

Origin Energy is a Community Interest Company that tries to bring the benefits of renewable energy to communities. Based in York, it designs, finances, builds and operates renewable energy systems for communities and allows them to spend the profits for sustainable investment. It can also give advice on energy reduction strategies for communities. All this is done using democratic community consultation methods. Origin helps the community to decide which path to pursue.

We've put together this proposal to show communities how they can progress their aspirations and perhaps discover what is possible.

Origin believes that the time is right for communities to address the problems of producing safe and secure energy and for taking their part in reducing the consumption of energy. Origin can show how this can be done in a democratic way that is financially beneficial for communities and offers a way to establish a steady investment stream. Origin's main interest has been in providing wind generated energy that is sold to the grid but can also advise on other resources.

The first stage of a feasibility study looks at the natural resources within the community and tries to generate options and looks to see if schemes are feasible from a technical and community point of view. The scope of this first phase would include:

- Estimating overall energy consumption of the community and addressing ways in which this can be reduced. This would be done in conjunction with a preliminary visual survey of the building inventory of a Parish.
- Carry out desk-top studies to identify potential sites for wind and other renewable energy resources.
- For all possible locations, choosing generic turbine parameters (heights, diameters and numbers) and examining the visual aspect of each choice with 3D models and photo-montages. In conjunction with local and national landscape designations an early visual impact will be assessed.
- Carry-out a consultation with Parish households to discuss the options and impact and to allow them to say if they support the scheme or not.
- Investigate the ecological constraints by way of consultation with national and local bodies to assess the likelihood of wildlife being impacted by the proposal options.
- In a similar manner, look at the cultural heritage constraints that may exist in the vicinity and if the proposals might adversely impinge on them.

- Carry-out a first-pass investigation of radar and telecoms problems to see if the turbines might interfere with signals.
- Investigate a strategy for connecting the turbines to the grid and the cost implications of the route.
- Generate noise profiles and shadow flicker patterns for the options to see what the likelihood of disturbance might be.
- Looking at a financial model for taking the scheme forward and for estimating the returns to the community.
- Planning advice and research

At the conclusion of the work a report will be produced which will assess which options are feasible and reflect how the community has responded.

The second stage would be a full Environmental Impact Assessment for a planning submission followed by a construction and installation phase. Origin would help the community through these stages and then further on to the long term to give advice in community decision making practices for investment decisions.

*As an illustration, Origin has been helping a community in South Yorkshire to realise 2 x 2.5 MW wind turbine project. After a community consultation exercise in which the community were invited to have a say in where the turbines be located a planning application is being submitted. The community stand to gain around £250k per annum over the life of the scheme which represents a huge investment potential for the community. A new co-operative was established which will administer the investment and every household has the opportunity to be a member of the co-operative for only £1.*

A new funding opportunity has arisen and Origin are now looking for communities who might like to start the process of looking at new ways of securing future prosperity through green technologies.



Steve Carney

Director