 5 years to 2028 and that the contribution from the Community Benefit Fund is increased to a maximum of £174,453 per annum calculated as 50% of the annual income as at 2023.

4.2. The programme will continue to support unemployed people and/or individuals who require support for skills development within the eligible area of the wind farm. The programme will particularly target early-stage employability activity with a particular focus on disengaged and economically inactive people with a focus on people experiencing health related barriers and parents including those in low waged / part time jobs. The C2R programme will continue to develop and adapt and compliment other Council and national support programmes. Adaptations or additional support will be undertaken in partnership with Banks Renewables and the local communities.

#### **5. Employee Implications**

5.1. Currently 1 FTE at Grade 3 level 2 is funded through the C2R programme this post will continue using the Community Benefit funds and review additional staffing requirements.

#### **6. Financial Implications**

6.1. There are no additional financial implications for the Council in managing the C2R programme.

#### **7. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications**

7.1. The C2R programme compliments sustainability aims, supporting local people into local employment and supports local SME employers reducing transport to work demands by delivering local services. Practical examples of this include, local people being helped into local jobs on a dairy farm and the local Coalburn Leisure Centre.

## **8. Other Implications**

8.1. No other risks or implications as a result of this report.

## **9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

9.1. Consultation was undertaken with the Council's Employability Service.

**David Booth**

**Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)**

22 December 2023

## **Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes**

### Values

- ◆ Focused on people and their needs
- ◆ Working with and respecting others
- ◆ Accountable, effective, efficient and transparent
- ◆ Ambitious, self-aware and improving
- ◆ Fair, open and sustainable
- ◆ Excellent employer

### Priorities

- ◆ We will work to put people first and reduce inequality
- ◆ We will work towards a sustainable future in sustainable places
- ◆ We will work to recover, progress and improve

### Outcomes

- ◆ Our children and young people thrive
- ◆ Good quality, suitable and sustainable places to live
- ◆ Thriving business, fair jobs and vibrant town centres
- ◆ Caring, connected, sustainable communities
- ◆ People live the healthiest lives possible
- ◆ Inspiring learners, transforming learning, strengthening partnerships

## **Previous References**

- ◆ Executive Committee 3 March 2004, Community Benefit: Establishment of a Renewable Energy Fund
- ◆ Enterprise Services Committee 17 January 2017, Community Benefit Funds – New Contribution – Middle Muir Wind Farm

## **List of Background Papers**

- ◆ None

## **Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Kenny Lean

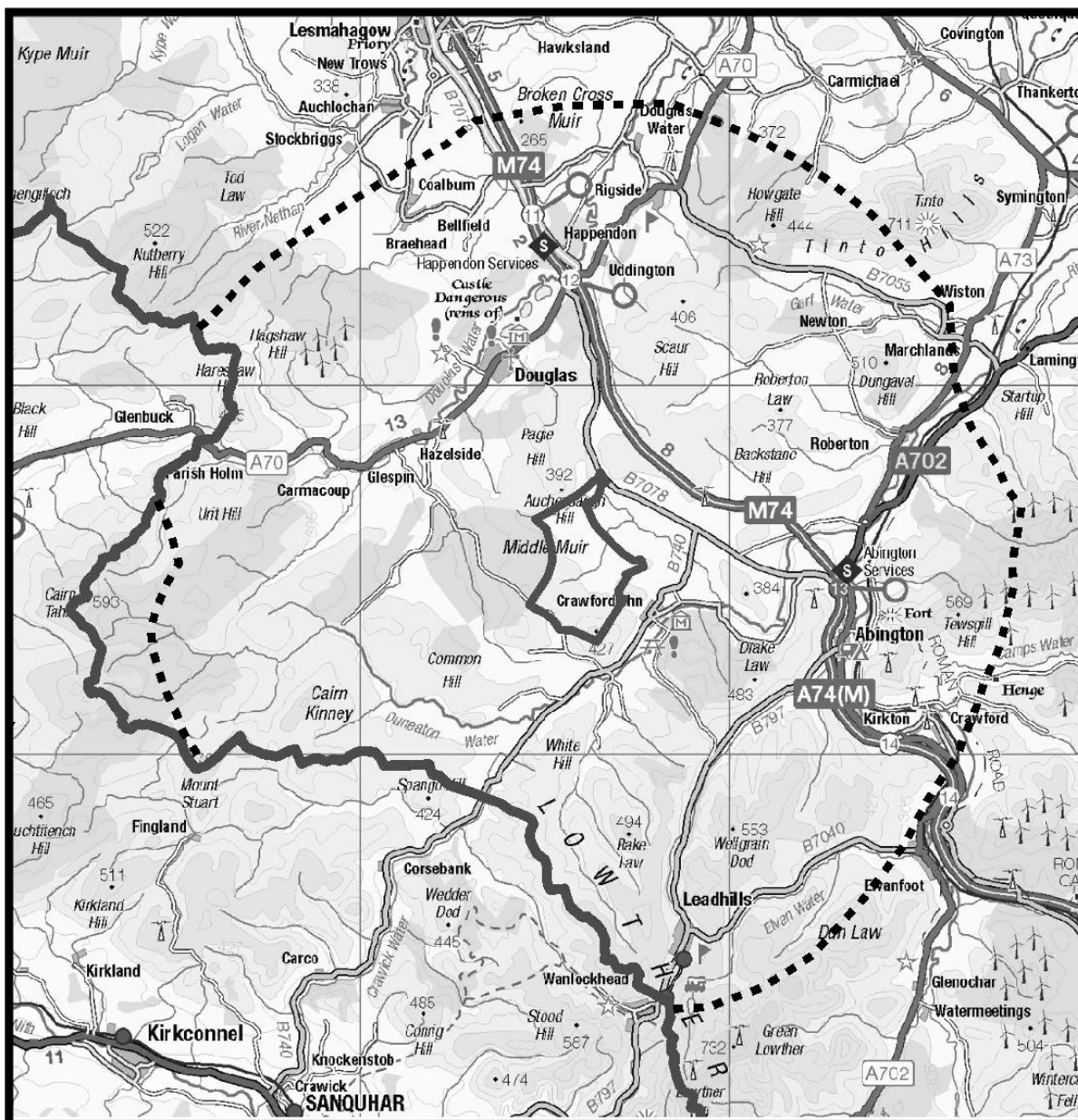
Economic Development Manager (Funding and Rural), Enterprise and Sustainability Services

Tel: 07469027925

E-mail: [Kenny.lean@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:Kenny.lean@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)

## Middle Muir

SOUTH  
LANARKSHIRE  
COUNCIL



- SLC boundary
- - - 10km boundary
- ▨ Windfarm

Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO. © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100020730 2016.  
Not to scale/indicative only