East Lammermuir Energy Developments meeting (invite only)

Wednesday 11 March 2026
Innerwick Old School

Participants

Industry: 17 attendees representing: Beltown Power (Newlands Hill), Community Wind power (Aikengall), Fred. Olsen Renewables (Crystal Rig), EnBW and JERA Nex bp (Morvern North), Metlen and Prysmian (EGL1 / SP Energy Networks contractors), SP Energy Networks (EGL1, Branxton Substation) and SSE Renewables (Berwick Bank).

East Lothian Council: Councillor Lyn Jardine and Officer Graeme Marsden (Head of Planning).

Community: 15 attendees, mainly from East Lammermuir, plus 3 from Dunbar and West Barns.

Facilitators: Beth Landon (Energy Projects Partnership Manager), Chris Bruce (East Lammermuir Community Council) and Tom Bywater (East Lothian Climate Hub).

Meeting summary

The evening began with a soft start for networking with refreshments.

1. **Energy Projects Partnership update**

At the last Energy Developments meeting in September 2025, all stakeholders participated in group work exploring our partnership working, which led to the setting of 5 key priorities (fig. 1) and an 18 month set of objectives.

Beth started the evening by presenting the partnership priorities and gave an update on progress.

- **Community-led Development**:
    - The vision of the partnership is for **East Lammermuir to be a better place as a result of the energy developments** and is articulated in the **Local Place Plan** (LPP).
    - **4 priority ambitions** for the community from LPP - we have held workshops on each, which have been a large focus of Beth's work over the last 6 months.
    - The workshop reports will guide the spend of community benefits, alongside other funding we may access
    - We have a vision for thriving biodiversity corridors and connected networks for walking, cycling safely.

    - When the whole planning and construction process works with the community the community are empowered and the design of the developments is better informed by local knowledge.
    - Chris described the **aligned arrangement for administration of all community benefits that we are aiming for**, but which is proving to be challenging to implement.
- **Partnership working**
    - **Energy Developments meetings** - These all stakeholder meetings are building a sense of direction and forward movement together.
    - **Partnership budget** - Following the September meeting a partnership budget of £10k was established to facilitate the delivery of the key priorities (fig.1), with contributions requested of £750 per consented project and £500 per project in planning. Just under half the budget has been received to date. Developers who have not yet made their payment were encouraged to do so.
- **Communication**
    - **E-bulletins** continue to be the main means of providing regular updates. The audience is now at 93. Subscribe here.
    - **Reporting portal** - funded through the partnership budget mentioned above. Development of this new facility has been commissioned, to be combined into the East Lammermuir Developments website that hosts the map. The portal is intended to make the process of reporting and follow up of issues relating to the construction of projects more streamlined.
- **Sharing learning**
    - **Lessons learned log** - is being developed through the steering group for live projects, to build up a body of knowledge for future developments and keep raising standards.
    - **Opportunities to share the learning more widely** - we are aware of interest from other areas of Scotland, especially in the current climate of communities feeling the impact of the escalation in the scale of renewables and transmission developments. There is interest about what we are doing here, with the community seeking to work in partnership with developers and the Council to improve the area. Relationships with trusted communications organisations are being developed to facilitate this.
- **Construction impacts**
    - There is a lot happening with Eastern Green Link 1 (EGL1) construction and Branxton substation enabling works, all centring around the Innerwick, Birnieknowes and Bilsdean areas
    - Construction of Crystal Rig IV is now winding down.
    - Enabling works for the onshore elements of Berwick Bank are expected to start later this year.
    - We are seeking ways to minimise disruption to the community through timely sharing of information and by proposing solutions (e.g. cab signage for vehicles)

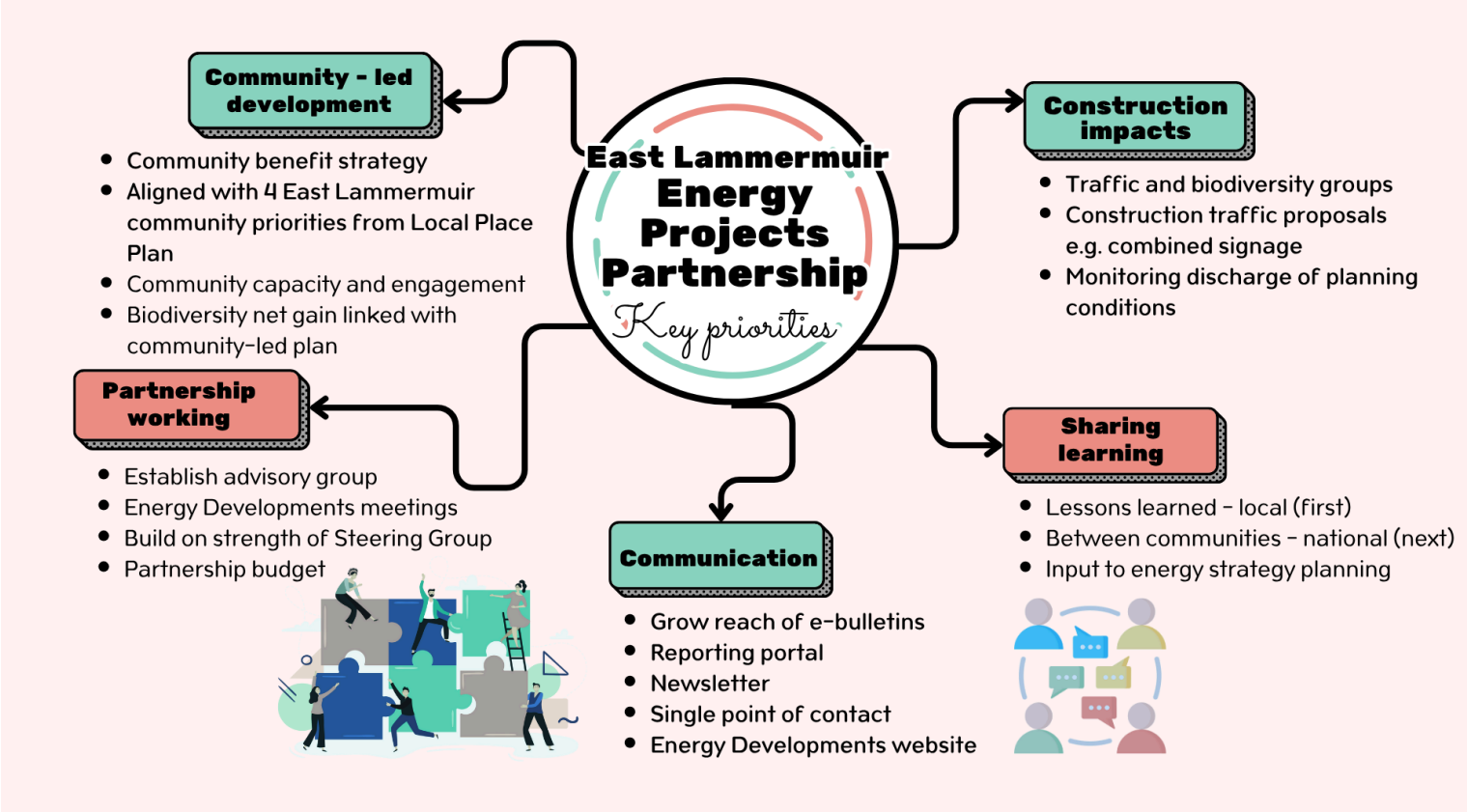

Fig. 1 Energy Projects partnership key objectives November 2025 - April 2027

2. SP Energy Networks and Morvern Offshore Wind Farm presentations

We have become aware of the potential for further energy infrastructure in East Lammermuir, and reached out to the relevant developer and the transmission owner to present on what they know so far and what this might mean for our area.

The two projects in question are Morvern North Offshore Wind Farm, which will make landfall in the “Branxton area” if consented, and a potential new substation nominally called “Thorntonloch”. Neither have sites proposed at this stage and it will not be clear whether another substation is needed until the NESO (National Energy System Operator) Connections Reform process has produced more results (expected late 2026) and it might be that Branxton substation will be sufficient. Illustrations of the related onshore works at Hawthorn Pit in Co. Durham suggest that the onshore infrastructure associated with Morvern North could be similar in scale to the converter station and cabling being built for EGL1.

Chris introduced this section, saying that if further energy and transmission infrastructure is coming, the community wants to be on the “front foot” this time and to input early into site

selection. Beth and Chris have met with Laurence Rockey (East Lothian Council's Chief Executive) and other senior representatives from ELC in January about this and have a further meeting scheduled for 24 March together with senior representatives from SP Energy Networks /SPT to pursue this.

The presenters were:
Morvern North: Chris Whitehead and Tony Alongi
Scottish Power Transmission (SPT): Iain Kinnair

The presentations can be accessed via the links above.

The possibility of more energy infrastructure in East Lammermuir met with great concern from community members present, in particular that another substation may attract further energy projects, and potentially followed by more data centres, compounding the cumulative impacts already being experienced. Community members expressed their sense of lack of agency through the planning process, that they are not being listened to by the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit.

Iain Kinnair (who is responsible for determining where new substations are located), explained that if a developer applies to them for a grid connection, they are obliged to offer one and they look at the most efficient and coordinated way to provide it.

Both projects would undertake early engagement with the community. It was recognised that they had come to present at this meeting at our invitation long before any kind of engagement starts, as there are several hurdles to pass before detailed planning might begin.

3. **Mini-workshop on the 4 community ambitions (Tom Bywater, East Lothian Climate Hub)**

Due to extra time being given to part 2 of the evening, this section ended up being more of a presentation of the 4 workshops and recommendations, with just 10 minutes at the end for groupwork. Tom is working on a 5th report looking at synergies and overlaps in how each and all community ambitions could be delivered and this was an opportunity to feed into that process.

The presentation provided an excellent overview of the current position and can be found here.

Despite the short time for group work, important insights were gathered which will help to share the 5th report and we are very grateful for everyone's engagement at the end of the evening.

Dates of next meetings: TBC, we are rescheduling due to the pre-election period for the May 2026 elections for Scottish Parliament.