

Note on Tourism Perception Studies for Deucheran Hill 2 Wind Farm

Background

Deucheran Hill 2 Wind Farm is a proposed renewable energy project on the Kintyre Peninsula in Argyll and Bute. As part of the consultation process, East Kintyre Community Council requested that a tourism survey was undertaken to understand the perceptions of tourists to the proposed development and estimate the potential impact of the Proposed Development on the tourism sector, in particular in Kintyre.

Approach and Justification

BiGGAR Economics was commissioned to complete a socio-economic impact assessment of the Proposed Development and this included an assessment on the potential impacts of the tourism sector.

BiGGAR Economics did not undertake a perceptions survey of tourists to East Kintyre because pre-construction perception studies have been proved to be a poor indicator of tourism behaviour post construction. This is highlighted in studies that have been undertaken by the National Grid, in which business operators and visitors were surveyed pre-construction and post-construction of multiple energy infrastructure projects, in this case overhead lines¹. This study found that the perception studies overestimated the impact of these developments by a factor of 8.

¹ ERM (2014) A Study into the Effect of National Grid Major Infrastructure Projects on Socio-economic Factors. Available at: [https://nsip-documents.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/published-documents/EN010080-001531-Orsted%20Hornsea%20Project%20Three%20\(UK\)%20Ltd%20-%20Appendix%2039%20-%20Environmental%20Resources%20Management%20Report,%202014.pdf](https://nsip-documents.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/published-documents/EN010080-001531-Orsted%20Hornsea%20Project%20Three%20(UK)%20Ltd%20-%20Appendix%2039%20-%20Environmental%20Resources%20Management%20Report,%202014.pdf)

People overestimate the impact of energy infrastructure on their location and businesses

People overestimate the impact if asked if a hypothetical, or planned energy project, will have a negative impact on their business or tourism offering in the local community. After a project is completed, impacts are 8 times smaller than anticipated.

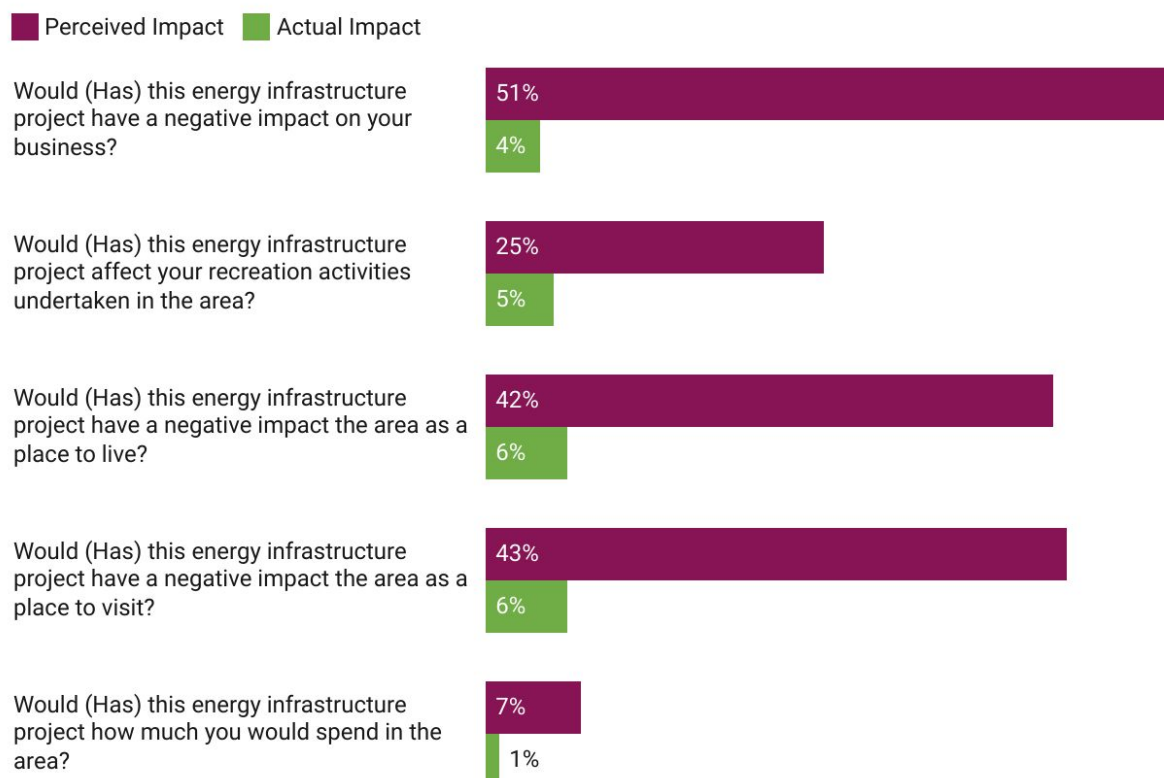


Chart: BiGGAR Economics • Source: ERM, A Study Into The Effect Of National Grid Major Infrastructure Projects On Socioeconomic Factors • Created with Datawrapper

The purpose of the socio-economic impact assessment is to estimate the actual impact that developments may have, rather than the perceived impact. Analysis of the performance of tourism businesses in the vicinity of onshore wind projects has found no general link between the development of onshore wind and the performance of the tourism economy in Scotland. Therefore, BiGGAR Economics considered the locations and assets that are the primary drivers of tourism activity in East Kintyre, to identify potential site specific issues that could impact the tourism economy. This process found that while the Proposed Development would be visible from some of these assets, the impacts of this visibility on visitor behaviour was not expected to be significant because of the low sensitivity to these visual impacts.