

Glenshimmeroch Infrastructure Layout Amendments

**Comparative Environmental Impact
Assessment Report
Volume IV – Non-Technical Summary**

February 2025

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	COMPARATIVE EIA SCREENING	3
3	RENEWABLE ENERGY AND PLANNING POLICY	4
4	FORESTRY	5
5	CULTURAL HERITAGE	6
6	ECOLOGY	7
7	SUMMARY	8

Figures (bound separately)

1 INTRODUCTION

Overview

- 1.1 Planning permission was granted for Glenshimmeroch Wind Farm at appeal on 4 September 2019 (references 18/0992/FUL and PPA-170-2138) for ten wind turbines with tip heights of up to 149.9m and associated infrastructure. A subsequent application was granted permission on appeal on 8 February 2022 to increase the consented tip heights from 149.9m to a mixture of 160m and 180m (references 20/0446/S42 and PPA-170-2149). A further application was granted permission on appeal on 24 March 2023 to increase the consented tip heights from a mixture of 160m and 180m to a mixture of 180m and 200m (references 22/1315/S42 and PPA-170-2169). A further application was granted permission at planning committee on 12 December 2023 to increase the overall tip height of all turbines to 200m (reference 23/1686/S42). The original planning application was accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report dated June 2018 (herein after referred to as the "original EIAR") and the most recent tip height increase application was accompanied by a Comparative EIA Report dated July 2023 (herein after referred to as the "Consented Development") which assessed the modified environmental impacts of the increased tip height.
- 1.2 A Comparative Environmental Impact Assessment Report ("Comparative EIAR") has been prepared to accompany an application made under Section 42 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 by Energiekontor UK Ltd ("the Applicant") to vary conditions 2 and 12 of planning permission 23/1686/S42 ("Consented Development") to allow a change to the infrastructure layout outwith the micrositing allowance ("the Proposed Development").
- 1.3 This document provides a Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of that Comparative EIAR.

Purpose of the NTS

- 1.4 The aim of the NTS is to summarise the content and main findings of the Comparative EIAR in a clear and concise manner to assist the public in understanding what the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Development are likely to be. The full Comparative EIAR volumes I and II provide a detailed description of the Proposed Development.

Viewing the Comparative EIAR

- 1.1 A hard copy of this Comparative EIA will be available for viewing during normal office hours at Dumfries and Galloway Council's headquarters. The address is: Council Headquarters, 109-115 English Street, Dumfries, DG1 2DD.
- 1.2 For additional copies, a charge of £15 will be made for a full electronic copy of the Comparative EIA on CD. Costs for paper copies are as follows:
 - Volume I – Written Text £50
 - Volume II – Figures £50

- Volume III – Appendices £50
- Volume IV – Non-Technical Summary free of charge

1.3 Requests for copies should be sent to: George.Oldroyd@energiekontor.com.

The Applicant

- 1.4 Energiekontor UK Ltd is a renewable energy development company with offices in Glasgow, Leeds and Edinburgh. The company was formed in 1999 and develops onshore wind and solar farms throughout the United Kingdom. The company operates 10 existing wind farms in the UK. EK also has a number of other wind and solar projects at various stages of the development process throughout the UK.
- 1.5 Energiekontor UK Ltd is part of the Energiekontor Group. The parent company, Energiekontor AG, was established in 1990 in Bremerhaven in Northern Germany. It has since grown to become one of the leading wind energy companies in Europe and is active in Germany, France, The Netherlands, Portugal, the USA and the UK. The company has built more than 140 onshore wind farms in Europe.

2 COMPARATIVE EIA SCREENING

Introduction

- 2.1 This Comparative EIAR has been prepared by Energiekontor UK Ltd and sets out the findings of a comparative Environmental Impact Assessment which has been undertaken to consider whether the Proposed Development would result in any additional significant environmental effects not identified in the original EIAR or Consented Development for the wind farm. This section provides a summary of the findings from the Comparative EIAR Screening potential for significant environmental effects to occur as a result of the Proposed Development.

Comparative EIA Screening

- 2.2 A Comparative EIA Screening Exercise was undertaken to assess the key findings from the original EIAR and Consented Development against the Proposed Development. This screening exercise sought to identify the potential for material changes to the original EIAR and Consented Development or a change in significance of effects as a result of the Proposed Development.
- 2.3 The topic areas assessed as part of this Comparative EIA Screening are:
- Landscape and Visual Amenity
 - Ecology and Ornithology;
 - Cultural Heritage;
 - Noise;
 - Traffic and Transport;
 - Soil and Water;
 - Forestry; and
 - Infrastructure and Shadow Flicker.

Summary

- 2.4 The Comparative EIA Screening exercise found that there were no topic areas where the Proposed Development would have the potential for materially different effects or increase in the significance of effects from those reported in the Original EIAR and Consented Development. However, in order to aid decision making, further assessment has been undertaken in relation to forestry effects, cultural heritage effects and ecological effects. These effects are summarised later in this document.

3 RENEWABLE ENERGY AND PLANNING POLICY

Introduction

3.1 This chapter in the Comparative EIAR provides an outline of the national and local planning policies, guidance and other material considerations that are potentially relevant to the Proposed Development.

3.2 The Statutory instrument for the determination of planning applications in Scotland is the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended). Section 25 of this Act states:

'Where, in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise'

Planning Policy Context

3.3 This section of the Comparative EIAR sets out the planning policy context that is relevant to the Site and the Proposed Development. It includes the consideration of:

- The National Planning Framework 4; and
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Local Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance

3.4 Other material considerations include:

- International Renewable Energy Framework;
- UK Carbon and Renewable Energy Policy;
- Onshore Wind Policy Statement;
- Scottish Government Web Based Renewable Guidance; and
- Local Landscape Capacity and Wind Farm Studies

4 FORESTRY

- 4.1 The Proposed Development is largely located within commercial forestry. The forestry assessment has identified that areas of forestry would require to be felled for the construction and operation of the Proposed Development.
- 4.2 Forestry is not being regarded as a receptor for EIA purposes. Commercial forests are dynamic and their structure continually undergoes change due to normal felling and restocking by the landowner; natural events, such as storm damage, pests or diseases; and external factors, such as a wind farm or other developments. The forestry proposals are interrelated with environmental effects, which are assessed separately in other chapters of the EIAR.
- 4.3 The forestry proposals have been developed to identify areas of forest to be removed for the construction and operation of the Proposed Development; and those areas which may or may not be replanted on site.
- 4.4 The Forestry Study Area (FSA) extends to approximately 512.5 ha and is comprised of two woodlands which are privately owned and managed. The forests are comprised largely of commercial conifers with areas of mixed broadleaves planted in the late 1900s and open ground. The crops are in the mid restructuring phase and there have been recent felling and replanting programmes.
- 4.5 A total of 115.2 ha will require to be felled to enable the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. The majority of the areas to be felled for the Proposed Development would be restocked except for land required for the Proposed Development's permanent infrastructure and land to be left unplanted for forest management; or forest design purposes.
- 4.6 On site replanting of felled areas within the woodlands results in a decrease in the area of stocked woodland. There would be a decrease in 46.3 ha within the FSA for which additional off site compensatory planting will be required.

5 CULTURAL HERITAGE

Introduction

- 5.1 The Comparative EIA assessed the potential construction impacts on cultural heritage assets within the Site boundary, that may be directly or indirectly impacted as a result of the infrastructure layout changes.
- 5.2 The assessment identified a group of clearance cairns, two alleged cup-marked rocks, one farm fodder store and one former hay ree, all of which had potential to be impacted by the Proposed Development.

Summary of Effects

- 5.3 Regarding the group of clearance cairns, no remains of the clearance cairns now survive, they would not be affected by excavation of a proposed borrow pit and would not require mitigation.
- 5.4 Regarding the two alleged cup-marked rocks, it is presumed these cup marks are natural depressions, therefore it is considered that this would be an impact of negligible significance (not significant in EIA terms), and would not require mitigation.
- 5.5 Regarding the former fodder store, it is presumed this asset has been removed or in very poor condition, therefore it is considered that this would be an impact of negligible significance (not significant in EIA terms), and would not require mitigation.
- 5.6 Regarding the former hay ree, it is presumed this asset has been removed or in very poor condition, therefore it is considered that this would be an impact of negligible significance(not significant in EIA terms), and would not require mitigation.
- 5.7 In summary, The Proposed Development would not lead to any additional direct or indirect effects on any cultural heritage assets, whether designated or otherwise. The magnitude of effect predicted in relation to the indirect effects would remain unchanged.

6 ECOLOGY

Introduction

- 6.1 This section of the Comparative EIAR provides an updated assessment in relation to potential impacts on habitats as a result of the proposed changes to the layout of the Development. Whilst there are additional ecological features present, such as protected mammals, it is not considered that the infrastructure changes will result in any change to the original assessment.

Summary of Effects

- 6.2 An update to the Habitat Loss Calculations as a result of the proposed layout changes identified minor increases in loss to three habitats that were identified within the Original EIAR as IEFs; blanket bog, marshy grassland and standing water (oligotrophic). It is assessed that these impacts are considered to result in minor adverse effects that are not significant. Embedded mitigation already required as part of the consented Glenshimmeroch Wind Farm includes the presence of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) and the implementation of a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) and Habitat Management Plan (HMP). Should consent for the S42 application be granted, it is recommended that measures are included within the CEMP and HMP which will compensate for the minor loss and provide enhancements for blanket bog, marshy grassland and standing water (oligotrophic) habitats. Following the implementation of this, effects on these habitats are considered to be minor beneficial and not significant.
- 6.3 In summary, the ecological effects resulting from the Proposed Development remain unchanged from the original EIAR and Consented Development.

7 SUMMARY

- 7.1 Planning permission was granted for Glenshimmeroch Wind Farm at appeal on 4 September 2019 (references 18/0992/FUL and PPA-170-2138) for ten wind turbines with tip heights of up to 149.9m and associated infrastructure. A subsequent application was granted permission on appeal on 8 February 2022 to increase the consented tip heights from 149.9m to a mixture of 160m and 180m (references 20/0446/S42 and PPA-170-2149). A further application was granted permission on appeal on 24 March 2023 to increase the consented tip heights from a mixture of 160m and 180m to a mixture of 180m and 200m (references 22/1315/S42 and PPA-170-2169). A further application was granted permission at planning committee on 12 December 2023 to increase the overall tip height of all turbines to 200m (reference 23/1686/S42). The original planning application was accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report dated June 2018 (herein after referred to as the "original EIAR") and the most recent tip height increase application was accompanied by a Comparative EIA Report dated July 2023 (herein after referred to as the "Consented Development") which assessed the modified environmental impacts of the increased tip height.
- 7.2 A Comparative Environmental Impact Assessment Report ("Comparative EIAR") has been prepared to accompany an application made under Section 42 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 by Energiekontor UK Ltd ("the Applicant") to vary conditions 2 and 12 of planning permission 23/1686/S42 ("Consented Development") to allow a change to the infrastructure layout outwith the micrositing allowance ("the Proposed Development").
- 7.3 The Comparative EIAR has been prepared by Energiekontor UK Ltd with specialist input where necessary and sets out the findings of a comparative Environmental Impact Assessment which has been undertaken to consider whether the Proposed Development would result in any additional significant environmental effects not identified in the original EIAR for Glenshimmeroch Wind Farm.

Comparative EIA Screening

- 7.4 No topic areas have been identified as having the potential for materially different effects from those reported in the original EIAR and Consented Development. However, to aid decision making an assessment of forestry, ecology and ornithology effects has been undertaken.

Forestry Effects

- 7.5 The total study area extends to 512.5 ha and is comprised of two woodlands which are privately owned and managed.
- 7.6 Felling would be advanced on 115.2 ha for construction of the Proposed Development.
- 7.7 The species composition of the forest would change as a result of the Proposed Development forestry proposals. In particular, the area of Sitka spruce (whether pure or in a mix) would reduce by 42.5 ha.

- 7.8 The area of unplanted ground would increase and, as a result, there would be a net loss of woodland area of 46.3 ha.
- 7.9 In order to comply with the Scottish Government's Control of Woodland Removal Policy, compensation planting would be required to mitigate for the loss of woodland area. The Applicant is committed to providing appropriate compensatory planting. The extent, location and composition of such planting to be agreed with SF, taking into account any revision to the felling and restocking plans prior to the commencement of construction.

Cultural Heritage Effects

- 7.10 The significance of impact on any of the Cultural Heritage Assets assessed as part of this Comparative EIAR remain as being at most, negligible impact (not significant).
- 7.11 The Proposed Development would not lead to any additional direct or indirect effects on any cultural heritage assets, whether designated or otherwise. The magnitude of effect predicted in relation to the indirect effects would remain unchanged.

Ecology Effects

- 7.12 An update to the Habitat Loss Calculations to account for the proposed layout changes identified minor increases in loss to three habitats that were identified within the Original EIAR. It is assessed that these impacts are considered to result in minor adverse effects that are not significant.
- 7.13 These effects remain unchanged with the changes to the infrastructure layout.

Overall

- 7.14 The potentially significant environmental effects associated with the Proposed Development have been considered. There are no additional effects arising compared with the Original EIAR and Consented Development. No other new potentially significant environmental effects arising from the Proposed Development are predicted which have not already been considered as part of the Original EIAR and Consented Development.