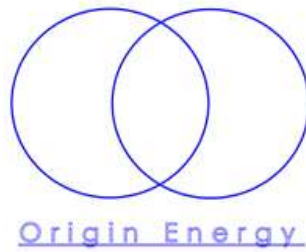


# Towards a Community Structure



## Foreword

This document is a part submission to Future Energy Yorkshire in support of a funding application for a Community Renewables scheme. It should be read in conjunction with all other documents relevant to that application.

## Community

Sustainable living is more than just buying green products and recycling waste. Sustainable living is having regard to the whole continuum of society, past, present and future and its place in the natural environment. To search for a more sustainable life-style means that we believe that living prosperously is possible within the resources available to us. It encompasses all our activities, hopes and dreams for the future. To believe that a sustainable life-style exists means that we believe it is for everyone: sustainability means prosperity for everyone. In this respect, community is our connectedness through our actions for a shared prosperity. Community implies that what we can do together is of more benefit than what we can do individually.

## Government

In recent years, much has been made by both local and national governments of the emphasis for communities to play a more prominent role in their own welfare. Whilst the concept of prosperous communities is certainly not a new one, it was at the UN 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro where the Agenda 21 'global action plan' for sustainable development proposed that the focus of action should be placed at local level throughout the world. Consequently, the Aalborg Charter was developed through the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign and its principles have been influential in forming European policy approaches in local government practice. Much has happened in the intervening years since Agenda 21, but the concept of 'governance' has been prominent in the emerging initiatives. Governance has many dimensions but tries to describe the engagement of local authorities with citizens to promote knowledge, understanding and to mobilise resources. Governance concerns the sphere of public debate, partnerships and dialogue entered into by local citizens, organisations and local government and aims to generate policies and public actions that will receive consent and support. It is in contrast to the top-down approach favoured in the past.

Commentators in this field have stressed the importance of strong community leadership and of capacity building. Studies have shown that democratic structures and procedure in all areas of society, not only in the political system, are preconditions for effective environmental policy.

*the fundamental driver of sustainable development  
must be democratic debate - decisions reached*

*through open discussion, consensus based on shared goals and trust. Sustainable development needs representative democracy that is trusted and vibrant, and new forms of participatory democracy to compliment it that can inspire greater engagement by citizens in creating a better world.*

Alongside the concept of capacity building is the idea of social capital. This factor tries to describe the importance of collective community intelligence and the links between different sectors of a community. And perhaps of over-riding importance is the observation that in order to be successful, communities need access to resources.

The latest development in this movement, as far as the UK is concerned, has been the introduction of the Sustainable Communities Act which actively seeks to enshrine local people's wishes into local government policy.

### Origin Energy

Origin Energy was established as a Community Interest Company whose aim is to help communities and local governments in Yorkshire and Humberside to live a more prosperous and sustainable life-style.

Its strategy is to raise funds on behalf of communities through the sale of renewable energy and to establish ways in which this revenue can be spent to promote longer term prosperity for the community. In relation to the initiatives outlined above, it aims to promote participatory democracy in environmental matters and make available to communities the resources that they may need to achieve their aims.

We believe that we can assist communities to:

- get access to finance
- get access to markets
- get access to information
- get access to knowledge

In this way and through participatory structures we hope to:

- encourage communities to be responsible for their own energy creation and management
- to foster the requirements of communities to

live sustainably within their own environment

- to support the up-take of sustainable construction and refurbishment
- to enjoy community living

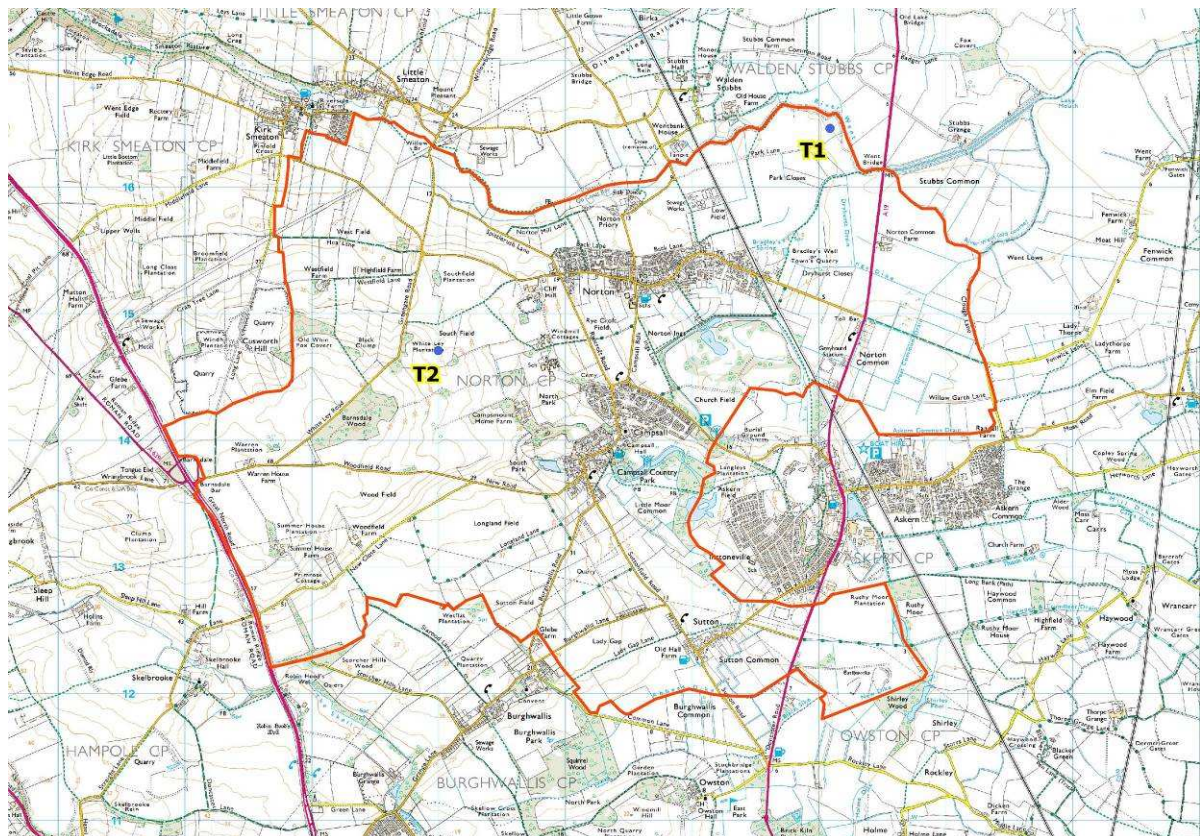
The tools for achieving these goals include

- assessment of local land for siting wind turbines, sized for the needs of the particular community
- providing and establishing an autonomous community structure to oversee investments in local sustainability needs from the energy revenues
- acting as a connection between national and local government strategies and communities
- offering expert advice with regard to:
  - ~ energy creation, usage and savings to homes and businesses
  - ~land-use and planning issues
  - ~ecological footprinting and strategies
  - ~minimizing environmental impacts of business activities

### Origin Energy Norton

A business plan has been developed which demonstrates that under current proposals, £300k per annum could be made available to the community of Norton in the Borough of Doncaster through the operation of a small wind farm.

The map below shows the possible geographical community which could be defined by the wind turbines:



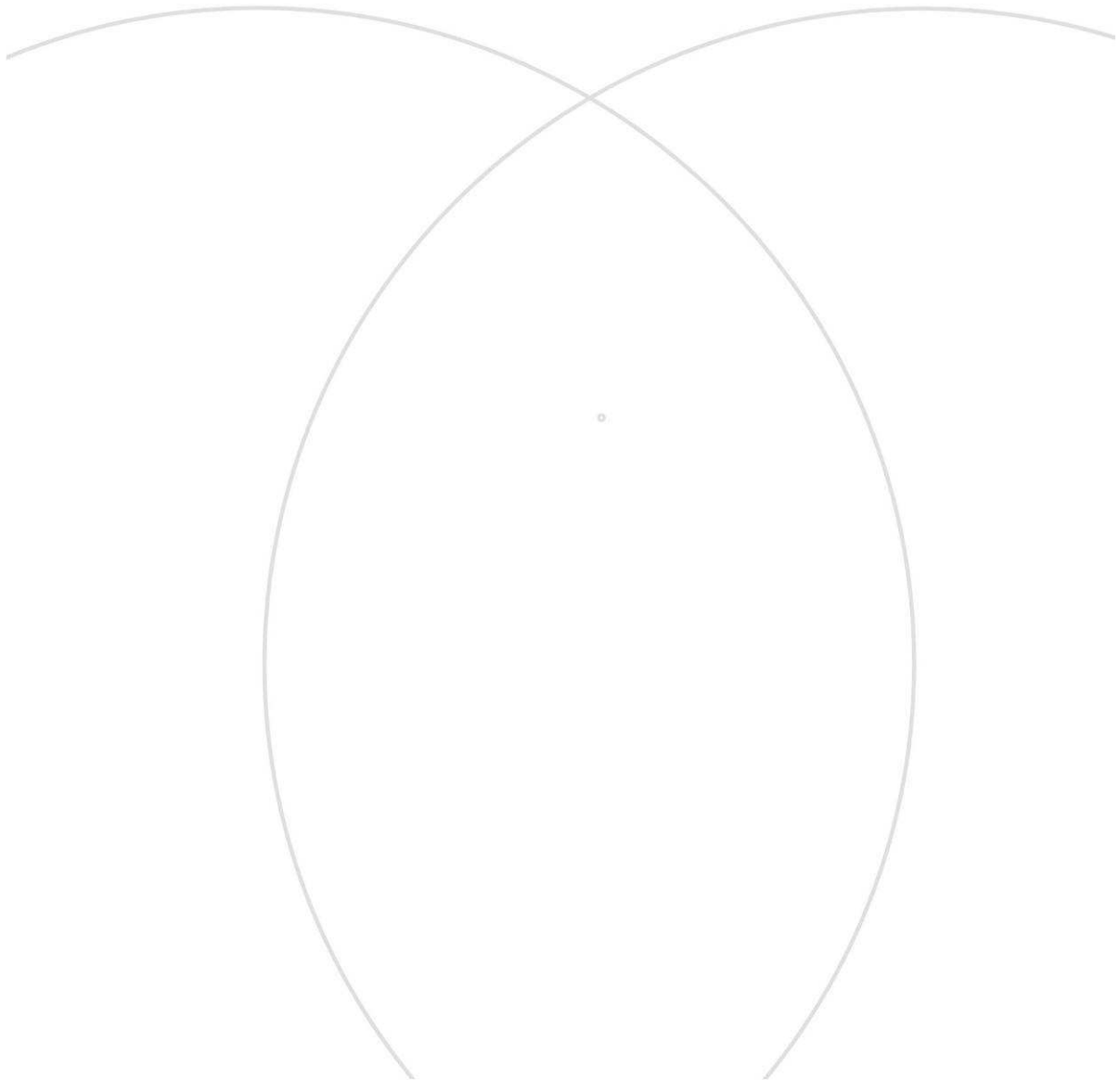
For our initial purposes we would define Norton Parish as our community. This comprises approximately 2000 households. This town, and the immediate environs around the turbines, constitute the community.

A democratic poll will be taken to assess the opinion of the community. Every household will be offered one share in a new community company. This enables them to have a say in how the profits from the wind farm will be invested. It is envisaged that a single share would also be offered to existing community bodies such as the parish council, the local council, environmental bodies and schools. This ensures that the governing body is representative.

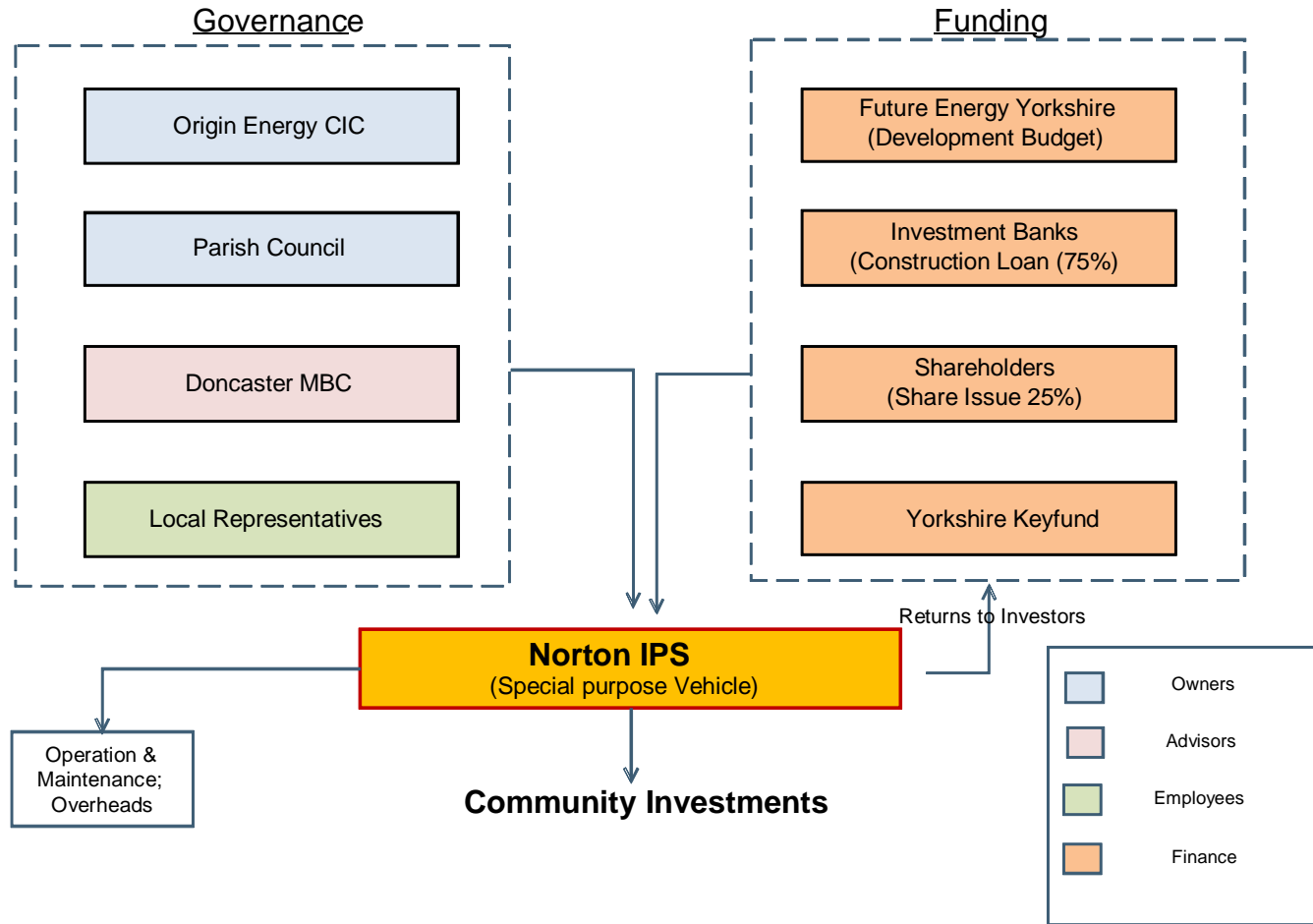
The business plan highlights the intention to raise 25% of construction costs through a share issue. This amounts to £1.45 million. In the first instance, the opportunity for direct financial investment would be offered to the local community. Remaining shares would be offered to investors in Yorkshire and Humberside where it is expected that the issue would be fully taken up. It is stressed that share ownership is made purely for financial returns and constitutes an investment for a dividend. The community is all the people in the vicinity irrespective of their capability to make investments in the turbines.

The operation of the turbines, their maintenance and administration plus overall long-term support will be provided by Origin Energy. However, a separate Industrial and Provident Society owned by the community would be established to administer

the investment process. The aim is to promote democracy and social capital building for the benefit of the local environment.



Company Structure:



It is expected that several approaches could be viable:

- longer term community sustainable issues relevant to that community
- knowledge dissemination
- information retrieval
- introduction of outside consultancies and contractors who could help the community with specific tasks
- the establishment of a sustainable economy through community allowances.

Investment in longer term projects would require allocating funds and perhaps trying to attract further funding for the community. Investment would also be required in knowledge structures and the participatory organisation.

Outside these longer term strategies, it is felt that the most empowering method of engaging the community would be to share remaining profits through a community sustainability allowance. This could be awarded on a per household basis with an annual budget given to each family within the community. It is not envisaged that an actual sum of money would be given but that a "credit" would be supposed which could be spent on goods and services within the Yorkshire and Humber Region. Origin Energy would administer the scheme and would liaise with local providers of sustainable services to ensure relevance and value.