

**LEGEND**

- Site Boundary

**Inset Map**

Location Map - Scale 1:500,000

**Map Details:**

- Location: (x) 315327, (y) 955725
- Status: DRAFT
- Scale: A3 (1:20,000)
- Drawn By: CK
- Checked By: JC
- Date: 28/02/2025
- Date: 28/02/2025
- Project Title: Achies BESS
- Drawing Title: Site Location Plan

**Inset Map - 1:10,000**

Welcome to our community consultation event. We appreciate your time and interest in learning more about the proposed Achiees Battery Energy Storage System (BESS).

This event is designed to provide you with more information and to give you an opportunity to ask questions and make comments. Please take your time to study the display banners which outline key aspects of the proposal.

Your feedback is important so please share your thoughts, questions, or concerns with our team today. We would also encourage you to complete the community questionnaire during your visit. Alternatively, you are welcome to take the questionnaire away to complete. You can return it by 11th April 2025 using the Freepost address provided. If you would rather fill the community questionnaire online, please scan the QR code:



01786 820 111  
peter.keep@sun4net.co.uk  
Freepost FCHANGE

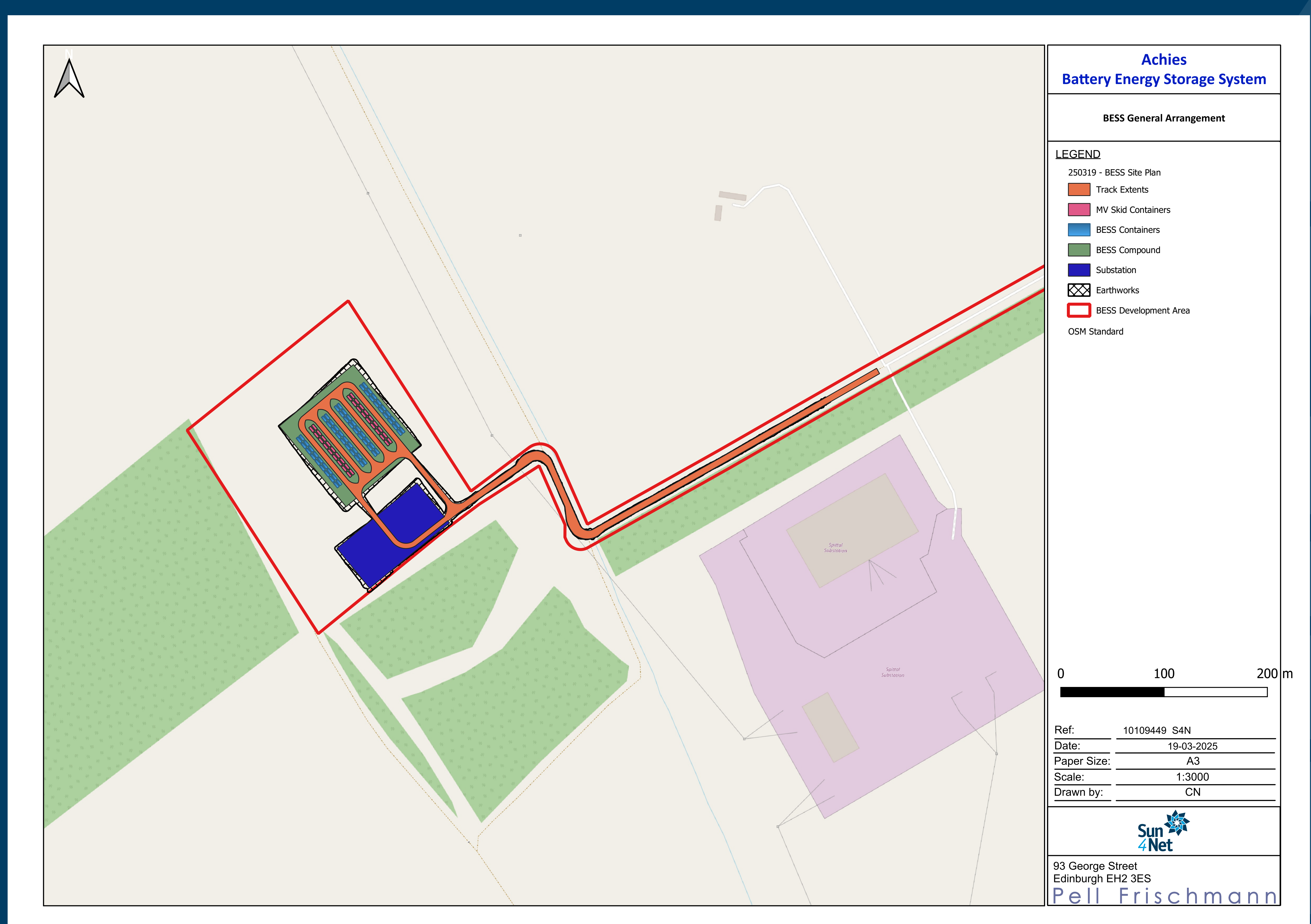
The information on display at this event is also available on our website:

[www.achiesenergystorage.com](http://www.achiesenergystorage.com)





# Achie's Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)



## PROJECT OVERVIEW

Sun4Net develops large battery energy storage systems (BESS) which store electricity to help make the electricity grid more sustainable. We are proposing to build one of these battery systems, which we are calling Achie's BESS, on land to the north west of the existing Spittal Converter Station. If consented, the Achie's BESS will occupy around 5 acres of land and will have a grid export capacity of 162 MegaWatts (MW). We anticipate applying for permission for a temporary period ie: 40 years. The development is expected to include the following components:

- ✿ Battery energy storage units (around 70 in total, subject to final design) which will be used to store energy from the electricity grid and release it back in times of higher demand.
- ✿ A dedicated substation to step the voltage up or down so that the electricity can be transferred between the battery units and the electricity grid.
- ✿ Underground cable to connect the BESS to the existing Spittal Converter Station.
- ✿ Site access tracks for maintenance and emergency vehicles.
- ✿ Drainage infrastructure.
- ✿ Safety and protection systems including fire suppression, monitoring systems, and automated shutdown mechanisms to prevent overheating or malfunctions, as well as security systems, such as lighting, CCTV and fencing.
- ✿ Landscaping and biodiversity enhancements such as earth bunds and new tree planting and other environmental enhancement works – we are currently exploring opportunities for peatland restoration/rewetting.



# Health & Safety

## BATTERY SAFETY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Ensuring safety is our top priority. The Achies Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) has been designed with multiple layers of protection to prevent and respond to any potential issues. An outline Battery Safety Management Plan (BSMP) reflecting best practice and the latest fire safety guidance from the National Fire Chiefs Council will be included with the Section 36 consent application. A detailed BSMP, based on the final battery technology selected, will be agreed with the relevant authorities before the project starts operating.

### CONTINUOUS MONITORING

- ✿ Each battery is constantly checked by a **Battery Management System (BMS)**, which can detect early warning signs of faults.
- ✿ If an issue is detected, the system can automatically shut down affected areas to prevent further risks.

### FIRE PREVENTION & SUPPRESSION

- ✿ The Achies BESS is expected to use **Lithium Iron Phosphate (LFP) batteries**, which are highly stable and have a lower fire risk than other types of lithium-ion batteries.
- ✿ Each BESS enclosure is typically equipped with an automatic **fire detection and suppression system**. This system usually consists of a combination of smoke and heat detectors, along with a dry agent suppression system, which can quickly extinguish a fire inside the BESS unit when activated.
- ✿ The site will be designed to **limit fire spread**, with fire-resistant materials and adequate spacing between battery units.

### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- ✿ A **detailed Emergency Response Plan** will be developed in coordination with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.
- ✿ The site will be equipped with **secure access routes** to allow emergency vehicles to respond quickly if needed.
- ✿ In the event of an incident, a **controlled response strategy** will be followed to ensure the safety of the community and the environment.

The proposed safety measures will meet the highest industry standards, including **National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 855**, **Underwriters Laboratories (UL) 9540A**, and **International Fire Code (IFC)** regulations,



To see a copy of the National Fire Chiefs Council guidance on Grid Scale Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), please ask a member of staff or scan the QR code.

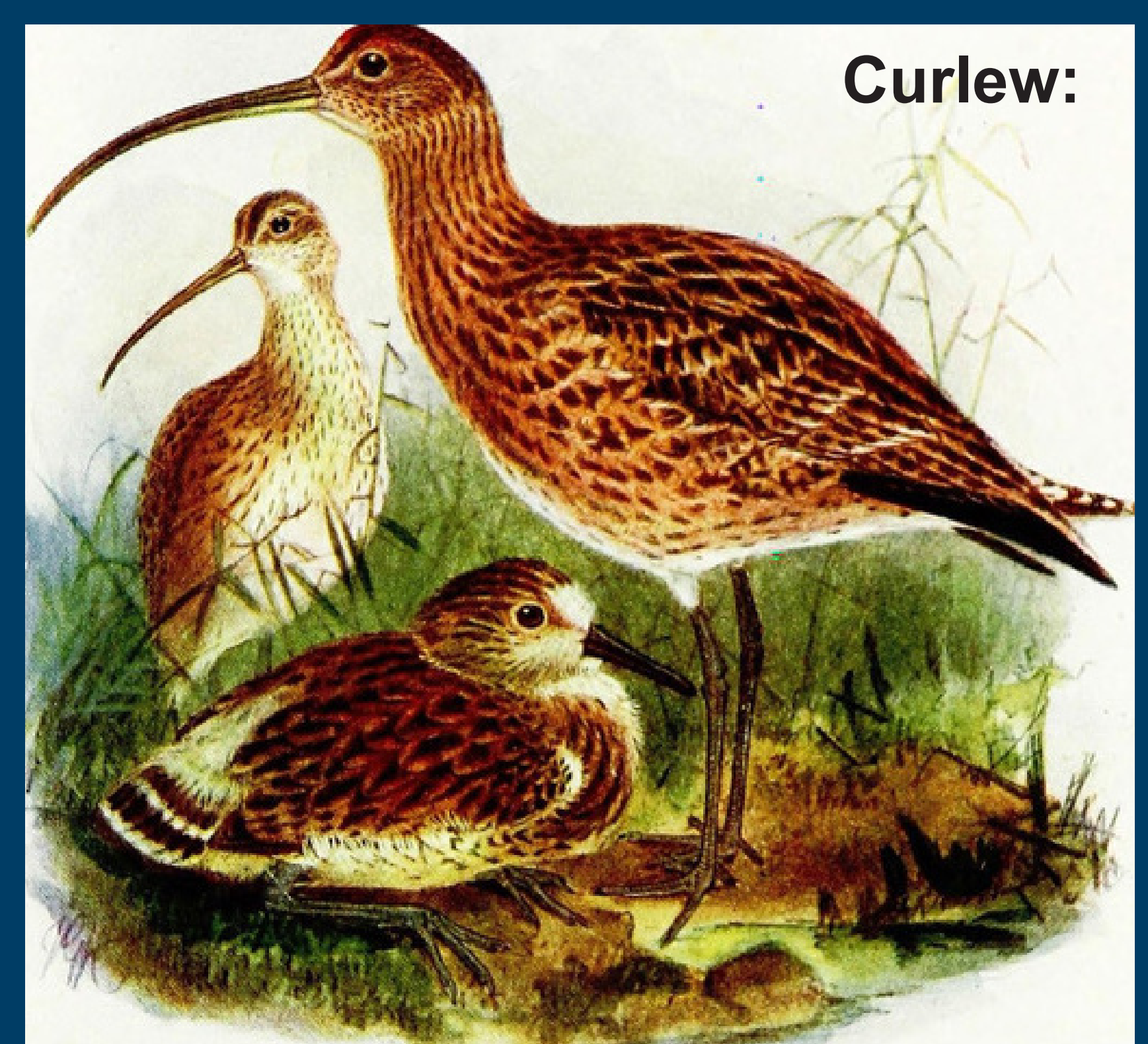




# Environmental Impact

## WHAT WILL THE EFFECTS BE?

Sun4Net are involved in renewable energy because we are committed to preserving our planet and reversing environmental damage where possible. The proposed Achies BESS will contribute positively to the twin National Planning Framework (NPF4) objectives of tackling the climate emergency and addressing the nature crisis. We will minimise effects on existing ecological features, and restore and enhance biodiversity. Enhancement measures for the proposed Achies BESS project will result in tangible biodiversity net gains, and once decommissioned, the habitats within the site will be restored, improving the ecological value and function of the habitats compared to their current baseline condition.



Curlew:



Lapwing:

Since 2023, Sun4Net has been carefully assessing the proposed development site to understand its ecology, ornithology, ground and peat conditions, landscape and cultural heritage matters. The site does not fall within a sensitive area, as defined in the EIA Regulations. However, our surveys have led to us significantly reducing the size of the proposed development to minimise the environmental impact.

We have submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Request to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit (ECU). This request seeks the ECU's guidance on whether a full EIA is necessary for the proposed Achies BESS under the terms of the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (known as the EIA Regulations).



Oystercatcher:

The Screening Request report submitted by Sun4Net describes the physical characteristics of the proposed Achies BESS and its location to determine whether the proposal is likely to have significant impacts.

*Paintings from "Birds of Britain" by JL Bonhote and HE Dresser; published in London in 1907 by A & C Black.*



To see a copy of the Screening Request for the Achies BESS, please scan the QR code.





# Your Frequently Asked questions

During the consultation process, we have received a range of questions and comments from the community about the proposed Achiees Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). Below, we address the key topics that have been raised. While we aim to provide as much information as possible at this stage, some details are still being finalised as part of the ongoing design and planning process.

## **HOW WILL LOCAL SERVICES BE AFFECTED BY THE INFLUX OF CONTRACTORS?**

We acknowledge concerns about the impact of temporary construction workers on local services. We will work with local businesses and accommodation providers to manage demand and ensure minimal strain on essential services. It is important to note that workers on the project will also contribute to the local economy by spending money in the area.

## **ARE THE BATTERIES SAFE? WHAT ABOUT FIRE AND EXPLOSION RISKS?**

Safety is our top priority. The BESS will be designed to meet stringent industry standards and regulatory requirements. It will feature advanced fire suppression systems, thermal management technology, and continuous monitoring to mitigate risks. Similar systems are already in operation worldwide with excellent safety records.

## **IS THE BESS AT RISK OF TERRORIST ATTACKS OR SABOTAGE?**

Security is a key consideration in the design and operation of the Achiees BESS. The facility will incorporate multiple security measures, including fencing, CCTV surveillance, and restricted access. In addition, the risk of attacks on energy infrastructure in the UK is assessed by national security agencies, and we will follow all relevant guidance and protocols to mitigate any potential threats. While no site can be completely immune to risks, modern BESS facilities are designed with resilience in mind, ensuring safe and secure operation.

## **WILL THIS PROJECT LOWER ELECTRICITY COSTS FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS?**

While the BESS improves grid efficiency and reliability, energy pricing is influenced by a range of national and market factors beyond the project's control. However, battery storage plays a key role in integrating more renewables, which can contribute to long-term cost reductions.

## **WHY DO LOCAL PEOPLE PAY THE HIGHEST ELECTRICITY COSTS IN THE UK DESPITE BEING SURROUNDED BY RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS?**

Electricity costs are determined by UK-wide market mechanisms, network charges, and government policy rather than local generation. We acknowledge concerns around this issue and support ongoing discussions at national and regional levels to address disparities in pricing.





# Your Frequently Asked questions

During the consultation process, we have received a range of questions and comments from the community about the proposed Achies Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). Below, we address the key topics that have been raised. While we aim to provide as much information as possible at this stage, some details are still being finalised as part of the ongoing design and planning process.

## **WHAT WILL THE PROJECT LOOK LIKE? WILL IT BE VISIBLE FROM MAIN ROADS OR LOCAL HOMES?**

The Achies BESS will be located near the existing Spittal Converter Station and is naturally screened by established woodland. Additional landscape measures, such as earth bunds and native species planting, will further minimise visual impact. The design prioritises blending into the existing landscape.

## **WILL LOCAL WILDLIFE BE AFFECTED?**

An environmental assessment has been conducted to understand the potential impacts on wildlife, informed by a suite of baseline field surveys and desk study gathering. Measures such as habitat protection, sensitive construction practices, and biodiversity enhancements will be implemented to mitigate any effects. We are committed to working with environmental bodies to ensure the protection of local species.

## **HOW WILL THIS PROJECT IMPACT LOCAL ROADS AND TRAFFIC?**

During construction, there will be an increase in vehicle movements, particularly for deliveries and contractor transport. We will implement a traffic management plan to minimise disruption, including designated routes, timed deliveries, and engagement with The Highland Council. Once operational, the site will have minimal traffic, limited to routine maintenance visits.

## **WILL THE PROJECT CREATE NOISE POLLUTION?**

The BESS will be designed to comply with strict noise limits, which will be agreed in consultation with the Council's Environmental Health Department. Acoustic modelling will be carried out, and noise-reduction measures such as enclosures and / or screening, will be implemented where required. If granted, maximum operational noise levels are expected to be stipulated in the decision notice, to which the operator will be required to adhere.

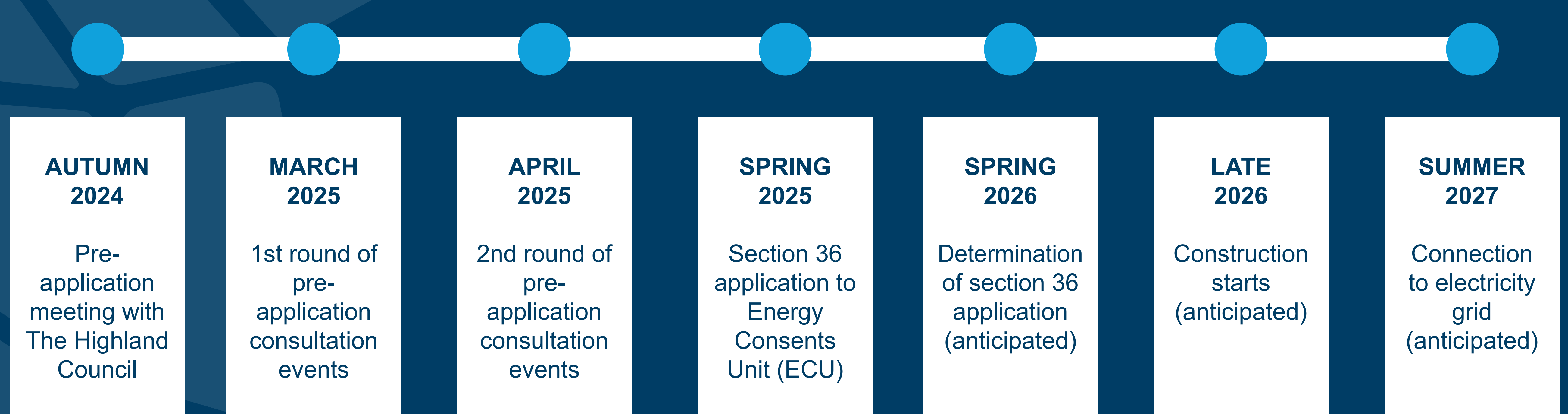
## **WHAT ABOUT THE CUMULATIVE IMPACT OF MULTIPLE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AREA?**

We recognise that this project is one of several energy-related developments in the region. We are working closely with planners, The Highland Council, and other developers to ensure coordinated approaches to minimise disruption and maximise local benefits.





# Planning, consultation & indicative timeline



## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

We are seeking permission from the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit (ECU) under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 and plan to submit a Section 36 application for development consent in spring 2025.

This is our final round of public events as part of our pre-application consultation process. We will report on the findings of this consultation in a Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report which we will submit to the ECU along with the following documents and assessments:

- ✿ Ecology Assessment
- ✿ Landscape and visual assessment
- ✿ Flood risk assessment / drainage strategy
- ✿ Noise impact assessment
- ✿ Archaeology and cultural heritage assessment
- ✿ Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP)
- ✿ Outline Battery Safety Management Plan (BSMP)
- ✿ Outline Habitat Management Plan (or similar)
- ✿ Socio Economic Assessment
- ✿ Planning Statement

Following submission, these documents will be available to the public via the ECU's website as well as via the Achies BESS project website.

Please note that comments made during this pre-application consultation phase are not representations to the Scottish Ministers. Following submission of the section 36 application to the ECU, there will be an opportunity to make representations directly to the Scottish Ministers.

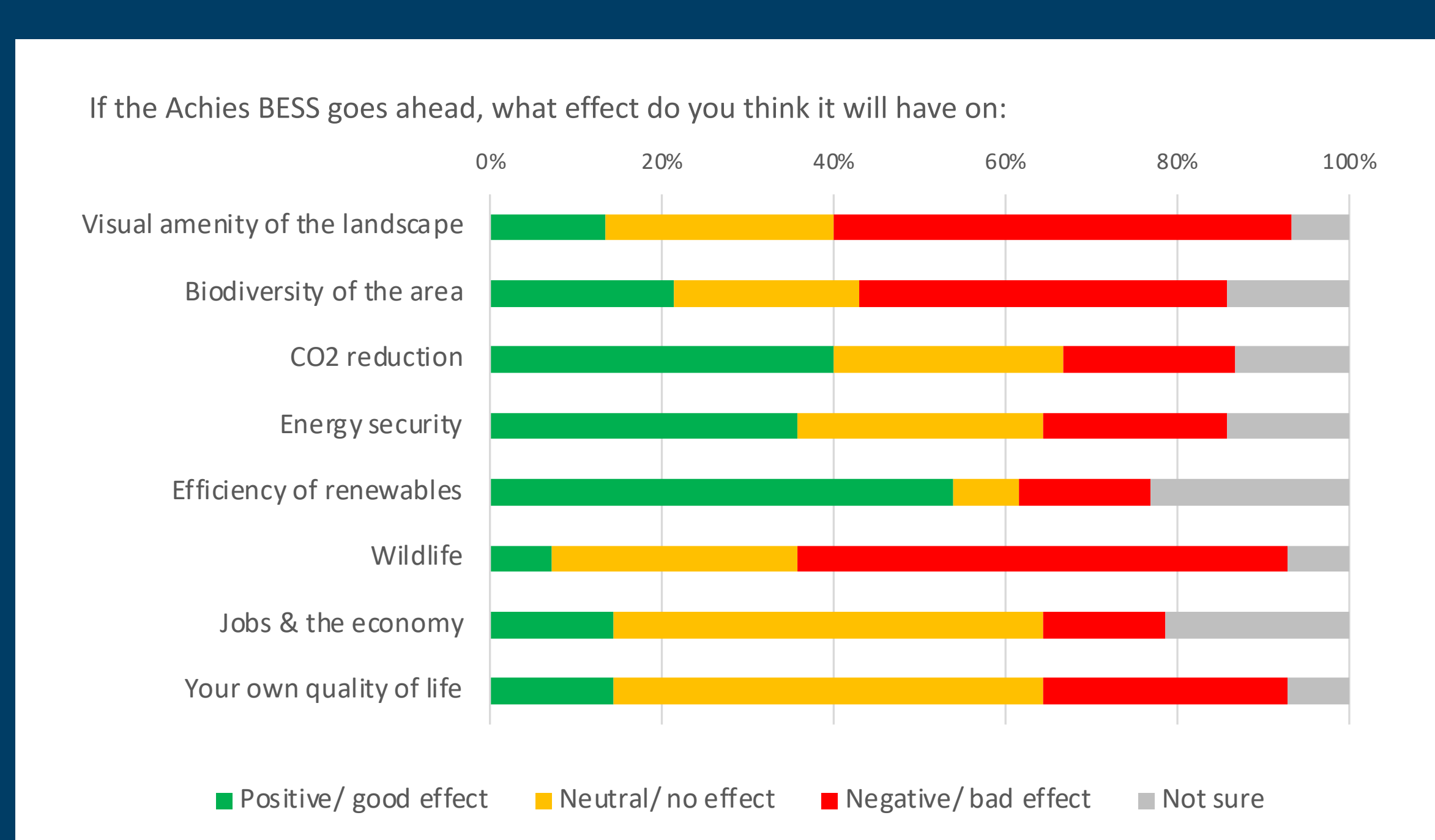
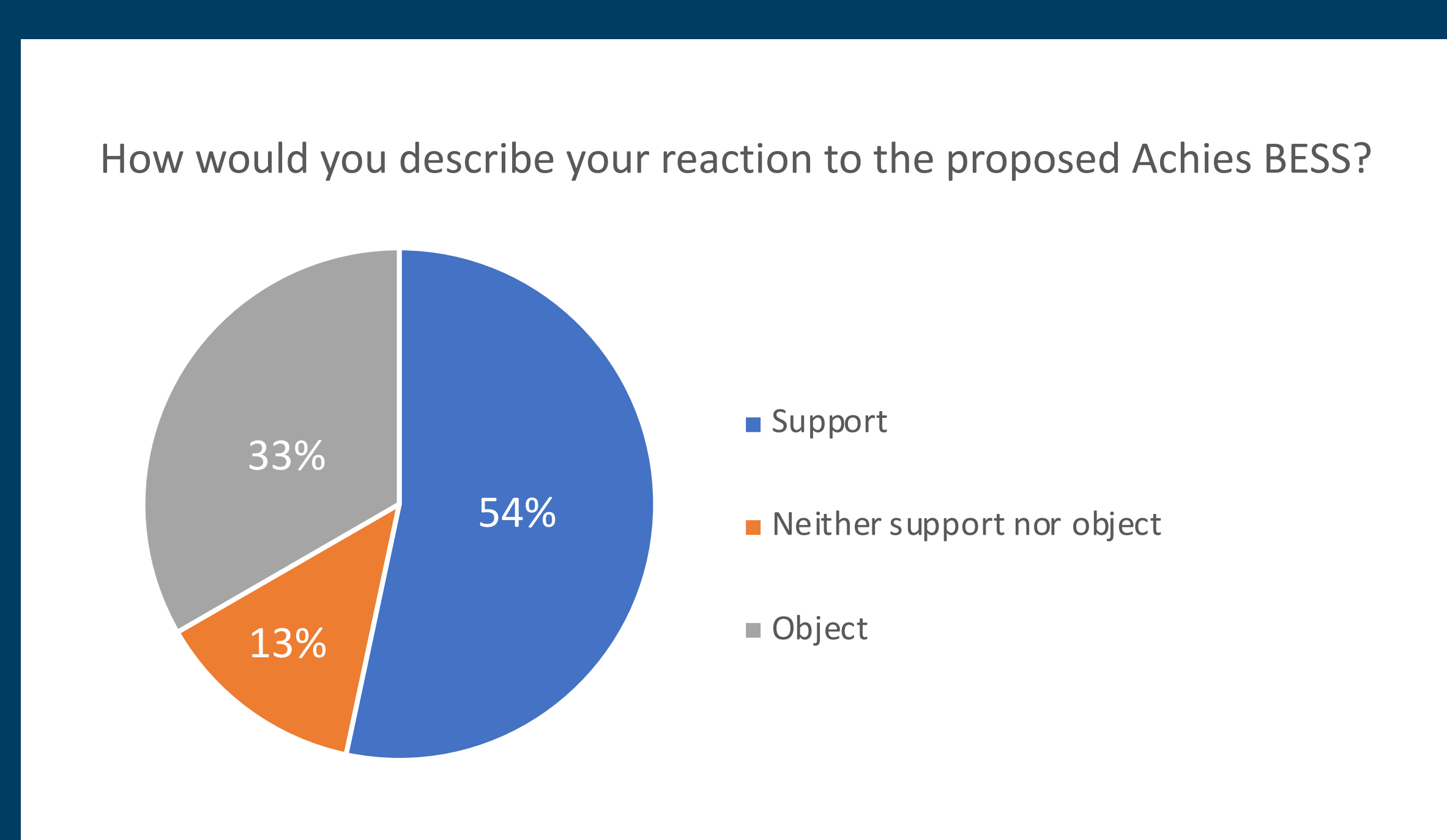
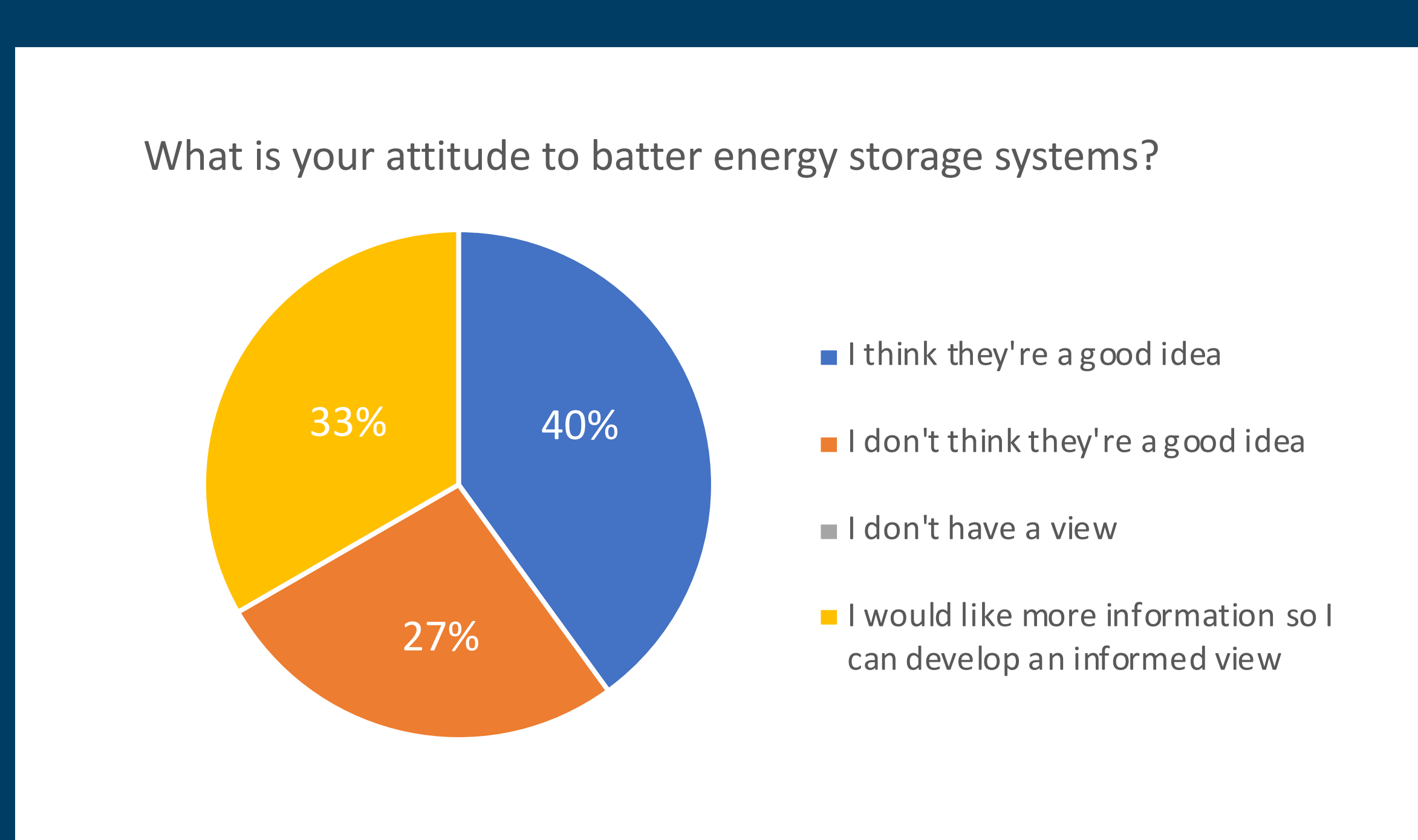
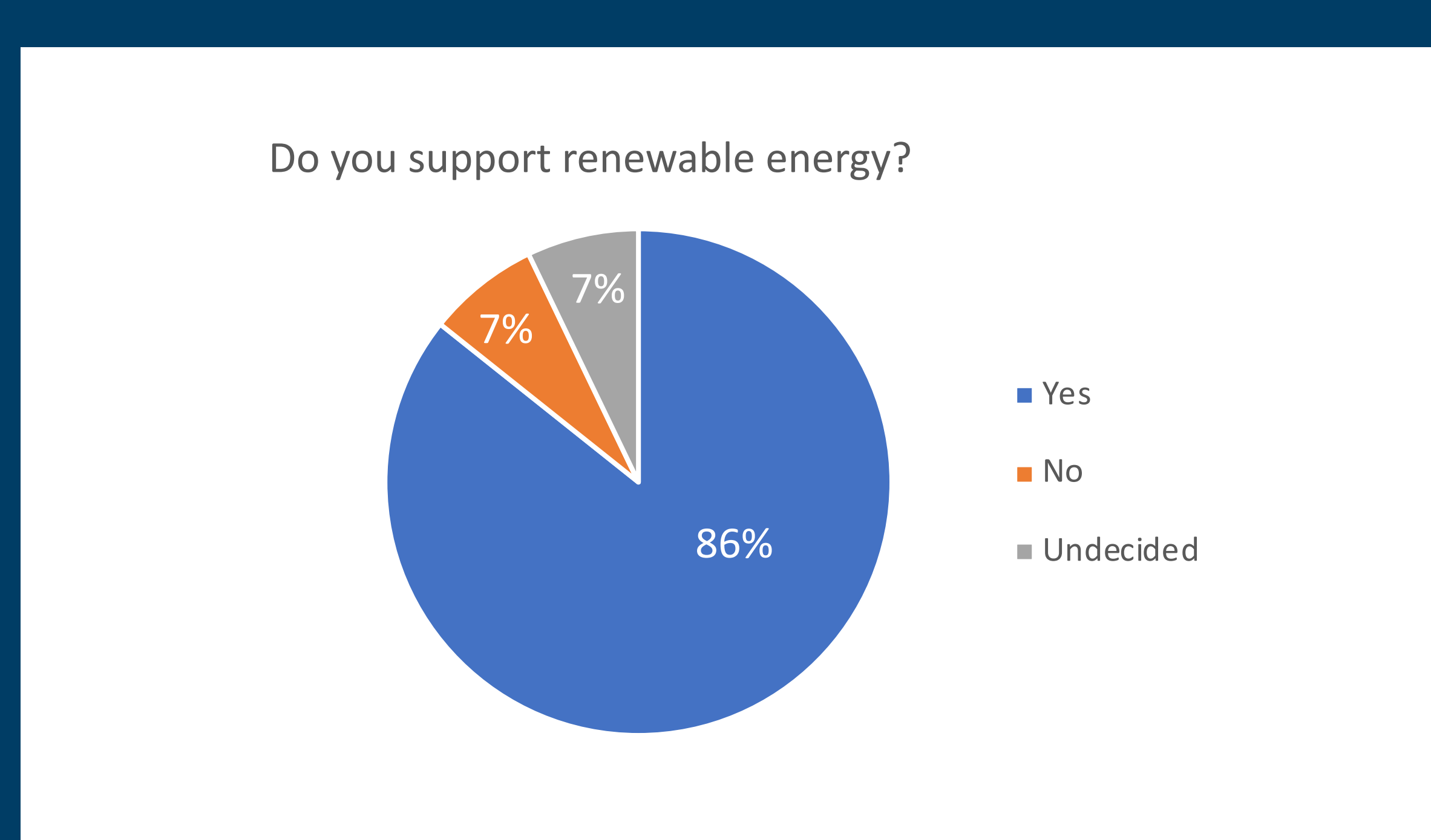




# Your Views

## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Our first round of community consultation events was attended by 58 local residents and 15 people completed our community questionnaire. The project team also documented discussions to ensure that as much feedback as possible was captured. The graphs below illustrate the responses to the questionnaire alongside a selection of comments received and suggestions for community benefit.



“Will we get a reduction in our energy prices?”

“Long term, I would like to see investment in people - sponsoring graduate placements in local small firms, encouraging graduates from the area back after university, and new people in from elsewhere is where funding could be used to good effect.”

“Excellent venue, very informative.”

“I do not support renewable energy when the land is being destroyed. No benefit to local community and huge energy terrorist risk.”

“How will the existing services which are fully stretched cope with the influx of the contractors?”

## COMMUNITY BENEFIT SUGGESTIONS:

Local people were asked for their suggestions regarding potential community benefit and how this might be delivered. Concerns were raised about the difficulty in accessing existing funds as well as suggestions around joining funds up to make them more equitable and create greater impact. Specific ideas for initiatives and beneficiaries included:

- A footpath from Halkirk to Sibster
- Training for local people
- Play equipment for Halkirk Community School
- Local schools for trips/ sports events/ school meals
- Sport clubs (eg: Caithness Athletic Club/Caithness Rugby Club, bowling clubs)
- Youth organisations
- Ormlie Community Centre in Thurso