

Narachan Wind Farm

Planning Statement Addendum
October 2021



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1 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 This Planning Statement Addendum is prepared to accompany the revisions to the proposed development as described and assessed within the Further Environmental Information (FEI) dated September 2021, prepared on behalf of Energiekontor UK Ltd
- 1.2 Narachan Wind Farm (herein referred to as the 'proposed development') is a proposal for the construction of a wind farm and ancillary infrastructure east in Tayinloan in Argyll and Bute. The proposed development was submitted under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 in January 2020 and was assigned the case reference ECU00001884 by the Energy Consents Unit (ECU). The EIA Report which accompanied it was dated December 2019 and is hereafter referred to as 'the original 2019 EIA Report'.
- 1.3 As described within Chapter 4: Design Evolution of the FEI, the proposed development was amended from 17 turbines to 11 turbines following a consultation process with stakeholders. The intended tip height is retained at 180 to tip. The aviation lighting report contained within FEI Appendix 13.2 reduces the requirement for visible aviation lighting at hub height from all 17 turbines to nine.
- 1.4 A new Habitat Management Plan (HMP) area is proposed to compensate and enhance golden eagle and other raptor habitat. A new Peat Management Plan is outlined, new Peat Slide Risk Assessment provided, and baseline surveys have been provided for the option of using either northern or southern access route to the site, which will be determined post-consent. As per the FEI and original 2019 EIA Report, only one of these options will be selected.
- 1.5 The Development Plan applicable to the proposed development has not changed since the original 2019 EIA Report, and still comprises the adopted Local Development Plan 2015 and its associated Supplementary Guidance, including the LDP Supplementary Guidance adopted in 2016. The Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (LWECS) prepared by Carol Anderson Associates, was adopted in 2017 and forms a material consideration. No new planning policy has been formed to constitute part of the Development Plan since the original 2019 EIA Report, and the Planning Statement (January 2020) which accompanied it.
- 1.6 The Proposed Local Development Plan 2 was open for consultation between November 2019 and January 2020 and sought comment on the Council's future vision for the LDP.
- 1.7 The Council agreed an internal position on the comments received as part of this process in June 2021 which will form the basis of the response to Reporters during the Examination period of the LDP2. Following discussions with the Council it is not anticipated that the LDP2 will be adopted until Q4 2022 or Q1 2023. Therefore, the LDP2 has not yet been adopted in the intervening redesign period of the proposed development, although the Council's position via its Schedule 4 responses is a relevant material consideration to understand the potential direction of policy.

- 1.8 The key change in planning and policy terms between the submission of the original 2019 EIA Report and the 2021 FEI following redesign, is the introduction of majorly significant energy and climate change policy during and following the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.9 Given the original January 2020 Planning Statement concluded that the proposed development (at a larger footprint and experiencing greater effects) accorded with the Development Plan, this Planning Statement Addendum does not retest every single policy against the amended development.
- 1.10 Instead, mirroring the spirit of the FEI, this Planning Statement Addendum concentrates on the matters which have changed, or require clarity or focus. This includes the Proposed LDP2 consultation, the LWECS, and new climate and energy policy.

Structure of this Statement

- 1.11 This remainder of this Planning Statement Addendum is structured as follows:
- **Section 2 – The Development Plan and LWECS:** this provides an overview of the likely direction of the emerging LDP2 and sets out the assessment of the amended development against the LWECS;
 - **Section 3 – National Planning Policy, Renewable Energy and Climate Policy:** provides an update in reference to national planning policy developments, new energy and climate policy since January 2020; and
 - **Section 4 – Conclusions:** presents the overall summary and conclusions.

2 THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND LWECS

Introduction

- 2.1 As outlined in section 1, the Development Plan is fundamentally the same as when the January 2020 Planning Statement was written. The adopted Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan (2015) forms the basis upon which the Council is required to make its recommendation to the Energy Consents Unit in respect of this Section 36 application unless material considerations suggest otherwise.
- 2.2 This section discusses the consultation and Council responses to the Proposed LDP2. The LWECS is not to be updated as part of the LDP2 and remains extant. The proposed development as amended is also discussed in relation to the findings of LWECS.

Proposed LDP2 Policies and Schedule 4 responses

- 2.3 The Proposed LDP2 was published in November 2019 and sets out the view of the Council relating to its forthcoming view of how it wishes to set out spatial strategy and development management policy for the area.
- 2.4 It is expected to be adopted in Q4 2022 or Q1 2023, and therefore forms an important material consideration in the recommendation of the Council.
- 2.5 The proposed Spatial and Settlement Strategy contained within section 3.0 of the Proposed LDP2 illustrates that the proposed development is designated as 'Remote Countryside Area'. **Policy 02 – Outwith Settlement Areas** contains policy regarding which development types that are suitable within this area. Renewable energy related development is appropriate within this area, subject to demonstrating through an EIA that there will be no unacceptable adverse effects either individually or cumulatively.
- 2.6 The FEI submitted demonstrates via Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual that there are significant adverse effects upon some landscape and visual receptors. Within the planning balance however, and given the reduced scale of the amended development, it is considered that these effects can be accommodated.
- 2.7 **Policy 30: The Sustainable Growth of Renewables** within the LDP2 sets out that " *the Council will support renewable energy developments when these are consistent with the principles of sustainable development and it can be adequately demonstrated that there would be no unacceptable environmental effects, whether individual or cumulative, on local communities, natural and historic environments, landscape character and visual amenity, and proposals would be compatible with adjacent land uses*".
- 2.8 Policy 30 then gives a considerable list of technical and environmental criteria upon which applications for all wind turbine developments will be assessed, including the scale of contributions to renewable energy generation targets.

- 2.9 The Council via its Schedule 4 responses does not intend to change the wording of the final Policy 30 despite several representations highlighting concerns over the omission of the word 'significant' within "unacceptable environmental effects", with the rationale of allowing the Council to decide what is significant. Energiekontor did not submit a representation on this matter but would be inclined to agree that for wind farm developments, the test of whether an effect is significant or not is one that shall be clearly developed via the EIA methodology appropriate to that subject matter.
- 2.10 The proposed development is clearly compatible with adjacent land use, given the Remote Countryside Area is suitable for wind energy subject to the findings of the EIA. The FEI submission demonstrates that the development has been sited and designed sensitively, taking into account the views of consultees (Chapter 4: Design Evolution and the consultation table of each FEI Chapter). The known residual effects are not significant for any part of the EIA except the intrinsic landscape and visual effects associated with wind turbines.
- 2.11 The adopted Argyll and Bute LWECS (2017) is quoted as a footnote relating to Policy 30 of the proposed LDP2. It is not technically part of Policy 30. It is noted that within the Schedule 4 responses, many organisations noted that with the advent of higher tip heights being necessary to meet increased demand for renewable electricity in light of climate targets (discussed further in this Planning Statement Addendum), that the LWECS should not be part of emerging policy.
- 2.12 The Council's response to this confirms that the LWECS is not part of the LDP2 and confirm that the LDP2 does not require compliance with the LWECS, only that it is considered (as a material consideration) and explained how the proposed design takes account of this study.
- 2.13 The proposed development accords with the provisions of Policy 30 given there are no significant effects noted within the FEI with the exception of landscape and visual. In landscape terms there are a number of existing and consented wind farms within the Landscape Character Type (Plateau Moor and Forest – Argyll LCT (39)). Significant effects would extend locally within the LCT to a distance of approximately 3km.
- 2.14 It is assessed that no landscape and visual designations would be adversely impacted by the proposed development, including the North Arran Wild Land Area (WLA03).
- 2.15 A number of significant visual effects have been reduced following the reduction of the scheme. Improvements in the composition and visual/lateral spread have been made which are apparent from most viewpoints. Significant effects are noted from 12 of the 24 representative viewpoints, and sections of routes such as the A83, B842, or ferry routes.
- 2.16 Significant visual effects during night-time from aviation lighting are predicted to occur from within 3km of the turbines and at elevated points within Arran for approximately 4% of the year, owing to the methodology and rationale explained within FEI Appendix 6.4 and FEI Appendix 14.2.
- 2.17 The cumulative assessment has been updated since the previous assessment. Under scenario 1, which considers all operational, under construction and consented wind farm

developments, there would be significant landscape effects within the host LCT, along with at six of 24 representative viewpoints. Under scenario 2 which considers scenario 1 plus all schemes currently in planning, and the revised Clachaig Glen scheme, there would be significant effects for 3 of the 24 representative viewpoints.

- 2.18 Given the FEI reports significant effects on landscape and visual only, the proposed development must be considered in accordance with LDP2 Policy 30 in relation to all other elements of that policy, given the unlikely event of a non-significant effect being unacceptable to the Council (as highlighted within the responses to Policy 30 during its consultation).
- 2.19 Therefore, the policy test is whether or not the noted significant adverse effects from the proposed development as amended, equate to unacceptable ones. With the clear improvement in composition and lateral spread from east and west, the localised nature of landscape effects, the restricted nature of aviation lighting effects, and the localised effects on routes, as well as any Group 2 constraints being negated by the lack of significant effects on those qualities, then the Applicant would contend that the significant effects are acceptable. This is also pertinent in respect of the planning balance that should be given when considering some powerful recent material considerations as set out within section 3 of this Planning Statement Addendum.

Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study

- 2.20 The Argyll and Bute LWECS was adopted in 2017 and is used as a key material consideration in the determination of applications for wind energy in Argyll and Bute.
- 2.21 Its finding within the Executive Summary that '*there is no scope for turbines greater than 150m to be accommodated in Argyll and Bute*' has been challenged several times in the intervening 4 years since the LWECS was prepared. Turbines are becoming more powerful and generally higher, as a result of pressures on the price of electricity and the removal of subsidy, and the ability to generate more renewable energy to assist in the clear and urgent need to combat climate change (see section 3). As written, the LWECS would comprise a significant barrier to the requirement to deploy more renewable energy generation and reduce emissions, as is now required by UK law.
- 2.22 The LWECS uses height criteria to determine levels of capacity. 'Very Large' is categorised as over 130m with no upper limit. The minimum turbine height commercially available at the time of writing is 150m. Therefore, all wind farms will be assessed under the 'Very Large' typology.
- 2.23 The relevant LCT is LCT 6: Upland Forest Moor Mosaic. Several wind farms are currently consented and operational within this LCT. Paragraph 3.8.3 recognises this LCT as being more extensive and less settled. The sensitivity assessment undertaken from the LWECS, reports in paragraph 3.9 that those upland areas have some limited scope for additional commercial development, including LCT 6. This is re-iterated within Table 3 of the LWECS, on page 8, where it is stated that LCT 6 may be suitable for very large turbines >130m. It is noted that within this Table, there is no upper limit provided.

- 2.24 Paragraph 3.10.7 of the LWECS offers strategy to minimise cumulative landscape and visual effects, particularly focusing on simultaneous cumulative effects in views from Arran and Gigha. It states that "*remaining undeveloped space within the Upland Forest Moor Mosaic is increasingly constrained by its closer proximity to more sensitive settled coasts*", whilst locating any additional windfarm development should be set back from the coast, whilst limiting turbine heights.
- 2.25 The LWECS states in terms of a landscape strategy it is appropriate to maintain most of the Kintyre skyline as open, with windfarms occupying lower sections of the ridge thus minimising dominance. A landscape with wind farms is more preferable to a wind farm landscape given the key sensitivities of the coastal fringes, Gigha and Arran. The LWECS states that a "*continuous or near continuous band of wind farms seen on the Kintyre skyline from Arran and Gigha would be too unremitting and potentially overbearing*" and that "*clustered developments with clear and generous spaces between them would be a better approach*".
- 2.26 The LWECS states that the "*largely undeveloped hills centred on Beinn Bhreac*" provides relief from the northern and southern areas of wind farm within Kintyre, and no development should take place on or near these hills. However, it is noted that the operational Cour Wind Farm and consented High Constellation Wind Farm are in proximity to this area. The proposed development would therefore generally form a smaller grouping with these two developments.
- 2.27 The Narachan site has always been situated within the spine of the Peninsula, and the turbine development area is centred as such, to reduce impact upon coastal areas as far as possible when taking account of coastal sensitivity.
- 2.28 The developable area has been considerably shortened with the deletion of six turbines from the original 2019 EIA. As outlined within Chapter 4: Design Evolution and following consultation with the Council, this is primarily to reduce lateral spread and minimise Narachan's influence in continuing this spread. This is readily apparent via a comparison of coastal VPs such as VP9 Gigha Jetty or VP10 Pirnmill with the original 2019 EIA.
- 2.29 The view from VP9 and VP10 offer an example of the clustering and generous spacing mentioned within the LWECS. The impacts from Gigha and from Arran are neither overbearing or overwhelming, during daytime or night. FEI VP16: Skipness Castle offers an example of improving the density from another coastal view.
- 2.30 The proposed development clearly cannot be set back any further from the coast and whilst it has influence and is visible from the coastline, the amendments to the proposed development meet the aims of the LWECS in strategic terms with the exception being the tip height. Interpretation of the LVIA submitted with the FEI suggests that 180m to tip is not an unreasonable height to develop turbines in this location, given the level of effects, the movement of the industry since 2017, and the planning balance that should be afforded to them.
- 2.31 In terms of the capacity analysis provided within section 4.10 of the LWECS which deals with the Upland Forest Moor Mosaic LCT, sensitivity to further wind energy developments

over 80m to tip is described as 'medium-high'. This is notably not the highest level of sensitivity attributed within the LWECS. It is noted that no designations exist in this LCT.

- 2.32 Section 4.10.3 of the LWECS sets out key cumulative landscape and visual issues that could occur in relation to LCT 6. These are discussed below, along with an interpretation of where the proposed development, as amended, would be positioned in relation to this.

Table 2.1: Analysis of LCT 6 cumulative landscape and visual issues

LWECS LCT 6 cumulative issue	Analysis against the proposed development as amended
<p>Larger turbines and/or more extensive wind farm developments sited on the outer edges of the Kintyre uplands where they would be likely to significantly increase landscape and visual impacts on the settled coastal edge of Kintyre and on views from Arran and Gigha and would also further erode the established pattern of wind farm developments largely associated with the less sensitive core of these uplands</p>	<p>The proposed development is not situated at the outer edges of the Kintyre uplands; the site is within the spine and is almost equidistant to either coast.</p> <p>The ZTV provided within FEI Figure 6.2 demonstrates that the settled coast of Kintyre is rarely impacted. The proposed development is largely not visible from the A83 except for a stretch of around 300m between Gartnegenach and Clachan (represented by VP8) and a small area adjacent to West Loch Tarbert. The proposed development is visible from the eastern settled coastal edge via localised visibility to the north and west of Carradale and isolated stretches of the B842 between Grogport and Carradale (represented by VP2). The size of turbines at 180m to tip are generally above those tested within the LWECS however they would not significantly increase impacts on the settled coastal edge.</p> <p>Views from Arran and Gigha have been carefully considered as per Chapter 4: Design Evolution, with lateral spread reducing significantly. VPs 9, 11 and 21 are situated on Gigha. From VP9, the top of tips are visible however other wind farms to the south would be considerably more visible, and the resultant effect would be neither significant nor unacceptable. VP11 from East Tarbert Bay on Gigha are considered significant in EIA terms, however it is only the cluster of other cumulative sites to the north that would be particularly prominent from this view, as all others including the proposed development either use topographical screening or are only partially visible. Views from Creag Bhan (VP21) would demonstrate the proposed development as part of a small cluster with High Constellation, and visually distinctly separate from the large clusters to the south and north.</p>

LWECS LCT 6 cumulative issue	Analysis against the proposed development as amended
	<p>The proposed development is theoretically visible from north and west Arran, and limited parts of its interior. VPs 10, 13, 14, 15, 17 and 22 are most relevant. From VP10 at Pirnmill, effects are found as significant however the development ties into Cour and High Constellation as a consented/operational cluster and maintains the approximate height line of Cour Wind Farm. From VP15 at Lochranza, the proposed development comprises a well designed and coherent layout. From higher ground, the difference in scale between the proposed development and Cour is apparent, however the integrity of neither North Arran WLA or NSA is impacted, as concluded within Chapter 6 of the FEI.</p>
<p>Potential effects on views from the A83 Tourist Route where any new wind farm development located in this character type could increase sequential cumulative effects with the developments of Allt Dearg, Srondoire, Freasdail, Auchadaduie, Blary Hill and Tangy</p>	<p>The A83 is a heavily tree lined route which opens out in stretches, which is a nuance that ZTVs cannot distinguish. In terms of sequential cumulative effects the assessment of routes within Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual, assesses the A83 as experiencing minor and not significant effects in sequential cumulative terms for these stretches, and not significant as a whole. In individual sections, moderate significant effects may be experienced, however these are generally at speed and for a limited time.</p>
<p>Potential effects on views from the B842 on the east coast of Kintyre where any additional development could be seen sequentially with the Cour and Beinn an Tuirc I, II and III wind farms</p>	<p>Effects from the B842 are deemed to be locally significant in places, primarily around the Carradale area where visibility is apparent. Cumulative and sequential effects are adjudged not to be significant and for the route as a whole, the effect is not significant.</p>
<p>Additional wind farms and extension/repowering of operational wind farms which may comprise much larger turbines and could increase intervisibility and overlap between developments seen from Gigha and Arran and from the A83 and B842</p>	<p>See first entry.</p>
<p>Extensions or repowering proposals (involving significantly larger turbines) to operational and consented wind farms which could increase the extent of development seen on sensitive skylines above LCT 3 Hidden Glens or within the narrow, settled Barr Glen and Glen Lussa within this character type</p>	<p>The proposed development is predicted to have a significant effect at distances of up to 3km from the proposed development, therefore occupying a small part of the LCT. Cumulative effects are adjudged to be not significant upon LCT 3. There would be</p>

LWECS LCT 6 cumulative issue	Analysis against the proposed development as amended
	negligible or no effect on the Barr Glen or Glen Lussa.
Cumulative effects associated with any additional wind farm development located in this character type and in the nearby Mull of Kintyre Upland Forest Moor Mosaic LCT (6c) in terms of views from the west coast of Arran which take in the full length of the peninsula	Views from west Arran that take in a large panorama of the Kintyre coast include VP22 from Imachar Point. From here, the southern group of turbines, including Beinn an Tuirc is visible. The proposed development is spaced well and can be read with the Cour and High Constellation grouping, presenting as coherent and with similar heights against the horizon. Others wind farms to the north are not visible.
A potential corridor of large wind farm development seen either side of the B8001 which could significantly detract from views to Arran and Jura and effect the experience of travellers using this road and the Lochranza – Claonaig ferry route	There would be distant views from around 3km of this route, west of Skipness, when looking south-west. This would be at approximately 10-15km distance. Intermittant visibility of part of the wind farm (6-9 turbines) may also be apparent in small sections of the B8001 from Kennacraig to Claonaig, however actual visibility will be limited by vegetation. Effects are considered within the EIA as not significant, either individually or cumulatively.
Significant increases in the extent of wind farm development (as gaps between present clusters of turbines are potentially filled) seen in views from Arran and Gigha which could present a dominant, continuous and dense band of turbines seen on the skyline – this could include a coalescing effect experienced when looking south down the Kilbrannan Sound from north Arran and from the Lochranza – Claonaig ferry.	Views from Arran and Gigha are covered above, and comprehensively within the Landscape and Visual chapter. The ferry route is covered within VP7 where a wireline demonstrates views. The proposed development would overlap Cour, forming a cluster with Cour and High Constellation, with gaps at either side to other development.
Cumulative effects on the setting of the North Arran National Scenic Area and Wild Land Area related to the above scenario.	As per the assessment within the FEI, the impacts on the North Arran NSA are deemed to be minor in nature, and not significant under both individual and cumulative scenarios.

2.33 It can be summarised in respect of the LWECS therefore:

- The proposed development has undergone redesign to reduce lateral spread from Gigha and Arran, in line with the recommendations of the LWECS;
- From many views, the proposed development reads as a comparatively small cluster of wind energy developments alongside Cour and High Constellation, which would be separate from clusters to the north and south;

- Whilst there are intrinsic significant effects, the route assessment within the FEI does not assess significant effects on any of the routes mentioned under LCT 6; i.e. the A83, B842 or B8001. There are some sporadic areas where the proposed development is theoretically visible at speed, with considerable vegetation;
- The ZTVs shown within Figure 6.10 to Figure 6.18 show the proposed development in combined cumulative ZTVs. It is apparent that the proposed development does not introduce much visibility on its own, therefore is unlikely to tip any balance of coalescence or dominance;
- It is assessed that the North Arran Wild Land Area and National Scenic Area would not be significantly affected to the detriment of their designation;
- It is recognised that some capacity within LCT 6 exists for further wind energy, however the LWECS caps this between 130 and 150m. At the time of writing, 150m turbines are the smallest available for commercial wind farms, and the Applicant expects this to change by the time the proposed development potentially is built.
- Most crucially, the Applicant has listened to feedback from the Council's Landscape Officer and NatureScot, and tried to prepare a design that will meet the tests of LWECS (with the exception of likely tip height, for the reasons stated).

2.34 The proposed development has taken the design guidance advice and significantly improved lateral spread and landscape fit particularly from Gigha, Arran and coastal Kintyre. Despite some intrinsic significant effects, the proposed development largely meets the requirements of LWECS and it is respectfully maintained that LWECS is a material consideration in the determination of this application, and one that the proposed development as redesigned largely complies with.

3 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY, RENEWABLE

ENERGY AND CLIMATE POLICY

Introduction

- 3.1 This section of the Planning Statement Addendum covers those important material considerations which have changed since the previous January 2020 Planning Statement.
- 3.2 These include the groundwork for the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), as well as several important pieces of policy or legislation relating to climate change and renewable energy. This section should be read in conjunction with Chapter 5: Planning Policy of the FEI.

National Planning Framework 4

- 3.3 At a national level, the Scottish Government published Scotland's Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) Position Statement in November 2020 and this is summarised in the relevant section below, including the contributions of Argyll and Bute Council towards it.
- 3.4 The NPF4 Position Statement sets out the Scottish Government's priorities for NPF4 ahead of its preparation, finalisation, and likely eventual adoption in 2021. It is focused on addressing climate change with the key long-term strategy to 2050 driven by the overarching goal of addressing climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in line with legal targets.
- 3.5 The Position Statement demands a fresh approach to national spatial planning whilst calling for significant investment in infrastructure which may facilitate the longstanding move to a lower and eventually zero-carbon future. The Position Statement sets out a goal that the planning system must support economic recovery and enable strategic investment in the long term.
- 3.6 The Position Statement specifies that compromises cannot be met on climate change and that the planning system must be rebalanced so that climate change is a guiding principle for all plans and decisions, whilst actively encouraging all developments that help to reduce emissions.
- 3.7 The Scottish Government set out that they will prioritise the types and locations of development that will help meet emission reductions targets, whilst actively facilitating decarbonised electricity generation and distribution. The NPF4 will take forward proposals and policies to support Scotland's forthcoming update to the Climate Change Plan.
- 3.8 The Position Statement sets out some key opportunities to realise this. Amongst them, relevant to the amended development is an opportunity to set out further support for renewable energy developments, including the re-powering and extension of existing wind farms, and supporting new and replacement grid infrastructure.

- 3.9 The Scottish Government set out that they expect that the Global Climate Emergency should be a material consideration in respect of considering applications for appropriately located renewable energy developments, with further significant investment required to support new technologies.
- 3.10 In respect of spatial planning for onshore wind development, the Scottish Government set out an intention to update the current spatial framework for onshore wind to continue to protect National parks and National Scenic Areas whilst allowing developments out with these areas where they are demonstrated to be acceptable in the basis of site-specific assessments.
- 3.11 Notably, the Position Statement considers whether policies on wild land should be changed in light of realising rural growth and population stability amongst other considerations.
- 3.12 In terms of the Council's response to the Position Statement, Argyll and Bute Council responded to the Scottish Government's call for ideas to the emerging NPF4 process via a paper discussed at its Planning, Protective Services and Licensing Committee on 17th February 2021.
- 3.13 The Council agree with the continued support for renewable energy projects, whilst recognising the impacts upon local communities and the landscape. The Council expressed that any consideration of the global climate emergency as a material consideration should be very carefully worded so that it can fit with local concerns or issues.
- 3.14 The Council, in line with other Local Authorities in Scotland, provided an Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (IRSS) to feed into the NPF 4 process. It identifies three strategic areas designated as 'Growth Corridors' to focus strategic intervention. Argyll and Bute's Western Seaboard is considered one of these areas, with its closest point to the site being the west coast of the Kintyre Peninsula at Tayinloan.
- 3.15 The IRSS highlights renewable energy as a priority for the delivery of strategic development. Within this, connectivity improvements are identified as important to support the growth of the renewable energy industry. Grid constraints are recognised as an issue, towards which the Inveraray to Crossaig overhead line is seen as an important step in addressing.
- 3.16 The Consultation Draft of the NPF4 is expected in the coming months and the Applicant may prepare a further Addendum to cover its contents.
- 3.17 It is absolutely clear from the above that the policy direction highlighted within the NPF4 Position Statement is one where renewable energy in all its forms should be supported in respect of an increased need for (clean) electricity, and quickly. The Scottish Government is also clear that the planning system requires to keep up with the pace of change to facilitate this.
- 3.18 The Council also make it clear that they agree with continued support for renewable energy, subject to a detailed assessment of the effects. The Council express concerns over the wording of the concept of a global climate emergency as a material consideration, but do not oppose it.

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)

- 3.19 A successful legal challenge was made to the wording of SPP which was changed in December 2020. The Court of Session granted a degree of reduction based upon the amendments to the treatment of a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' within Paragraphs 28 to 33. The 2014 version of SPP is now therefore in force.
- 3.20 As a consequence of reverting back to SPP 2014 the proposed development benefits from the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within Paragraph 27.
- 3.21 Paragraph 33 also applies in regard to the balance that should be afforded. It states *"where relevant policies in a development plan are out of date...then the presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development will be a significant material consideration"*.
- 3.22 The paragraph goes on to state that *"decision makers should take into account any adverse impacts which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the wider policies in this SPP. The same principle should be applied where a Development Plan is more than five years old" (underlining added).*
- 3.23 The reversion to SPP 2014 firstly reintroduces the presumption in favour of sustainable development but applies more weight in the case of the proposed development given the adopted Development Plan is now more than five years old (2015).
- 3.24 In this respect therefore, the decision makers must assess whether any adverse impacts associated with the proposed development that perhaps were not accounted for in policy terms in 2014/2015 (i.e. tip heights and associated landscape and visual impact) , significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of habitat enhancement and renewable energy generation in the context of Net Zero.

Compliance with UK Energy Policy

- 3.25 Pertinent UK-wide documents which have been released since the original 2019 EIA Report include:
- The CCC Annual Report to UK Parliament (June 2020);
 - National Audit Office report 'Achieving Net Zero' (December 2020);
 - The UK's Sixth Carbon Budget (December 2020); and
 - The UK Energy White Paper (December 2020).
- 3.26 These are summarised in turn below.
- 3.27 The CCC published a landmark report entitled 'Net Zero – UK's Contribution to Stopping Global Warming in May 2019. The foreword sets out that "the CCC has reviewed the latest scientific evidence on climate change, including last year's IPCC special report on global warming of 1.50C and considered the appropriate role of the UK in the global challenge to limit future temperature increases". It adds, "Net Zero is a more fundamental aim than previous targets. By reducing emissions produced in the UK to zero, we *also end our contribution to rising global temperatures*".

- 3.28 The report makes recommendations for the UK economy including a new tougher emissions target of net zero green gases by 2050, therefore ending the UK's contribution to global warming within 30 years. This replaces the previous target of an 80% reduction by 2050 from a 1990 baseline and accords with the obligations under the Paris Agreement.
- 3.29 The report makes clear that at a UK level "current policy is insufficient for even the existing targets".
- 3.30 In June 2019 the Prime Minister Theresa May brought forward legislation to turn Net Zero into law, and the UK became the first major economy in the world to pass legislation to end its global warming contribution by 2050. The target is now legally binding via the provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019.
- 3.31 The CCC Annual Report to Parliament (2020) offered an update on the progress towards Net Zero following adoption of the Net Zero Target.
- 3.32 The report states that in terms of building a resilient post-Covid economy, "*success requires that net zero emissions and improved climate resilience are integral*", whilst investments towards achieving net zero will "*help create jobs and stimulate economic recovery, whilst changing the course of UK emissions and improving our resilience to climate change*".
- 3.33 The National Audit Office offered an update report 'Achieving Net Zero' in December 2020 regarding progress on achieving Net Zero following the change to legislation in June 2019.
- 3.34 Key points from the report include that reducing emissions to achieve net zero will require wide ranging changes to the UK economy including further investment in renewable energy, changes "*unprecedented in their overall scale*".
- 3.35 Page 22 of the report sets out that a national fourfold increase in renewable energy capacity is needed.
- 3.36 The CCC set out the Sixth UK-wide carbon budget in December 2020 with recommendations from 2033 to 2037. This sets out the path the UK must follow to achieve Net Zero by 2050.
- 3.37 A key point includes the CCC's clear statement that new demand for electricity will mean that demand will rise 50% by 2035 and perhaps doubling or trebling by 2050.
- 3.38 The UK Energy White Paper in December 2020 set out a major shift in UK policy and highlights the importance of renewable forms of electricity. Page 38 states that a key objective is to "*accelerate the deployment of clean electricity generation through the 2020s*".
- 3.39 It is clear that the UK Government supports a rapid increase in deployment and capacity of renewable energy technology, however the Scottish Government provide further detail as discussed below.

Compliance with Scottish Energy Policy

- 3.40 There have been a number of new policy documents and important material considerations to consider in respect of climate and energy policy since the submission of the original 2019 EIA Report. New Scottish documents are listed below;
- The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) advice to the Scottish Government on recovery from the Covid-19 crisis (May 2020);
 - The recommendations from the Scottish Government's Advisory Group on Economic Recovery (June 2020);
 - The Report from the Climate Emergency Response Group (CERG) 'Eight Policy Packages for Scotland's Green Recovery' (July 2020);
 - The Update to the Climate Change Plan (December 2020);
 - The Scottish Energy Strategy Position Statement (March 2021);
 - Scottish Government's 'Bute House Agreement' (August 2021); and
 - Scottish Government Programme for Government 2021 – 2022.
- 3.41 These are explained briefly below.
- 3.42 The CCC advice to the Scottish Government in May 2020 came after the Scottish Government approached the CCC requesting advice on a green recovery for Scotland in light of the Covid 19 pandemic. Within its response, the CCC sets out that *"reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change should be integral to any recovery package"*. The CCC also note that many of the large infrastructure programmes are *"critical to preparing for climate change and achieving net zero emissions"*. Reference is specifically made to onshore wind as part of the large infrastructure required, and the CCC add that *"acceleration of these projects should take priority"*.
- 3.43 This advice to the Scottish Government is clear and unequivocal about the speed at which infrastructure must be put in place to transition to a net zero economy. It is assumed that this advice will shape the forthcoming NPF4 and subsequent policy.
- 3.44 The Scottish Government's Advisory Group on Economic Recovery was formed to provide input to Government on Scotland's economic recovery post-Covid 19. The report provided to the Government in June 2020 recognises that there is a need to *"grasp the tremendous opportunities for a green recovery which such a transition offers"*, and that *the net zero imperative presents "an increased and urgent challenge for existing policy, planning and licencing frameworks to identify and consent suitable projects with a sufficient level of impact in the light of the climate emergency"*.
- 3.45 Shortly following the Economic Advisory Group's Report, the Report of the Climate Emergency Response Group (CERG) to the Scottish Government was published in July 2020, titled 'Eight Packages for Scotland's Green Recovery'.
- 3.46 The CERG Report states that it *"encourages the Scottish Government to embrace these policy packages as key components of its economic recovery plan for a fairer and greener Scotland"*, and that these should be reflected in key policy milestones. It states that green recovery must be investment led, and the Scottish Government must create

"an attractive policy environment for investors, resulting in a stronger business case for a climate neutral economy". The Report concludes with the view that "Scotland's response to Covid-19 is a massive opportunity to catapult and prioritise a just transition to a net carbon economy".

- 3.47 In December 2020, the Scottish Government published an update to the Climate Change Plan, covering the period 2018 to 2032, and responding to the new requirement in Scotland to meet net zero by 2045. Page 9 in particular sets out the strategic goal of achieving *"decarbonisation across the whole energy system, including electricity, transport, industry and buildings"* and *"integrating climate change action into all of the decisions we make across Government"*.
- 3.48 The Update sets out the intention to prepare an Energy Strategy in 2021 and an updated Electricity Generation Policy Statement by 2022. Page 19 refers to a 2032 'pathway' whereby decisions take account of benefits across all energy sectors as well as economic and social benefits they create across Scotland. By 2032 it is intended that we will generate at least the equivalent of 50% of our energy from renewable sources. It is stated on page 18, importantly, that *"there will be a substantial increase in renewable generation, particularly through new offshore and onshore wind capacity"*.
- 3.49 The planning and consenting systems are recognised (p78) as remaining a *"critical enabler of rapid renewables deployment in Scotland"*. A key point is that the Climate Change Plan Update expects that renewable energy generation is expected to increase substantially between now and 2032 with an expectation of the development of between 11 and 16GW of new capacity (underlining added), to meet a rapidly increasing electricity demand.
- 3.50 The Scottish Energy Strategy Position Statement (March 2021) reinforces the consistent theme of the Scottish Government's support for a green, fair and resilient economy. Onshore renewables is addressed within section 8 of the Statement where it is reported that *"the continued growth of Scotland's renewable energy industry is fundamental to enable us to achieve our ambition of creating sustainable jobs as we transition to net zero"*. It adds that the Scottish Government *"is committed to supporting the increase of onshore wind in the right places to help meet the target of net zero"*.
- 3.51 On 20th August 2021 the SNP-led Scottish Government and the Scottish Green Party signed the Bute House Agreement which represents a formal co-operation agreement for the next five years of Government. Page 12 of this agreement the Government set out that *"the climate emergency means we need to use the limited powers we have to accelerate the decarbonisation of our energy system...our plans will see a significant increase in electricity demand for heating and transport. To accommodate this, we will support the continued and accelerated deployment of renewable energy"*.
- 3.52 In order to achieve this, subject to consultation the Government and Green Party state they aim to deliver *"an additional (underline added) 8 to 12 GW of installed onshore wind by 2030, supported by changes to the planning system needed to permit the growth of this essential zero carbon sector"*.

- 3.53 At present, Scotland has approximately 8.5GW of installed onshore wind capacity. The Bute House Agreement signals a minimum of doubling onshore capacity within the next 9 years.
- 3.54 The Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2021-2022 followed the Bute House Agreement is titled "A Fairer, Greener Scotland" and sets the tone for the goal of becoming a 'Net Zero Nation' and paves the way towards a future 'Just Transition Plan'. It is the intention of the Government that all applications over 50MW have 'National Development' status which if adopted would give further importance and status to Section 36 applications. The Programme again re-iterates the importance of securing a further 8 to 12 GW of onshore wind capacity by 2030.
- 3.55 The above policy developments since the provision of the original Planning Statement provide highly significant and important material considerations in favour of the proposed development.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 This Planning Statement Addendum provides an update on planning and other material considerations since the original 2019 EIA was submitted alongside its accompanying Planning Statement.
- 4.2 The revision to the proposed development as set out within the FEI has not been retested against the Development Plan, given our conclusion was that the development accorded with the Development Plan then, and its smaller footprint improves environmental effects and represents a coherent and balanced scheme.
- 4.3 This Addendum concentrates on this elements which were not assessed within the original Planning Statement, namely the emerging LDP2, and a significant number of policy changes which are very important material considerations. It also set out an assessment against the LWECS to allow the Council and other interested parties to understand the rationale behind the scheme amendments through the considerations and concerns of the LWECS.
- 4.4 The Planning Statement Addendum concludes strongly in favour of the proposed development for the following reasons:
- The FEI reports only significant residual landscape and visual effects, which are mostly localised. The agreed aviation lighting scheme and new methodology provides evidence to suggest that aviation lighting will not be as severe as originally reported;
 - There are no predicted significant effects on any designated site;
 - The proposed development offers robust Habitat Management which would be detailed via condition;
 - The proposed development accords with the considerations of the LWECS and every effort has been made to accommodate its findings, with the necessary exception of turbine height in order to provide sufficient wind yield and for commercial reasons. The proposed development significantly reduces impacts from Gigha and Arran from its previous iteration, as well as coastal Kintyre, and respects the ever-evolving cumulative situation on the Peninsula;
 - Given the adopted LDP is more than 5 years old, the reversion to the 2014 SPP places a 'tilted balance' on the decision makers to justify why effects are unacceptable to the extent that they outweigh the presumption in favour of sustainable development;
 - Climate and energy policy is overwhelmingly in favour of moving towards Net Zero, and indeed is now Scottish and UK law. The Scottish Government are clear and unequivocal that the planning and consenting systems must play their part in ensuring the rapid deployment of new onshore wind, including a minimum of doubling onshore capacity within the next 9 years.
- 4.5 The proposed development has been carefully redesigned and represents the optimum solution for the site, accords with adopted and emerging Council policy, and draws extremely strong support from national policy. As such, the Applicant respectfully concludes that this proposed development should be consented via the Electricity Act

1989 following a verdict of no objection from Argyll and Bute Council and other statutory consultees.