

Galileo Empower Renewables Proposals
Kinlochbervie Community Consultation
Kinlochbervie Village Hall
Tuesday 28 October 2025 7pm

Chaired by Iain Ross, impartial.

It was noted that the proposed development is at the engagement phase and that no planning application has been submitted yet. The Kinlochbervie Community Council are adopting an impartial position and their chair is also impartial. This meeting was an opportunity for the wider public to ask questions and to seek clarification and to make the developer aware of any issues. It was stated that the meeting will help inform future consultation.

The three developers' representatives introduced themselves.

Questions from the audience and answers to them are listed below:

1. *Are the Rhiconnich Estate owners fully aware of what is happening?*

The estate is not included in the development proposal.

2. *Do Galileo plan to include autistic members of the community when carrying out noise assessment?*

It was noted that the noise expert was not present at the meeting and that a good conversation had been had at the open event a few days before. The Galileo representative said that she would speak to the noise expert about the matter and that a further conversation with the questioner would be helpful. ETSU noise levels are being followed by the designers.

3. *Will Galileo pledge to fund triple glazed windows for the buildings of people who suffer from noise sensitivity?*

The developers were not in a position to give a definitive response to this question.

4. *A query re. visual impact of the development because there is an iconic view of the three mountains from the top of the bealach.*

A landscape architect has been involved in the project from the beginning and the plan is to create a sympathetic scheme. Photo montages are now available online, overlaid with images of turbines. NatureScot guidance is being followed.

5. *If the development goes ahead, will Galileo ringfence funds for the end-of-life tidy-up?*

Planning consent requires the developer to decommission and tidy so there is no lasting legacy.

6. *Has anyone taken a photo from the top of the hill going into Kinlochbervie, looking at the three mountains?*

The developer couldn't ascertain this at the meeting.

7. *Will Galileo paint one of each turbine's blades black to help prevent bird deaths?*

The developer had no answer yet and stated that an ornithology assessment would come later. If it was reported that the turbines would have no significant effects on the bird population, Galileo would not consider painting the blades, but the developer would mitigate if otherwise. In designing the site, consideration of birds will inform the siting of the turbines, to avoid problems.

8. *Can Galileo comment on the number of jobs that it is hoped will be generated during and post construction?*

Construction phase: 210 job years; post construction: 12 jobs in the Highlands and 36 across Scotland. The developer committed to finding out what these jobs would look like. It was thought that 2 jobs would be created locally for turbine technicians and another job involving battery storage. It was later stated that there may be a job locally for a fund manager. Once Galileo have the information they will put it on the website.

9. *Is a Traffic Management Plan part of the planning application?*

Traffic Management Plan outlined in planning application and fleshed out post planning consent and pre construction in consultation with Transport Scotland, the local community, emergency services etc.

10. *Will the new electricity cable be under or over ground?*

The developer stated that this would be National Grid's decision and that the cable would potentially be both underground and overhead. The information will be shared when the detail is known.

11. *A local resident queried the choice of site on a peat bog with no connection to the grid.*

The developer answered that they had started looking into potential sites over the whole of Scotland in 2021 and that the Kinlochbervie site wasn't precluded by SSI and historical designations. It also has a fantastic wind resource. Ecology and hydrology surveys are being undertaken following SEPA guidance and identifying sensitive habitats. Peatland restoration post construction will be needed as mitigation.

12. *How much time will the turbines be active (i.e. not switched off)?*

At the moment, the UK grid is severely constrained, which the Labour government is seeking to rectify. The example was given of Shetland, which despite being the windiest part of the UK, can only run its turbines 50% of the time.

13. An audience member asked if Galileo could anticipate the percentage of 'on' time for the Kinlochbervie project.

No definitive answer, but the proposed connection date is 2032 so the grid constraints should be rectified by then.

14. An audience member asked why the plans show so many turbines close to the road and houses and why could the wind farm not be further back and less obtrusive?

The developer stated that they are always looking to balance views, ground conditions, transportation routes, houses and noise against the maximisation of output. They are still gathering data to feed into the design and welcome people's views.

15. Can the panel explain 'constraint payments' and where the funding for them comes from?

A constraint payment is made when a wind farm has to be turned off due to constraints on the grid. The payment is marginal, not a top-up income. The developer said they would feed back more information to the Community Council.

16. Who is going to gain from this project?

The benefits: societal: helping to reach Scottish Government targets re. Net Zero; the community will benefit from the community benefit fund; local contractors will get work; apprenticeships; local service providers during construction phase; community benefit of £5k per megawatt, equating to £540K per year and £27M over the lifetime of the project.

17. How many projects have Galileo brought online and completed?

Projects in planning are on the website; first consent given summer 2025. No wind farms built and operating yet.

18. Will the community be allowed to spend the money however they want to?

The geographical area where the money can be spent will be restricted, other than that, there will be a reasonable degree of flexibility.

19. Where can members of the community learn more about the potential financial benefits of the wind farm?

The socio-economic statement has not been produced yet but will be submitted as part of the planning application next year. The developer stated that they will interrogate re. the job data and will communicate and demonstrate how numbers are calculated. There was a request from the audience that this information be put on the website and shared with the Community Council.

20. Is the developer thinking about involving the High School in the project?

One of the community benefit offers is apprenticeships which would be offered to school pupils.

21. *What is the timeframe for construction?*

The current plan is to switch the wind farm on in 2032 and construction takes 2 years.

22. *What is to happen about the roads as they are currently not fit for purpose?*

Galileo will upgrade the roads at their own expense and repair and maintain them. A Traffic Management Plan is to be interrogated, with plans to avoid as much disruption as possible.

23. *The comment was made that if the turbines came in from Nigg via the Lairg road it would take hours and be disruptive for road users.*

The developer answered that, for example, layby pits could be put along the road to allow movement of traffic and emergency services would be liaised with. The plan would be to mitigate against closing the road.

24. *What would the traineeships look like in Kinlochbervie?*

Galileo will discuss with local parties and would value community views. The community were encouraged to contact Galileo via the QR code provided earlier. The developer is conscious that there are few opportunities for young people in this area.

25. *Why not bring wind farm components in by sea?*

This is a good idea and is being considered.

26. *Why are we building more wind farms when the Highlands are being industrialised, fishing is being squeezed and the network is inadequate?*

Scotland has the potential to create a lot of energy which can be exported. To switch to green power is seen as the right thing to do and governments are looking for this.

27. *An audience member queried the meaning of the 3 coloured zones on a map provided by Galileo.*

The map had been shared at the consultation event a few days before and the zones depicted distance from the wind farm. It was proposed that, as compensation for being closer to the wind farm, payments would be made as a discount on electricity charges. The developer also stated that noise modelling would be undertaken and that the design of the farm would be taking recommendations of noise limits into consideration.

28. *Will the wind farm and the new grid connection be built at the same time?*

Galileo will be working with the National Grid so both projects will marry up.

29. Please explain why red lights will be needed for the turbines.

The developer stated that any structure above 150m needs aeronautical lighting and that an aviation consultant will look at the most appropriate way of doing this. Galileo will prepare some nighttime visualisations.

30. An audience member commented that the Scottish Government requires renewables projects to voluntarily offer £5K/MW as a community benefit, whereas the figure being consulted upon south of the border is £7.5K/MW.

The developer stated that Galileo are offering over and above £5K/MW generated, along with shared ownership, so the community benefit would go far above that required.

31. Regarding visualisations shown at the consultation event, blue colouring of zones blended into the lochs and rivers on the map so the visualisations were difficult to interpret.

Galileo said they would change the colour scheme to rectify this.

32. A petition by Community Councils and MSPs for a debate regarding the lack of planning around new wind farms had been made. Does the panel think it unreasonable to pause the project until it can get proper planning?

Galileo responded that it is difficult to comment on how the Highland Council plan and choose to implement plans. With regards to NPF4 and Net Zero targets, we are getting dangerously close to 2030 and are nowhere near reaching the proposed targets.

33. Regarding noise, if the noise level is exceeded, what are the options? Would the developers pay a penalty? Would a community be able to take them to court? Could money from wind farms be used to fight this in court?

Galileo stated that they will undertake noise monitoring so as not to be in contradiction of planning consent. If there were to be a complaint, this would be made to the environmental health officer.

The Galileo panel left the room at this point.

Community-only discussion.

The chair invited comments and statements from members of the audience.

1. An audience member commented that the community consultation should have started earlier in the process.
2. An audience member was under the impression that income from a wind farm in East Sutherland had slowed down, despite having benefited the

- community to start with. (There was no evidence offered with this comment.)
3. Someone commented that there is currently a small hydroelectric scheme in Kinlochbervie, the community benefit from which has been £100K over 3 years. This scheme was developed by Energy for All. Small to medium grants have been dispersed, totalling £50K. There has also been a community benefit income of £56K from the North and West Sutherland Trust, which comes from a wind farm near Lairg. Energy for All says that 3 smaller wind turbines could be built, be wholly community-owned and would generate a greater amount of money for the community than Galileo's proposal. (This was not verified).
 4. It was stated that the Highland Council has set money aside to fund a development officer for 5 years for Kinlochbervie, Scourie and Durness.
 5. Someone commented that there hasn't been the chance to look at smaller, less obtrusive developments.
 6. The landowner commented that they entered into an agreement with Galileo to investigate and that nothing is a done deal as the proposal has to go through planning. The landowner encouraged members of the community to keep communicating their thoughts with Galileo and also commented that no one locally had ever brought forward a community energy proposal, which would have been considered.
 7. Someone stated that there are other solutions aside from wind farms for creating green energy, e.g. hydroelectric schemes. Why not go for an alternative?
 8. Someone was afraid that allowing the proposed wind farm to go ahead would open the door to more wind turbines being built.
 9. Referencing Lesley Riddoch's map of wind farms in Scotland, an audience member was concerned that the whole of the West Coast will end up covered in turbines and made the comment that it would make more sense for individuals to use less electricity.
 10. Another audience member also expressed concern at the number of wind farm proposals across the north Highlands and that this development seemed unnecessary in this beautiful place.
 11. Someone urged the community to think about the financial benefit from the proposed wind farm versus the disruption.
 12. There was a query regarding the GVA: where does the £27M benefit over the lifetime of the project come from? It was stated that the onus is on the community and the Community Council to challenge Galileo on this.
 13. An audience member asked what the positives are. They felt that the community owes it to the young people of the area to explore the options. It would be good to hear from those who feel positive about the project.
 14. Someone commented that there were roughly 120 people in the hall, equating to roughly 50% of the community.
 15. Someone commented that they believe that the wind farm will affect tourism negatively because the views will be changed. Could another hydro

scheme be established instead, which would also financially benefit the estate?

- 16.** The Community Council stated that they have looked into possible hydro scheme sites and commented that there are very few that would not necessitate building a dam.
- 17.** Someone commented that they felt the proposed wind farm will affect house prices negatively.
- 18.** Someone commented that there was no requirement for the developer to deliver on their promises.
- 19.** The estate owner commented that they trust Galileo and that they genuinely believe that the developer is community minded. The estate owner will ensure that Galileo hold to their promises. The estate owner is hugely aware of the aging population and depopulation problem in the area and that revenue is needed to turn that around, or the area won't survive. The wind farm could also help tackle fuel poverty. The owner feels a responsibility regarding the climate emergency and really wants to do the best for the community.
- 20.** A young person in the audience who just left school in the summer commented how they have been looking for a job in the area and realises there is a lack of them. They made the point that the younger generation are going to grow up with the wind farm and that people should take this into account when they are voting. They stated that they feel really positive about the benefits the wind farm could bring.
- 21.** Someone asked if the Community Council has ideas about how funding from the wind turbine would be spent on the children of the area. A Community Councillor said that this has not been discussed yet. Affordable housing was touched on, and it was stated that it is very important that the detail of any spending ideas be assembled.
- 22.** An audience member commented that people need to know the bigger economics of the proposed project, how specifically will the children benefit?
- 23.** A member of the Community Council mentioned affordable housing, high building costs and how it is up to communities to build homes.
- 24.** Someone commented on how valuable 2 years' guaranteed work during the construction phase would be for local contractors; how this would give them the resources to invest in new machines which, in turn, would make it cheaper to build local houses.
- 25.** Someone asked if the Community Council have a view either for or against the project. The answer was that the Community Council are neutral. A polling company has been spoken to and every eligible Kinlochbervie voter will receive a polling pack.
- 26.** It was noted that an area wide of Kinlochbervie will also be affected by the proposed wind farm and that other Community Councils could undertake their own polls.

Actions for Galileo from the meeting:

- Galileo to contact Vivien Scotswood re. the noise and effects on neurodivergent individuals and impact on this specific group, and any requirement for triple glazed windows to combat any issues
- A photo visualisation is required from the top of the hill going into Kinlochbervie, looking at the three mountains
- Galileo to clarify the number of jobs that it is hoped will be generated during and post construction
- Galileo / National Grid to confirm when possible if the new electricity cable is going to be under or over ground
- Galileo to provide more information on Constraint Payments
- Galileo to prepare some nighttime visualisations
- Galileo to change the colour scheme of the visualisations so they are easier to identify on the photos

These actions will be followed up by the CC with Galileo.

The chair thanked all present for their participation.