

BORALEX
Beyond
RENEWABLE ENERGY



Pre-Application Consultation Report

Lochluichart East BESS

August 2025



Table of Contents

	Executive Summary	2
1.	Introduction	3
2.	Framework for pre-application consultation	3
3.	Boralex's approach to community involvement	3
4.	Consultation	4
	4.1 Key stakeholder engagement	
	4.2 Information Postcards	4
	4.3 Freephone	5
	4.4 Online Consultation Website	5
	4.5 Social Media	5
	4.6 Community Open Days	5
5.	Consultation Feedback	7
	5.1 Newsletter	7
	5.2 Online Consultation Website	7
	5.3 Community Open Days	7
	5.4 Issues	7
6.	Response to Consultation Feedback	8
7.	Future Consultation and Community Liaison	8
8.	Appendices	
	Appendix 1 Proposal of Application Notice	
	Appendix 2 Stakeholder Notification Correspondence	
	Appendix 3 Community Open Day Invitation Postcards	
	Appendix 4 Online Consultation Page	
	Appendix 5 Community Open Day Information Panels	
	Appendix 6 Social Media Coverage	
	Appendix 7 Community Open Day Advertisements	
	Appendix 8 Community Open Day Images	
	Appendix 9 Community Open Day Questionnaire Sample	
	Appendix 10 Community Open Day Enquiry Form	
	Appendix 11 Planning Aid for Scotland's SP=EED framework	

Executive Summary

In line with both The Highland Council's advice, 'Pre-Application Consultation: A Guide for Communities', alongside Planning Advice Note 3/2010 which includes the National Standards for Community Engagement, and Planning Aid for Scotland's SP=EED framework, Boralex Limited ('Boralex') has undertaken two rounds of consultation for its Lochluichart East Battery Energy Storage System proposal ('the Proposed Development').

In March 2025, a Pre-Application Consultation request was submitted to The Highland Council (Appendix 1). A first round of consultation was undertaken in April 2025, with a follow up round of consultation undertaken in May 2025.

Boralex expects consultation activity to continue throughout the application process.

Consultation activity so far has included:

- Attendance at Garve and District Community Council meetings;
- distribution of invitation postcards to all local properties;
- a dedicated project website with online consultation tool (www.lochluicharteastbess.co.uk);
- a Freephone telephone number;
- community open day held on 3rd April in Garve Village Hall; and
- follow up community open day held on 1st May in Garve Village Hall.

Local residents and other key stakeholders were invited to attend the open days. The first round was publicised via a postcard sent out to all addresses (180) within the Garve and District CC area which is 611 square kms and stretches from Aultguish/Strathvaich in the north, and Garve in the east to Achnasheen in the west. In addition, an advertisement for the event was placed in the Ross-shire Journal, as well as being promoted by the Community Council via their minutes and social media. The second round was again publicised in the same manner.

At the Community Open Days (CODs) members of the development team were on hand to explain the proposals, discussing the wider issues around battery storage development and energy policy more generally. Those attending had the opportunity to discuss their views with the project team and complete feedback questionnaires. Local residents also had the opportunity to air their views via the project website, Community Council and Freephone telephone number.

A total of 15 people attended the open days (some to both rounds). No feedback forms were received, either on the days of the open days or subsequently via the website or via Freepost.

Boralex has written to those local residents who raised questions or concerns during the initial consultation process. Consultation is on-going and will continue post submission.

1. Introduction

Boralex embraces community consultation; it is at the heart of its approach to development. This report provides detailed information regarding the Proposed Development pre-application community consultation.

2. Framework for pre-application consultation, Loch Lochluichart East Battery Energy Storage System

Boralex's public consultation plans for the Proposed Development were influenced by the Highland Council's Statutory Advice, 'Pre-Application Consultation: A Guide for Communities' alongside PAN 3/2010 which includes the National Standards for Community Engagement and Planning Aid for Scotland's SP=EED framework (**Appendix 11**), as well as its longstanding relationship with the local community.

Both documents outline how applicants of major infrastructure projects should undertake pre-application consultation with the community. The aim of this procedure is to make sure that communities are made aware of, and have an opportunity to comment on, these types of development proposals before a formal application is made. This allows community views to be reflected early in the process and gives the developer the opportunity to incorporate them into the proposals before making a formal application.

The Guide outlines the consultation and involvement activities:

- Engagement at the earliest possible stage with any communities or groups who would be affected by the development proposal;
- Public notices on the project website and in local media; and
- Public Events (at least two public consultation events, with the final public event held at least 14 days after the first public event).

3. Boralex's approach to community involvement

Boralex's general approach to community involvement in projects includes the following:

- Early engagement and consultations with community councils and relevant interested community groups;
- Establishment of a dedicated project website;
- Production and circulation of printed information material for local residents;

- Information and dialogue via social media platforms (where available); and
- Hosting of community open days prior to submission of the planning application, when the development is at draft design stage, and continual consultation throughout the application process.

4. Consultation

Consultation that has taken place so far in this pre-application stage has enabled Boralex to take forward its commitment to continuing the constructive relationship with residents and local representatives within the local community that it has developed over many years, as well as make changes to the project in line with feedback received.

To consult on the proposal with the local community, Boralex undertook the following activities:

4.1 Key Stakeholder Engagement

Boralex contacted the Chair of Garve and District Community Council (GDCC) at the start of March 2025 to advise that plans for a battery energy storage development on Lochluichart East were being considered by the Company. The draft proposals were initially presented to the GDCC at their monthly meeting on 4 March 2025.

On the submission of the Proposal of Application Notice (PoAN) (**Appendix 1**), Boralex wrote to GDCC with the PoAN and associated documents advising of the Community Open Day (COD) details and providing contact information for any questions at that stage.

In addition to GDCC, Boralex wrote to each of THC's Ward Members, the local MSP, regional list MSPs and also MP advising of the PoAN and of the consultation events.

Boralex attended a further GDCC meeting on 6 May to discuss the feedback received so far in the consultation process and the developing proposals. This dialogue will continue throughout the application process.

This correspondence can be found in **Appendix 2**.

4.2 Information Postcard

In March 2025, Boralex distributed 180 information postcards (**Appendix 3**) to the local community within GDCC area (611 sq km). The postcards were posted via Royal Mail (1st class), using an address database checked by Royal Mail to reduce the risk of non-delivery. The postcard provided an invitation to the in-person CODs as well as details of

the online consultation page, overview/update of the project including site suitability and information promoting other contact methods.

Following the first round of consultation, Boralex sent a further postcard inviting residents to attend the second round of CODs where project updates would be presented.

4.3 Freephone

The Freephone telephone number for specific enquiries relating to the proposal continues to be in use (0800 980 4299), enabling residents to speak to members of the project team and receive additional information.

4.4 Online Consultation Website

In April 2025 Boralex launched a new project website www.lochluicharteastbess.co.uk to provide information for residents and their representatives about the proposal for the battery storage energy scheme and allow them to give feedback by completing an online questionnaire or asking specific questions via info@lochluicharteastbess.co.uk - the dedicated email facility.

The dedicated project consultation page (**Appendix 4**) provided:

- introduction to the consultation;
- information panels (**Appendix 5**);
- link to feedback form; and
- details of dedicated email address and freephone number.

4.5 Social Media

Garve and District Community Council utilises its Facebook page (236 followers) to disseminate information about the topics it is discussing at meetings, and as its meetings are now held online, provides a link to the recording of meetings, as well as issuing comprehensive minutes by email. (**Appendix 6**)

4.6 In-person Community Open Days

Two rounds of in-person CODs outlining the draft proposal and presenting the revised proposals were held. The first community open day was held on 3rd April 2025 in Garve Village Hall; and the follow up community open day was held on 1st May 2025 in Garve Village Hall, both between 1.00pm and 7.00pm. Copies of the exhibition information panels can be found in **Appendix 5** and photographs taken at the exhibition in **Appendix 8**.

As well as being able to discuss the Proposed Development, members of the development team were also able to discuss the wider issues of battery storage, climate change targets, energy security etc.

Feedback from the first round resulted in the commissioning of a speed survey at Lochluichart, the results of which were shared with the GDCC.

Publicity

Invitations to the public exhibitions were sent by postcard to all households within the GDCC area, which is 611 square kms and stretches from Aultguish/Strathvaich in the north, and Garve in the east to Achnasheen in the west. See **Appendix 3**.

In order to publicise the exhibition to the wider area, press advertisements (**see Appendix 7**) were placed in:

- The Ross-shire Journal – 28 March 2025 and 25 April 2025

Media

While paid advertisements for both events were placed in the local newspaper, and a news item added issued and added to the project website, no editorial content was published.

Attendance

Based on the open day register, 6 people attended the first open day, where they had the opportunity to inspect the draft proposal, discuss issues with the project team, provide feedback directly and complete a questionnaire (**Appendix 9**) and/or enquiry request form (**Appendix 10**) for return on the day or via FREEPOST.

9 people (some of whom had attended the first round and included members of the GDCC) attended the second open day where the revised proposals and additional information were presented.

5. Consultation Feedback

Throughout the community consultation programme Boralex received a good deal of qualitative feedback. Listed below is a summary of the key findings obtained and the subsequent changes made to the project.

5.1 Postcard

In addition to inviting recipients to the CODs, the postcard directed them to the dedicated consultation page on the project website and also provided a range of contact methods including Freepost, Freephone and email address in order to provide feedback.

5.2 Online Consultation Website

The Lochluichart East BESS online consultation page (**Appendix 4**) has been live since April 2025, providing an overview of the project, and hosting the online consultation facility. To date, no online consultation feedback forms have been submitted using the online form.

5.3 Community Open Days

Discussion with visitors to the first COD identified key concerns around several issues.

Having taken on board the comments and feedback received, a review of the project information was undertaken and further information on those topics was presented to the community at the second open day.

5.4 Issues

Having already attended an open day for a nearby BESS proposal, those attending came prepared with a comprehensive list of questions for the team. The overriding feeling was that there was still a high level of concern, particularly around fire risk of projects.

This initial feedback prompted a review of the project information which was updated and presented to the community at the second open day.

In advance of the second open day, THC advised that a sizeable visibility display would be required at the entrance to the existing commercial forestry access to the site due to the current speed limit in place and the site boundary would require to be updated. Following the open day, Boralex attended the subsequent GDCC meeting, where this matter was discussed in more detail and concern was raised regarding the loss of habitat through the size of the visibility splay.

Boralex understands that the local community has been applying to THC for many years to have the speed limit reduced through the settlement of Lochluichart and Boralex has agreed to support them in their efforts wherever possible.

A speed survey was commissioned by Boralex on the back of this discussion, details of which have been shared with the GDCC, and further discussion with local ward members on the issue was had by the GDCC at their subsequent CC meeting.

Boralex will continue to engage with both THC and GDCC around this matter to find an acceptable solution benefitting the community.

6. Response to Consultation Feedback

Further to the consultation process outlined in this statement, a number of activities have or are being undertaken in order to respond to feedback received. These are detailed as follows:

Web/email

Everyone who submits a question or query either via the website questionnaire or by email direct will also be responded to electronically.

Further in-person consultation

Following submission, and the completion of the summer holiday period, Boralex is proposing, on the advice of the GDCC, to return to Garve in order to undertake a further open day, details to be confirmed.

7. Future Consultation and Community Liaison

Next Steps – Pre and Post Submission

Boralex is committed to the continued involvement of and consultation with the local community and other stakeholders throughout the planning process.

Even though the pre-application consultation has been completed, this does not mean that the consultation will end. Boralex is committed to further consultation during the planning determination period, ensuring that local residents and stakeholders continue to be involved in the process and are kept informed of the proposal's progress.

Application information

On submission, Boralex will provide all the relevant information to the local community in order for them to be able to easily make representations in respect of the application. Full details of the application will be uploaded onto the project website for ease of access.

Stakeholder/Interest group briefings

Members of the Highland Council were engaged with the consultation process by email and members of the Community Council attended the open days and will continue to be updated as the application process progresses.

Media relations

Media relations activity will be ongoing. Once the application has been submitted, a news release detailing the submitted proposal and representation contact information will be issued. Boralex will respond to media enquiries and requests for information throughout the determination time period.

Ongoing response to queries

Boralex will continue to respond to queries that are received via the various consultation channels i.e. freephone telephone number, freepost address, dedicated email address, website and newsletter.

Community Liaison

On submission of the application, Boralex will inform the appropriate community groups, along with those individuals who have already engaged with the consultation. Boralex will also attend future GDCC meetings in order to keep the community apprised of the project during development and has offered an additional in-person open day, post-submission.