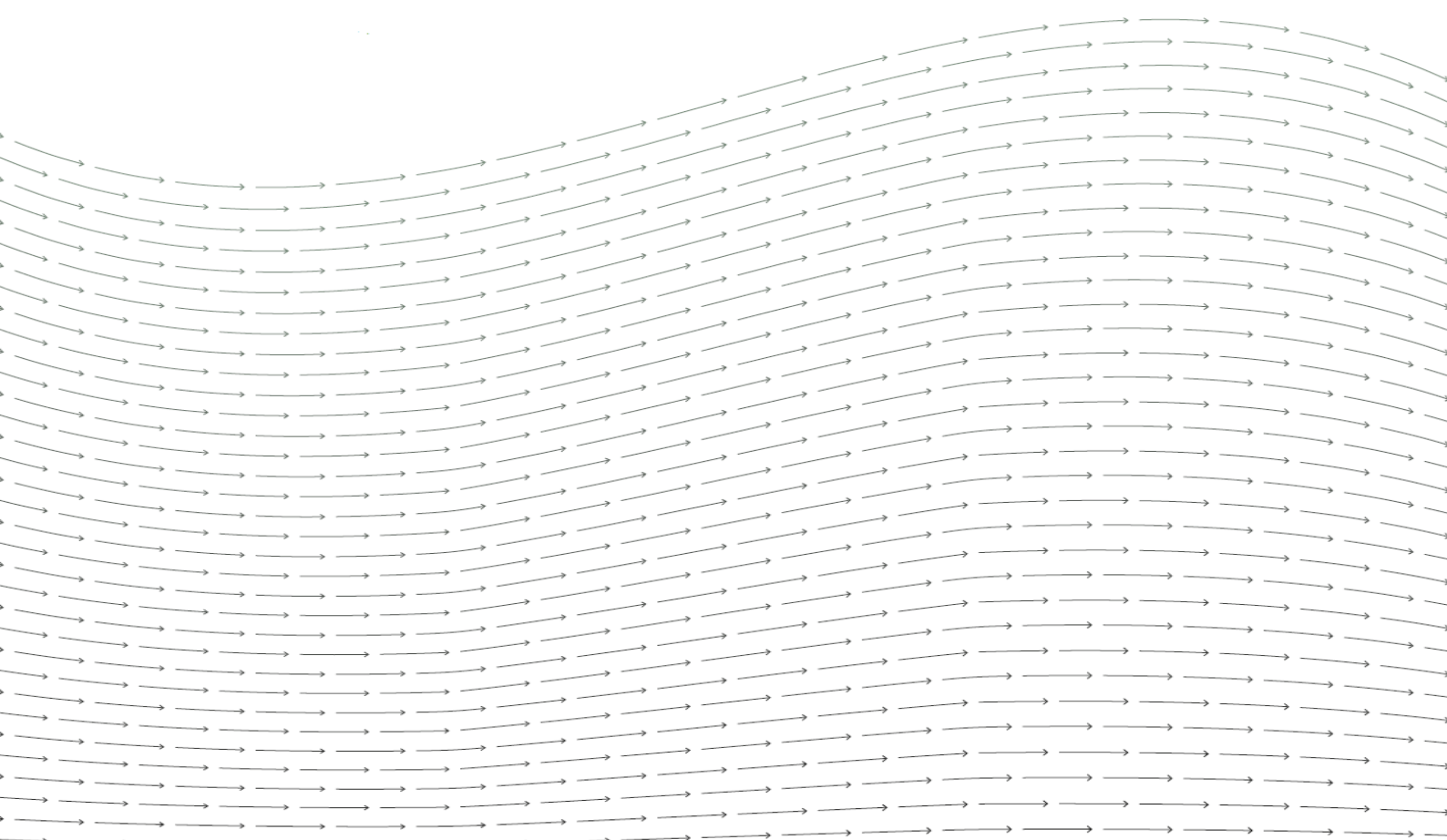


Ballach Wind Farm

Planning Statement

July 2025



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1 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared to accompany the submission of an application for consent under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 by Energiekontor UK Ltd ('the Applicant') to the Scottish Ministers for a proposed renewable energy development known as Ballach Wind Farm, comprising 20 wind turbines, an energy storage facility and associated infrastructure for a period of 35 years ('the proposed development') on land located approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack.¹, on the Farley and Erchless Estates ('the Site')
- 1.2 This Planning Statement outlines the key characteristics, details of the proposed development, and summarises the relevant planning policy context, before providing an appraisal of the proposed development against the Development Plan and other relevant material considerations. In doing so, this Planning Statement demonstrates the need for the proposed development and provides justification for the granting of consent.
- 1.3 An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken for the proposed development and an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) has been submitted as part of this application. This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the EIAR submitted and draws evidence from it to demonstrate compliance where applicable.

The Applicant

- 1.4 Energiekontor UK Ltd is a wind energy development company with offices in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Leeds. The company was formed in 1999 and develops onshore wind farms throughout the United Kingdom. The company has built eight wind farms in the UK with many more currently in the development process.
- 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, Portugal, the USA and the UK. The company has obtained consent and built over 170 onshore wind and solar farms in Europe, with a total nominal power of more than 1.5 gigawatts. The company constructed the first 'no-subsidy' wind farm in the UK, Withernwick II in East Riding, Yorkshire.

Purpose of this Planning Statement

- 1.6 Along with Section 36 consent, deemed planning consent is also sought under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) (the TCPA).

¹ When measured from the centre point of the Site

- 1.7 The purpose of this Planning Statement is therefore to set out the context and rationale for the proposed development and to demonstrate how it accords with the applicable planning policy framework against which the planning application must be assessed. In doing so, the objective of this Planning Statement is to provide clear and robust justification for the granting of consent for the proposed development.

EIA Screening and Scoping

- 1.8 Generally, a proposal is screened against the EIA Regulations to ascertain whether a development would constitute EIA development. The Proposed Development is of a type described within Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations as an installation for the harnessing of wind power for energy productions. It is not located within a 'sensitive area' as defined by the EIA Regulations; however, the project would exceed both of the applicable thresholds as it involves more than two wind turbines with hub heights of more than 15 metres ('m'). The requirement for an EIA was therefore determined based on whether the project would be likely to give rise to significant effects on the environment by virtue of its size, nature, or location. The scale, nature and location of the Proposed Development were considered such that, in order to allow the environmental impacts of the project to be appropriately considered throughout the application process, an EIA Report would be required.
- 1.9 Pursuant to the provisions of Regulation 17 of the Electricity Act (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017, in August 2024 the Applicant submitted an EIA Scoping Report to accompany a request for an EIA Scoping Opinion from the Scottish Ministers. This Scoping Report is included within the EIAR as Technical Appendix 1.1.
- 1.10 The Scottish Ministers issued their Scoping Opinion in November 2024 which set out the topics to be addressed in the EIA. This Scoping Opinion is included within the EIAR as Technical Appendix 1.2. Scoping is a voluntary process, and the responses received as part of this process are advice associated with the methodologies put forward by the Applicant for the determination and potential for likely significant environmental effects.
- 1.11 The EIA Scoping process therefore provides an accompanying background to the planning context for the policy analysis associated with the proposed development.

Structure of this Statement

- 1.12 This remainder of this Planning Statement is structured as follows:
- **Section 2 – The Proposed Development:** provides a summary of the main components associated with the Proposed Development, an overview of the Site and its surroundings, as well as a summary of the design evolution;
 - **Section 3 – Renewable Energy Policy Framework:** provides a summary of the wider renewable energy policy context relevant to the Proposed Development;
 - **Section 4 – Legislative & Planning Policy Framework:** outlines and surmises the relevant statutory Development Plan and other material considerations relevant to the Proposed Development
 - **Section 5 – Planning Assessment:** provides a planning appraisal of the Proposed Development against the relevant provisions of the Development Plan and other

material considerations including principle and acceptability of the proposed development;

- **Section 6 – Conclusions:** presents the overall summary and conclusions.

2 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

- 2.1 This section describes the various elements associated with the Site and the proposed development, whilst providing details of what processes will take place at the various stages of the project's lifecycle (construction, operation, and decommissioning).

The Site

- 2.2 The Site is located approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack within the Erchless and Farley estates and lies entirely within the administrative boundary of the Highland Council. The present land use is open moorland with limited forestry found within the Site boundary.
- 2.3 The topography of the Site reaches a high point of 490m AOD at Beinn name Fitheach in the west.. Access to the site is taken utilising the estate track to the south which runs from the A831 at Erchless Castle.
- 2.4 Several watercourses and surface water features are located within the development site. The largest of these is Gleann Giobhre, which runs along the northern site boundary, draining to the east. Allt Chogach, Allt Beinn Name Fitheach, Allt an Torra Dhuinn, Allt a' Chrochadair and Allt Dearg all spring within the northern part of the study area and flow towards the Gleann Giobhre, along with nine unnamed tributaries.
- 2.5 Loch Ballach is located in the central part of the study area, and is connected to Allt an Locha Bhallaich, which flows towards the Breakachy Burn immediately to the southeast of the study area. Allt Liach flows along the southern extent of the study area towards the Breakachy Burn.
- 2.6 There are no environmental designations within the site boundary. In terms of other environmental designations within 10km of the site, these include:
- Glen Strathfarrar NSA;
 - Strathpeffer WPA and
 - Wild Land Area 24: Central Highlands
- 2.7 Approximately 3km northwest of the site, sits the operational Fairburn Wind Farm (20 turbines, 100m to tip). 5km to the northwest of the site the proposed Fairburn Wind Farm Extension (14 turbines, 200m to tip) which is currently in the scoping stage.

Description of the Proposed Development

- 2.8 The proposed development is illustrated on Figure 3.1 within Volume 2 of the EIAR and would consist of the following principal components:
- 20 turbines;

- Associated turbine compound areas including foundations and hardstanding areas for erecting cranes at each turbine location;
 - On-site tracks connecting each turbine;
 - Upgrade to existing bellmouth junction from the A831 (set out in Figure 12.5)
 - Upgrade of existing estate track;
 - Twelve new watercourse crossings and eight upgraded watercourse crossings , as set out in EIA Report Volume 4, Technical Appendix 10.1;
 - An energy storage compound to store batteries with a 5MW capacity which would be within the construction compound footprint;
 - Underground cables linking the turbines to the substation;
 - Up to three borrow pit search areas for the extraction of stone on-site (indicated on Figure 3.1 as borrow pit search areas);
 - A temporary construction compound including provision for onsite concrete batching; and
 - An on-site substation to provide a grid connection;
 - Outline Habitat Management provisions as proposed within EIA Report Volume 4, Technical Appendix 8.4.
- 2.9 The proposed development would be time-limited to 35 years from the first date of commercial operation. The construction phase would last approximately eighteen months, and decommissioning would last approximately six months.
- 2.10 Deemed planning permission is sought to permit a period of ten years between the date of the Decision Notice and expiry of consent (should works not be commenced) rather than the usual three years.
- 2.11 The proposed development would provide approximately 134MW of installed capacity (depending on the turbine model chosen) in addition to 5MW of battery storage capacity. It is estimated by the Applicant that this installed capacity could generate approximately 557,344MWh of renewable electricity each year which would be expected to power the equivalent of approximately 160,989 homes on average each year², or provide 3.1 million full battery charges for electric vehicles per year.³
- 2.12 The planning application includes an allowance for micrositing of the wind farm infrastructure. If planning permission is granted, the Applicant will commission detailed ground investigations and geotechnical surveys to determine the ground conditions. A 100m micrositing allowance is sought for the wind turbines (with restrictions in place to safeguard constraint buffers as applicable), and all other new elements of the Proposed Development.
- 2.13 Turbines would be of tubular steel construction, finished in a typical off-white matt colour and comprise three blades. The final turbine choice would be made post-consent during

² Based on an average annual UK domestic electricity consumption figure of 3,462KWh as set out in the BEIS publication "Energy Consumption in the UK" July 2023

³ Based on a large electric vehicle requiring 180kWh for a full charge.

the procurement phase, but for the purposes of this EIA Report, representative candidate turbines of 230m to tip with 163m rotor diameter and hub heights of 148m.

- 2.14 Turbine co-ordinates, subject to a maximum of 100m micro-siting dependent upon localised constraints, are as follows within Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Proposed Wind Turbine Coordinates (subject to a 100m micro-siting allowance)

Turbine	Easting	Northing	Tip Height (m)	Hub Height (m)
1	244863	847520	200	118.5
2	245014	846919	200	118.5
3	244392	847847	230	148.5
4	244442	846961	200	118.5
5	243983	847192	200	118.5
6	244320	846348	200	118.5
7	243735	845779	230	148.5
8	243703	846349	200	118.5
9	243700	847738	230	148.5
10	242959	847265	230	148.5
11	243181	846851	200	118.5
12	243091	845800	230	148.5
13	242801	846189	200	118.5
14	242310	846787	200	118.5
15	243056	847914	230	148.5
16	242375	847396	230	148.5
17	242295	847834	230	148.5
18	241638	847776	230	148.5
19	240986	847643	230	148.5
20	240370	847601	230	148.5

3 RENEWABLE ENERGY POLICY FRAMEWORK

Introduction

- 3.1 This section of the Planning Statement provides an overview of the renewable energy legislative and policy framework relevant to the proposed development. It covers International, European, UK and Scottish energy policy and legislation. It provides an overview of the relevant international agreements and targets which set the policy criteria for national energy policy and guidance.
- 3.2 The framework outlined under the respective subheadings below demonstrate clear and consistent policy support for renewable energy, as well as the need for further transition to low carbon electricity generation. There is firm support for onshore wind developments as part of a diverse energy strategy, with an overarching intention that renewable energy developments will make significant a contribution to achieving the legally binding renewable energy targets established by the renewable energy policy framework.
- 3.3 An emphasis on Net Zero and Climate Emergency at UK, Scottish and The Highland Council (THC) level places significant weight on the overarching policy and legislative framework as a material consideration.

International and European Context

International Agreements and Obligations – The COP21 Paris Agreement

- 3.4 The Paris Agreement was adopted on 12th December 2015 by 196 parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, creating a legally-binding, international agreement towards tackling climate change. The UK is one of the signatories and is legally bound to the Paris Agreement.
- 3.5 The Paris Agreement came into force on November 4th, 2016, having been ratified by at least 55% (the point which triggers ratification) of the 196 countries. The meeting in Paris was considered a make-or-break opportunity to secure an international agreement on the approach to tackling climate change, commitment to a longer-term goal or near zero emissions in the second half of the century and supporting the transition to a clean economy and low carbon security.
- 3.6 The respective Governments involved agreed:
- A long-term goal of keeping the increase in global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels;
 - To aim to limit the increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius since this would significantly reduce risks and the impacts of climate change;
 - On the need for global emissions to peak as soon as possible, recognising that this will take longer for developing countries;

- To undertake rapid reductions thereafter in accordance with the best scientific guidance available.

3.7 Countries are legally obliged to make new post-2030 commitments to reduce emissions every five years.

UK Energy Policy

3.8 The UK Government is legally committed to the delivery of a reduction in emissions to 'net zero' by 2050 (with the Scottish Government committing to 2045).

3.9 This section identifies recent shifts in UK-wide Renewable Energy Policy to accommodate this and summarises some key documents including:

- The Clean Power 2030 Action Plan (December 2024)
- The CCC Annual Report to UK Parliament (July 2024);
- National Audit Office report 'Achieving Net Zero' (December 2020);
- The UK's Sixth Carbon Budget (December 2020);
- The UK Energy White Paper (December 2020); and
- The UK Net Zero Strategy (October 2021).

The Clean Power 2030 Action Plan

3.10 The Clean Power 2030 Action Plan, published in December 2024 by the UK Government, clearly highlights the requirement for rapid deployment of new clean energy capacity across the whole of the UK. The document reflects the shared renewable ambitions of the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments and in accepting the government's central role in steering the creation of this new energy system, the document sets out the expectations for the 2030 capacities of key technologies at national and regional level.

3.11 Focusing on onshore wind specifically, the target set out within the document aims for 27-29 GW of capacity. Combined with large targets for other technologies such as solar and offshore wind, the key aim is to significantly reduce dependence on fossil-fuels – particularly gas.

3.12 In order to deliver the capacity, there is a requirement to deploy these technologies at a very significant scale and pace, which can only be delivered by taking rapid action to unblock delivery challenges. The ability to maximise the efficiency of the electricity system today and in future, is critical to delivering decarbonisation and a key step to achieve net zero by 2050.

3.13 Whilst the proposed development is unlikely to meet the 2030 target date for generation of clean power, it is clear that onshore wind forms a key part of the clean power mix for 2030 and beyond to 2035.

The CCC Annual Report to UK Parliament (July 2024))

3.14 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."

- 3.15 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.
- 3.16 The report makes clear that at a UK level *"current policy is insufficient for even the existing targets."*
- 3.17 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.
- 3.18 The CCC Annual Report to Parliament (2020) offered an update on the progress towards Net Zero following adoption of the Net Zero Target.
- 3.19 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."*
- 3.20 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.
- 3.21 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."*
- 3.22 Page 22 of the report sets out that a national fourfold increase in renewable energy capacity is needed.
- 3.23 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.
- 3.24 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.
- 3.25 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"*.

- 3.26 The UK Government then published the UK Net Zero Strategy in October 2021 which sets out the long-term pathway to net zero by 2050, setting out the UK Government's plans to reduce emissions from each sector of the economy. It sets out within page 103 that the Government will support sustained deployment of low carbon generation and that there is a need to continue to drive rapid deployment of renewables.

Scottish Climate Change and Energy Policy

- 3.27 The Scottish government has devolved authority over matters relating to the implementation of energy policy and there have been a number of policy documents and legislation produced in recent years dealing with climate change and renewable energy. The documents summarised below are considered to set out the Scottish Government's commitment to reducing carbon emissions via the promotion and development of renewable energy and the contribution this can make to energy generation throughout Scotland.

Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009

- 3.28 The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 provides a long-term framework to ensure a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050, with an interim milestone of 42% by 2020.
- 3.29 Whilst successive bills and legislation have increased the target to net zero emissions, as reported below, the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 provides the wider context for Scotland's ambitious targets for the reduction of carbon emissions.

Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019

- 3.30 The Scottish Government introduced a new Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill to Parliament on 23rd May 2018. The Act was subsequently passed in September 2019.
- 3.31 The Bill raises the ambition of further reducing greenhouse gas emissions by amending the targets set out within the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, hence superseding them and sets a legally binding net zero target for all greenhouse gases by 2045. This target date is five years ahead of the current date set for the rest of the UK and aims to ensure Scotland contributes to the worldwide efforts to deliver on the Paris Agreement. It requires net zero by 2045 at the latest.
- 3.32 Whilst the target of net zero for 2045 remains, a statement made by the Climate Change Committee explained that the delay of the governments Climate Change Plan has meant that the goal of achieving a 75% reduction target by 2030 is fundamentally unachievable. As such, on the 18th of April 2024, the Scottish Government stated that:

'In light of the UK-wide Climate Change Committee's (CCC) recent rearticulation that the 2030 target for emissions reduction is not achievable, this will no longer be a statutory target.'

- 3.33 Despite the removal of the 75% emission reduction target, setting a net-zero target by 2045 is an ambitious target and places Scotland at the forefront of efforts to combat climate change. Therefore, through this Act and other associated Government strategies and policies, the Scottish Government aim to provide certainty and credibility to businesses, industries and investors that are vital partners in Scotland's transition to a low carbon economy.
- 3.34 The trajectory of net zero targets and the actions required to meet them have become steeper following the passing of the 2019 Act into law.

Climate Change Emergency

- 3.35 In April 2019, the Scottish Government declared a climate change emergency, which instigated a commitment to enforcing stronger climate change proposals and targets whilst delivering support to the transition to a low carbon economy. It is anticipated at this stage that this declaration will deliver revised approaches and shape future guidance for a range of policy decisions, affecting transport, oil and gas and renewable energy strategy.
- 3.36 The Highland Council opted to follow suit and declare its own climate emergency in May 2019.

Scotland's Carbon Budget

- 3.37 Published in May 2025, the Climate Change Committee issued Scotland Carbon Budget report using the most recent emissions data from 2022.
- 3.38 In 2024, Scotland's interim emissions targets for 2030 and 2040 were repealed as the progress required to meet the 2030 target was deemed to be beyond what was credible. The Act was amended to replace interim targets with carbon budgets. Carbon budgets are legally binding caps on greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland over five-year periods. The UK, Wales, and Northern Ireland also use carbon budgets to set binding milestones for emissions reductions on the way to their Net Zero emissions targets.
- 3.39 In line with the 2009 Act, the report sets out the Committee's advice on the level of Scotland's four carbon budgets, covering the period 2026 to 2045. The CC recommend that the Scottish Government sets its carbon budgets, at annual average levels of emissions that are:
- 57% lower than 1990 levels for the First Carbon Budget (2026 to 2030).
 - 69% lower than 1990 levels for the Second Carbon Budget (2031 to 2035).
 - 80% lower than 1990 levels for the Third Carbon Budget (2036 to 2040).
 - 94% lower than 1990 levels for the Fourth Carbon Budget (2041 to 2045).
- 3.40 Within the report, renewables have an essential role to play in meeting Scotland's carbon budgets and the wider UK emissions targets. In the pathway set out, the capacity of variable renewables in Scotland (including offshore and onshore wind and solar) more than triples from 15 GW in 2023 to 49 GW by 2035, increasing to 66 GW by 2045.

- 3.41 Whilst the report does not set policy but instead informs the Scottish Government on steps to take towards emissions reduction targets, it is evident that renewables and, in turn, onshore wind will play a key role in the route to Net Zero by 2045. The pathway outlines that in order to achieve these targets, renewable energy capacity must be accelerated.

Scottish Renewable Energy Policy

- 3.42 This section identifies recent shifts in Scottish Renewable Energy Policy and summarises the key documents including:

- The Scottish Energy Strategy (2017);
- The Update to the Climate Change Plan (December 2020);
- The Scottish Energy Strategy Position Statement (March 2021);
- The Onshore Wind Policy Statement (2022); and
- Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023)
- Onshore Wind Sector Deal
- Climate Change Committee (CCC) Report to Scottish Parliament – Progress in reducing emissions in Scotland (March 2024)
- The Green Industrial Strategy (September 2024)

The Scottish Energy Strategy

- 3.43 The Scottish Energy Strategy 2017 sets out the Scottish Government's overarching position on many forms of energy, including onshore wind. Specifically, it states that "*onshore wind must continue to play a vital role in Scotland's future*"..."*which can be done in a way which is compatible with Scotland's magnificent landscapes.*" The Energy Strategy is currently being updated, with a draft Energy Strategy accompanying the Just Transition Plan in early 2023. These reiterate the findings of the Onshore Wind Policy Statement, and aim to drive Scotland towards Net Zero by 2045, with a clear focus on the delivery of 12GW of new installed capacity by 2030.

The Update to the Climate Change Plan (December 2020)

- 3.44 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*".

- 3.45 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*".

- 3.46 The planning and consenting systems are recognised (p78) as remaining a “critical enabler of rapid renewables deployment in Scotland”. 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 to meet a rapidly increasing electricity demand.

Scottish Energy Strategy Position Statement

- 3.47 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.”
- 3.48 On 20th August 2021, the SNP-led Scottish Government and the Scottish Green Party signed the Bute House Agreement which represented a formal co-operation agreement for the next five years of Government. However, on the 25th of April 2024, the Bute House Agreement came to an end. Despite the end of the Bute House Agreement, a number of policies still remain relevant to climate change legislation set out by the Scottish Government. Page 12 of the agreement 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.” This statement is still valid in the wider context of climate change and energy policy.

Onshore Wind Policy Statement

- 3.49 Subject to consultation the Government and Green Party aimed to deliver “an additional 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”. This still remains within the Onshore Wind Policy Statement (OWPS, 2022) which replaced the previous version published in 2017 and makes it explicitly clear that seeking greater security of supply and lower cost electricity are now key drivers alongside the need to deal with the climate emergency. It requires a minimum installed capacity of 20GW of onshore wind by 2030, with an additional 12GW installed between 2023 and 2030.
- 3.50 The OWPS states that deployment of onshore wind is “mission critical for meeting our climate targets” as an “affordable and reliable source of electricity generation.”

The Draft Energy and Just Transition Plan

- 3.51 The Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan was published on 10th January 2023 which builds on the Scottish Energy Strategy (2017), by setting out how targets will be delivered. The purpose of the strategy is to set out clear policy positions and a route map of actions with a focus on the decisions the Scottish Government need to take and the

changes the UK Government need to make by 2030, in order to deliver a net zero energy system for Scotland by 2045.

- 3.52 The draft strategy sets out key ambitions for Scotland's energy future. Specifically in relation to onshore wind, the draft strategy aims to deliver *inter alia* an additional 12GW of onshore wind by 2030.
- 3.53 The draft strategy sets out the scale of the opportunity to transform Scotland's energy supply, with energy increasingly provided from climate-friendly renewable electricity. Onshore wind *inter alia* will assist in achieving this transformation. The Scottish Government therefore commit to the following:
- Take action to deliver an additional 12GW of installed onshore wind by 2030, as set out in the Onshore Wind Policy Statement (2022). This will increase the total energy supply from onshore wind to 20GW;
 - Working with the industry to deliver an Onshore Wind Sector Deal in 2023 to ensure deployment is maximised as well as the opportunities that flow from it;
 - Ensure that the community energy sector is represented on the forthcoming onshore wind strategic leadership group; and
 - Convene an expert group, including representatives from industry, agencies, and academia. This will provide advice to the Scottish Government on how guidance could be developed to support both peatland and onshore wind aims.

The Onshore Wind Sector Deal (2023)

- 3.54 The Onshore Wind Sector Deal, published in September 2023, provides a framework of commitments between Scottish Government and the onshore wind sector in order to support the rapid development and deployment of onshore wind, including the identification of barriers and potential solutions and actions to, for example, decrease consenting times. It is very clear that the Scottish Government wishes to see quicker deployment of onshore wind and is actively supporting the sector to do so.

Climate Change Committee (CCC) Report to Scottish Parliament – Progress in reducing emissions in Scotland (March 2024)

- 3.55 As set out above, the CCC Report presented to the Scottish Parliament entitled 'Progress in reducing emissions in Scotland' in March 2024. The related press release states that Scotland's 2030 climate goals are no longer credible due to continued delays to the updated Climate Change Plan and other related climate policies.
- 3.56 The press release states that a path to Scotland's post-2030 targets remain however stronger action is needed to reduce emissions across the economy. It states that there has been some progress in delivering renewable electricity generation in Scotland with the aim to develop 8-11 GW of offshore wind and 20 GW on onshore wind capacity, both by 2030. However, the report notes that "The growth in onshore wind capacity has slowed, however, and is slightly off track to deliver its 2030 target, which will require operational capacity to more than double." Page 40 states that in terms of onshore wind, Scotland must increase the deployment rate by more than a factor of 4 to an average annual rate of 1.4 GW.

The Green Industrial Strategy

- 3.57 In September 2024, the Scottish Government published a Green Industrial Strategy (GIS). The Executive Summary sets out the mission of the GIS, which states:
- 3.58 "This Green Industrial Strategy's mission is to ensure that Scotland realises the maximum possible economic benefit from the opportunities created by the global transition to net zero".
- 3.59 The strategy sets out five opportunity areas for Scotland where identified strengths are most likely to lead to growth and the potential to develop internationally competitive economic clusters. The points focus on maximising Scotland's wind economy, developing carbon capture, utilisation, and storage, supporting the green economy by way of professional and financial services, expanding upon the hydrogen sector and establishing Scotland as a competitive centre for clean energy intensive industries of the future.
- 3.60 When focusing on onshore wind specifically, it is referred to detail at page 21 where the strategy states:
- 3.61 "Onshore wind is the biggest single technology in Scotland's current mix of renewable electricity generation, comprising 62% of installed capacity.
- 3.62 A thriving onshore wind sector is therefore critical to the decarbonisation in Scotland and the UK. As set out in our 2022 Onshore Wind Policy Statement, Government and industry are focused on delivering at least 20 GW of onshore wind by 2030 (doubling current capacity) and recent pipeline analysis shows that we should be on track to deliver this.
- 3.63 This trajectory is underpinned by the Onshore Wind Sector Deal which sets out a set of specific collaborative actions which include commitments by both the Scottish Government and the onshore wind industry to help deliver the 20 GW ambition.
- 3.64 A supportive policy environment and successful industry collaboration via the Onshore Wind Strategic Leadership Group confirms the shared commitment of Government and industry to achieve this successful and responsible growth.
- 3.65 The onshore wind workforce is highly skilled and opportunities in installation, consulting, operations, and maintenance are anticipated to rise in response to growth ambitions. Specialised engineering consultancy services such as wind farm design and financial due diligence related to onshore developments are expected to grow and offer additional export potential. There is commercial opportunity in circular supply chains related to the UK wind industry. Scotland's established, and now ageing onshore wind assets may also offer opportunities for innovative solutions in remanufacturing, recycling, and decommissioning end of life assets."
- 3.66 It is evident that in order to progress the Government's objectives with regard to wind energy, clear support for new investment and growth in onshore wind development is needed. Realisation of the economic and social opportunities can only be achieved through the development and consenting of additional wind energy developments. Such deployment will not only be critical towards achieving the net zero target, given the

important contribution that wind energy will make in that regard, but will also help deliver the Government's clear green infrastructure mission.

Compliance with and Weight to be Afforded to Energy Legislation and Policy

- 3.67 The scale of the threat we face through climate change is widely acknowledged by governments across the world. The Scottish Government has recently taken the decision to declare a climate emergency, citing the need for world action to deliver transformative change. Everyone has a role to play in this global climate emergency, including businesses and local authorities. Extremely challenging targets have been set for decarbonising the economy: net zero emissions for Scotland by 2045, the most stringent target for decarbonisation anywhere in the world.
- 3.68 It is evident that there remains a strong policy drive to continue to develop renewable energy. International and national commitments have been made to address the effects of climate change and to achieve greater security in the domestic supply of energy. This in turn has directly influenced a response through the land use planning system which through national planning policy strongly encourages renewable energy development and the evidence base demonstrates that wind energy is the key renewable resource for Scotland.
- 3.69 In the balance of material considerations, it is the role of the decision maker in terms of which weight to assign to each material consideration and then potentially groups of material considerations thereafter.
- 3.70 What is clear is that at a global, European, UK and Scottish level, there is a clear and determined effort to reduce global carbon emissions. It is also abundantly clear that onshore wind energy has a very significant part to play in this. Taken and read as a whole, there is a very clear policy priority upon the deployment of renewable technology.
- 3.71 The planning system (and its decision makers) is a critical enabler of this deployment. As per the next section of this Planning Statement, planning policy (and particularly local policy) cannot keep pace with the rate of change in climate change policy and legislation however that should not mean that this becomes a barrier to deployment. It is legitimate for the planning system to take account of updated and emerging issues as material considerations in arriving at a decision.
- 3.72 The current weight to be afforded to the preceding matters is therefore, in the Applicant's view, significant.

4 NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Introduction

4.1 This section sets out the planning policy framework relevant and material to the determination of the application. Consideration is given below to the following matters:

- National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4);
- The statutory Development Plan applicable to the Site; and
- Other material considerations, including Supplementary Guidance, local planning guidance and relevant national policies, advice, and guidance.

NPF4

4.2 The Scottish Government is clear and unequivocal about the requirement for new onshore wind generation through legislation and policy.

4.3 The inclusion of 'Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure' as a 'national development' demonstrates the importance that the Scottish Government places upon the increase in onshore renewable generation. Annex B of NPF4 provides a statement of need. This states that "*a large and rapid increase in electricity generation from renewable sources will be essential for Scotland to meet its Net Zero emissions targets.*"

4.4 Wind farms in excess of 50MW generating capacity will comprise **national development**. The proposed development, at 108MW (plus 5MW of battery storage) exceeds this threshold and therefore be classed as a national development. Page 97 of NPF4 sets out that national developments are described as "*significant developments of national importance that will help to deliver the spatial strategy*". It adds that "*their designation means that the principle for development does not need to be agreed in later consenting processes.*"

4.5 There is and remains a clear support at a national level for the further development of renewable and low carbon technologies however greater emphasis has been placed on the pace at which these technologies are rolled out. It is then appropriate to examine the contents of particular policies of NPF4.

4.6 **Policy 1: Tackling the climate and nature crises** acts as an overarching policy which in turn filters into each individual policy detailed within NPF4, stating that when considering all development proposals, significant weight should be given to the global climate and nature crises, in order to ensure that they are recognised as a priority in all plans and decisions.

4.7 The intent behind Policy 1 is to encourage, promote and facilitate development that addresses the global climate emergency and nature crisis. The proposed development inherently seeks to address the climate crisis by providing low carbon energy and reduces

greenhouse gas emissions by contributing to a more sustainable energy mix across g78
1nqScotland.

4.8 Therefore, NPF4 introduces a key, prominent policy which states that the global climate emergency is a priority, and significant weight must be attached to this. Onshore wind, as a national development, accords fully with the aspirations of this policy and can draw immediate and full support.

4.9 **Policy 2: Climate change and Mitigation** aims to encourage, promote, and facilitate development that minimises emissions and adapts to the current and future impacts of climate change. Policy 2 states:

a) Development proposals will be sited and designed to minimise lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions as far as possible.

b) Development proposals will be sited and designed to adapt to current and future risks from climate change.

c) Development proposals to retrofit measures to existing developments that reduce emissions or support adaptation to climate change will be supported.

4.10 **Policy 3: Biodiversity** requires that “development proposals contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity, including where relevant restoring degraded habitats and building and strengthening nature networks”, integrating “nature-based solutions where possible”. Policy 3b) also states that national development, which the proposed development is defined as, will be ‘supported where the proposal will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, including nature networks so they are in a demonstrably better state than without intervention.’

4.11 **Policy 4: Natural Places** of NPF4 reinforces the need for the protection, restoration and enhancement of natural assets making best use of nature-based solutions. Part a) of this policy states that development proposals which would have an unacceptable impact upon the natural environment by virtue of type, location or scale will not be supported.

4.12 Policy Criteria is provided in 4(b) for proposals that impact upon National Parks, National Scenic Areas, SSSIs, Ramsar sites are as follows:

‘Development proposals that will affect a National Park, National Scenic Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest, or a National Nature Reserve will only be supported where:

i) The objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the areas will not be compromised; or

ii) Any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental, or economic benefits of national importance.

All Ramsar sites are also European sites and/ or Sites of Special Scientific Interest and are extended protection under the relevant statutory regimes.’

4.13 Part d) discusses impacts upon local designations and states where a site is designated as a “local nature conservation site or landscape area in the LDP, it will only be supported

where development will not have significant adverse effects on the integrity of the area and qualities for which it has been identified." Part ii) of d) states the second criteria for support, which is where "any significant adverse effects on the integrity of the area are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits or at least local importance."

- 4.14 Part e) states that the precautionary principle is to be applied whilst Policy 4(f) states that development proposals that are likely to have an adverse effect upon species protected by legislation will only be supported where it meets the statutory test.

- 4.15 **Policy 5: Soils** focuses on the protection of carbon-rich soils, the restoration of peatlands and the minimisation of disturbance to soils from development with wording as follows:

Development proposals on peatland, carbon-rich soils and priority peatland habitat will only be supported for:

- i) Essential infrastructure and there is a specific locational need and no other suitable site;*
- ii) The generation of energy from renewable sources that optimises the contribution of the area to greenhouse gas emission reductions targets;*
- iii) Small-scale development directly linked to a rural business, farm, or croft;*
- iv) Supporting a fragile community in a rural or island area; or*
- v) Restoration of peatland habitats.*

- 4.16 **Policy 7: Historic Assets and Places** details under part a) that "development proposals with a potentially significant impact on historic assets or places will be accompanied by an assessment which is based on an understanding of the cultural significance of the historic asset and/or place". Part h) is also useful and relevant, where it is stated that development proposals affecting scheduled monuments will only be supported "where i) direct impacts on the scheduled monument are avoided, ii) significant adverse effects on the integrity of the setting are avoided or iii) exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated to justify the impact on a scheduled monument and its setting and impacts on the monument or its setting have been minimised".

- 4.17 The key policy pertaining to energy is **Policy 11: Energy**, which contains the intent to "encourage, promote, and facilitate all forms of renewable energy development onshore and offshore. This includes energy generation, storage, new and replacement transmission and distribution infrastructure and emerging low-carbon and zero emissions technologies including hydrogen and carbon capture utilisation and storage (CCUS)."

- 4.18 At a local level, the policy also states that Local Development Plans (LDPs) should seek to realise their areas' full potential for electricity and heat from renewable, low carbon and zero emission sources by identifying a range of opportunities for energy development.

- 4.19 Policy 11 a) sets out that development proposals for all forms of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies will be supported, which include:

- i) wind farms including repowering, extending, expanding, and extending the life of existing wind farms;*

- ii) *enabling works, such as grid transmission and distribution infrastructure;*
- iii) *energy storage, such as battery storage and pumped storage hydro;*
- iv) *small scale renewable energy generation technology;*
- v) *solar arrays;*
- vi) *proposals associated with negative emissions technologies and carbon capture; and*
- vii) *proposals including co-location of these technologies.*

4.20 Policy 11 reiterates support for renewable and low carbon technologies, however there is a clear and direct reference to onshore wind farms, recognising this form of energy generation as a key component to achieving the outcomes of Policy 11 as well as wider overarching climate change policy and legislation which aim to expand renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies at a national level.

4.21 While repowering, extensions and expansions are also supported, the creation of new onshore wind development must be supported to ensure there is a continued pipeline of new onshore wind farm schemes, such as the proposed development, which can be revisited for future repowering, extension, and expansion. In addition, the policy also includes support for battery storage which has been included as part of the development with 5MW of storage proposed.

4.22 Policy 11 (e) provides further information on the topics which should be addressed as part of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies. It states that:

In addition, project design and mitigation will demonstrate how the following impacts are addressed:

- i) *impacts on communities and individual dwellings, including, residential amenity, visual impact, noise, and shadow flicker;*
- ii) *significant landscape and visual impacts, recognising that such impacts are to be expected for some forms of renewable energy. Where impacts are localised and/ or appropriate design mitigation has been applied, they will generally be considered to be acceptable;*
- iii) *public access, including impact on long distance walking and cycling routes and scenic routes;*
- iv) *impacts on aviation and defence interests including seismological recording;*
- v) *impacts on telecommunications and broadcasting installations, particularly ensuring that transmission links are not compromised;*
- vi) *impacts on road traffic and on adjacent trunk roads, including during construction;*
- vii) *impacts on historic environment;*
- viii) *effects on hydrology, the water environment and flood risk;*
- ix) *biodiversity including impacts on birds;*
- x) *impacts on trees, woods, and forests;*

- xj) *proposals for the decommissioning of developments, including ancillary infrastructure, and site restoration;*
- xii) *the quality of site restoration plans including the measures in place to safeguard or guarantee availability of finances to effectively implement those plans; and*
- xiii) *cumulative impacts.*

- 4.23 Throughout the EIA Report, each topic listed within Policy 11 (e) has been fully assessed, in addition to the Planning Statement providing an appraisal on the level of impacts and justification for how the proposed development not only complies with existing policy but how project design and mitigation has resulted in no or limited significant effects.
- 4.24 Policy 11 states that “*in considering these impacts, significant weight will be placed on the contribution of the proposal to renewable energy generation targets and on greenhouse gas emission targets*”.
- 4.25 A key point of policy is that Policy 11 e) ii) recognises that where some landscape and visual impacts are to be expected, localised impacts and/ or the application of appropriate design mitigation has been employed, then effects are considered to be acceptable.

Highland-wide Local Development Plan

- 4.26 On 5 April 2012, the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) (hereafter referred to as the Development Plan) was adopted by the Council and constituted as the Local Development Plan in law. It sets out the overarching spatial planning policy for the whole of the Highland Council area, except the area covered by the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan. However, since the adoption of the Development Plan in 2012 the national and local policy landscape has shifted considerably with the adoption of the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) with national policy now forming part of the statutory Development Plan for the first time.
- 4.27 A key provision legislated within section 13 of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 is that Section 24 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 is now amended to state that in the event of any incompatibility between a provision of NPF4 and the provision of an LDP, then whichever of them is later will prevail. In this case and at the time of writing, it is the NPF4 that should prevail over the LDP in case of any incompatibility.

Overarching Renewable Policy

- 4.28 Policy 67 is the key or ‘lead’ HwLDP policy for the assessment of onshore wind farm developments. The policy contains a number of criteria which generally address the environmental topics that are referred to in other policies within the Plan. The proposed development has been assessed against Policy 67 and the associated OWESG.
- 4.29 **Policy 67: Renewable Energy Developments** requires renewable energy developments to relate well to the source needed for its operation and sets out specific criteria THC will consider in the determination of any such application, including:

- The contribution of the proposed development towards meeting renewable energy generation targets; and
- Any positive or negative impacts a proposed development is likely to have on the local and national economy.

4.30 Policy 67 confirms that renewable energy proposals will also be assessed against other policies within the Development Plan, the Highland Renewable Energy Strategy and Planning Guidelines, and will have regard to other material considerations, including demonstration of significant benefits such as making effective use of existing and/or proposed infrastructure or facilities. The Supplementary Guidance forms part of the Development Plan and supplements its key principles, whilst the Highland Renewable Energy Strategy has since been superseded.

4.31 Policy 67 confirms that THC will support proposals for renewable energy developments where they are satisfied that they are located, sited, and designed in such a manner that they will not be significantly detrimental, either individually or cumulatively, with other developments, having particular regard to any significant effects arising on the following receptors:

- Natural, built, and cultural heritage features;
- Species and habitats;
- Visual impact and impact on the landscape character of the surrounding area (reflecting the scale and character of the landscape seeking to minimise landscape and visual impact, subject to any other considerations);
- Amenity at sensitive locations (including residential properties, workplaces, recognised visitor sites);
- Safety and amenity of (regularly) occupied properties and grounds in relation to noise, ice throw, shadow flicker and shadow throw;
- Ground and surface water, aquatic ecosystems, and fisheries;
- Aviation, defence, or emergency service operations, including flight activity, navigation and surveillance systems and associated infrastructure or on aircraft flight paths or MoD low-flying areas;
- Other communications installations or the quality of radio or TV reception;
- The amenity of users of any Core Path or other established public access for walking, cycling or horse riding;
- Tourism and recreation interests; and
- Land based traffic and transport interests.

4.32 Policy 67 includes a requirement that seeks (via a legal agreement/obligation under section 75 of the Principal Act) suitable decommissioning of any development and associated infrastructure as part of the restoration of the site.

4.33 Policy 67 requires a proposed development to be assessed against the 11 factors listed above with regard to predicted significant effects, and a judgement has to be reached as to whether or not such effects would be “significantly detrimental overall”. Each of these 11 factors is addressed in the appraisal presented within Chapter 5 of this Planning

Statement. However, the broader aims of the policy and their relation to the proposed development is presented below.

- 4.34 Firstly, Policy 67 refers to the need for renewable energy development proposals to be “well related to the source of the primary renewable resources that are needed for their operation”. The proposed development meets this requirement as the “primary renewable resource” for its operation is wind and the location is one where the wind resource is particularly good.
- 4.35 Secondly, Policy 67 states the Council will consider a proposed development's contribution “towards meeting renewable energy generation targets”. The proposal has an indicative capacity of 108 MW with an additional 5 MW of battery storage and would therefore make a valuable contribution to unmet international, UK and Scottish Government climate change and renewable electricity and energy generation targets.
- 4.36 Thirdly, Policy 67 states the Council will consider “any positive or negative effects [a proposed development] is likely to have on the local and national economy”. The proposed development would contribute to the attainment of economic development objectives at local and national levels.
- 4.37 **The Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance** offers additional details on factors which the Council will take into consideration when determining applications. The Supplementary Guidance provides a draft spatial framework which applies to all turbines over 50m in height or more than one turbine with a height of 30m and above to blade tip. This framework is in line with the adopted SPP 2014 document. The proposed development lies predominately within a Group 3 area (area with potential for wind farm development subject to other policy consideration), however there is an area which falls within Group 2 (Areas of significant protection) owing to its classification as an area of Class 2 Carbon Rich Soil and Peat (the quality of this is explored further in Chapter 10: Hydrology, Geology and Peat).

Landscape and Visual

- 4.38 **Policy 28: Sustainable Design** states that the Council will support development which promote and enhance the social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of the people of Highland'. The policy notes that the impact of proposals on individual and community residential amenity will be considered. Reference is also made to sensitive siting considerations as well as the impact on various resources including;
- Habitats;
 - Freshwater systems;
 - Species;
 - Landscape;
 - Cultural heritage, and;
 - Scenery.
- 4.39 **Policy 29: Design Quality and Place-making** requires that development proposals should demonstrate sensitivity and respect towards the local distinctiveness of the landscape.

4.40 **Policy 30 Physical Constraints** requires consideration as to whether a development proposal is located within areas of constraint as set out within the Physical Constraints Supplementary Guidance;

4.41 **Policy 61 Landscape** sets out requirements for the evaluation of potential impacts on landscape character arising from a proposed development. Landscape Character Assessments, Landscape Capacity Studies and relevant supplementary guidance shall be taken into account by THC when assessing proposed developments;

Hydrology, Geology and Peat

4.42 **Policy 55 Peat and Soils** requires development proposals to minimise the disturbance, degradation or erosion of peat and soils. A peatland management plan may be required if development on peat is clearly demonstrated to be unavoidable;

4.43 **Policy 62 Geodiversity** states that development proposals which include measures to protect and enhance geodiversity interests of international, national, and regional/local importance in the wider countryside, will be supported. The Council will also support improvement of accessibility and interpretation as an educational or geo-tourism resource, where it is possible to integrate sympathetically development, geodiversity, and other existing interests.

4.44 **Policy 63 Water Environment** states that proposals that do not compromise the objectives of the Water Framework Directive, which is aimed at supporting the protection and improvement of Scotland's water environment will be supported;

4.45 **Policy 64 Flood Risk** requires development proposals within or bordering medium to high-risk flood risk areas will need to demonstrate compliance with Scottish Planning Policy through the submission of suitable information which may take the form of a Flood Risk Assessment;

4.46 **Policy 66 Surface Water Drainage** requires all proposed developments to be drained via Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS);

Ecology and Ornithology

4.47 **Policy 58 Protected Species, Policy 59 Other Important Species and Policy 60 Other Important Habitats and Article 10 Features** sets out requirements for development proposals to adhere to a range of criteria regarding the avoidance of detrimental impacts upon biodiversity, flora, and fauna. Consideration must also be given to any existing protected planting and wetland which have habitat and species value;

Cultural Heritage

4.48 **Policy 57 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage** requires all development proposals to be assessed in consideration of designated heritage assets in close proximity to the development site. Furthermore, the design, layout, and massing of the development in relation to designated heritage assets must avoid detrimental impacts upon the character and setting of these assets;

Transport and Access

- 4.49 **Policy 56 Travel** requires details of on and off-site transport implications, those criteria relevant to the proposal advise proposed development's should:
- Be well served by the most sustainable modes of travel;
 - Be designed for the safety and convenience of all potential uses;
 - Incorporate appropriate mitigation, through developer contribution, if necessary, to improve and enhance all transport modes;
 - Include appropriate parking provision, and;
 - Green Travel Plans may be required for significant travel generating developments.
- 4.50 The Council will also take account of The Core Paths Plan.
- 4.51 **Policy 77 Public Access** requires developments which affect any route defined in a Core Paths plan, an access point to water or wider access rights, to maintain or enhance any existing path including its amenity value, or ensure alternative access provision is provided which is no less attractive, is safe and convenient for public use, and does not damage or disturb habitats or species. Any proposal classed as a major development will need to be accompanied by an Access Plan, indicating existing public access provision alongside proposed public access provision both during and post-construction.
- 4.52 **Policy 78 Long Distance Routes** confirms the Council, and partners will safeguard and seek to enhance long distance routes.

The Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan

- 4.53 The Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2 (IMFLDP2) was adopted by THC in June 2024 and sets out the policies and provide a framework to guide and enable a range of levels of development.
- 4.54 The IMFLDP sets out a strategic vision for the area and includes a number of development allocations. The IMFLDP does not include any specific designations or planning policies relating to onshore wind energy developments or the Site and is not accompanied by any relevant appropriate supplementary guidance.

The Highland Council Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance

- 4.55 THC adopted its Onshore Wind Energy: Supplementary Guidance in 2016 and subsequently adopted an addendum to the supplementary guidance in 2017, entitled 'Addendum Supplementary Guidance: Part 2b Highland Strategic Capacity', hereafter referred to as 'the Supplementary Guidance'.
- 4.56 The Supplementary Guidance recognises the potential social and economic benefits onshore wind developments can bring to communities, and outlines THC's positive stance towards renewable energy developments. The Supplementary Guidance also sets out how THC will manage onshore wind energy development proposals against a range of

policy requirements in-line with Section 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006.

4.57 The guidance for potential onshore wind developments contained within the Supplementary Guidance is broadly structured around the following topics:

- Landscape and visual;
- Public access;
- Noise assessment;
- Natural and historic environment;
- Operational efficiency of other communications;
- Operational efficiency of wind energy developments;
- Water environment;
- Peat;
- Safety and amenity at sensitive locations;
- Tourism and recreation;
- Airport, defence, and emergency service operations;
- Traffic and transport;
- Electricity and gas infrastructure;
- Borrow pits;
- Construction environmental management plans;
- Restoration bonds; and
- Repowering.

4.58 Each topic provides specific guidance to inform the nature and context of technical assessments, as well as guidance towards the acceptability of potential significant impacts arising from an onshore wind proposal. Where relevant, these policy provisions are considered further under specific topic headings in Section 5 of this Statement.

4.59 In addition to the topics listed above, Pages 18-20 of the OWESG list ten landscape and visual criteria that the Council use as a framework for assessing proposals. They are not absolute requirements but set out key considerations that proposed developments should be aware of and take into account the within design and assessment. The criteria should influence the proposals and supporting documents for any application should include the developer's assessment against these criteria. The following criteria are likely to be of particular significance:

- *1 - Relationship between Settlements/Key locations and wider landscape respected.*
- *2 - Key Gateway locations and routes are respected*
- *3 - Valued natural and cultural landmarks are respected*
- *4 - The amenity of key recreational routes and ways is respected.*
- *5 - The amenity of transport routes is respected*
- *6 - The existing pattern of Wind Energy Development is respected*

- 7 - *The proposal contributes positively to existing pattern or objectives for development in the area*
- 8 - *The perception of landscape scale and distance is respected*
- 9 - *Landscape setting of nearby wind energy developments is respected*
- 10 - *Distinctiveness of Landscape character is respected*

4.60 An assessment of the proposed development against the criteria listed above have been assessed in full in Section 5 of this Planning Statement.

5 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Introduction

- 5.1 Following identification of the relevant planning policies, guidance and other material considerations in Section 4 of this Planning Statement, this section examines how the proposed development accords with the Development Plan, material considerations and other policy guidance considered in this statement.
- 5.2 Having regard to the relevant provisions within the Development Plan and other material considerations, the following determining issues have been identified:
- The principle of the proposed development;
 - The conformity of the proposed development against the Development Plan and supplementary guidance;
 - The acceptability of predicted environmental and other impacts arising from the Proposed Development, as assessed against the relevant Development Plan policies;
 - The consideration of other material considerations that may weigh in support of the proposed development.
- 5.3 These determining issues are considered further under the relevant headings below.

The Principle of the Proposed Development

- 5.1 The proposed development seeks to deliver a sustainable renewable energy development that will make a valid contribution to low-carbon energy targets and net-zero goals.
- 5.2 There is clear policy support for the principle of wind energy across the Development Plan and other material considerations including national policy and legislation. These are concisely summarised below.
- 5.3 By virtue of NPF4's classification of national developments, the proposed development is one that could be considered of national importance given its generating capacity is over 50MW. The purpose of designation of schemes over 50MW is that "*a large and rapid increase in electricity generation*" is "*essential*" for Scotland to meet its net zero emissions targets. This is the case for the proposed development.
- 5.4 As set out in NPF4 (Page 97), national developments are defined as "*significant developments of national importance that will help to deliver the spatial strategy*", adding that "*their designation means that the principle for development does not need to be agreed in later consenting processes*". The rationale of designating schemes over 50MW as national development is that "*a large and rapid increase in electricity generation*" is "*essential*" for Scotland to meet its net zero emissions targets. This is the case for the proposed development.

- 5.5 In addition to the proposed developments status as national development, NPF4 **Policy 1: Tackling the climate and nature crises** (arguably the primary policy within the document) is emphatic that significant weight should be given to the global climate and nature crises, in order to ensure that they are recognised as a priority in all plans and decisions.
- 5.6 The intent behind Policy 1 is to encourage, promote and facilitate development that addresses the global climate emergency and nature crisis.
- 5.7 The NPF4 is linked directly to the legislation and policy set out within section 3 of this Planning Statement, which provides further overarching and overwhelming support for renewable energy generation in the need to reduce carbon emissions.
- 5.8 The fact that the Scottish Government and the Highland Council have both declared climate emergencies again reinforces the need to act. The principle of development has clear and unambiguous support from the Development Plan. It is therefore not in question that Scotland needs wind farms. Matters around siting and acceptability of design and impact are dealt with later in this document.
- 5.9 In terms of wider legislation, material considerations all strongly point towards the need for the proposed development. At a UK policy level there is a consistent thread that more needs to be done. The CCC report to UK Government in 2024 assessed that to be on track for the UK Government's interim 2030 target of 68% of 1990 levels, that only a third of the emissions reductions required are currently covered by credible plans, all indicators for low carbon technology rollout are off track, with rates needing to significantly ramp up. This is echoed in the Clear Power 2030 document also which sets out the need to generate enough clean power to meet to UK's total annual electricity demand whilst increasing energy security.
- 5.10 The Scottish Government are also clear that the aspirational additional capacity required in Scotland is a minimum. The aforementioned targets in the 2022 OWPS of reaching 20GW installed capacity in 2030 may not be met. In any event, the requirement for clean electricity clearly does not stop at 2030.

The Acceptability of the Proposed Development

- 5.11 Having regard to the characteristics of the Proposed Development and the potential environmental effects identified and assessed within the EIAR, it is appropriate to test the policies of the Development Plan and demonstrate compliance using the evidence gathered within the EIAR. Topics include:
- Landscape & Visual;
 - Cultural Heritage;
 - Geology, Hydrology & Hydrogeology;
 - Ecology & Ornithology;
 - Noise;
 - Transport;
 - Socioeconomics and Tourism, and;
 - Other Issues.

5.12 These matters are considered further under the relevant subheadings below.

Landscape and Visual

5.13 Landscape and visual impacts are often a primary focus of wind energy developments and throughout the design evolution and assessment, potential impacts have been fully considered. As part of the accompanying EIAR, a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) has been carried out and the findings are presented in full in EIAR Volume1, Chapter 6.

5.14 The key planning policy relevant to onshore wind energy development and subsequently landscape and visual matters is Policy 67 of the HwLDP. Policy 67 advises that THC will support renewable energy proposals where it is satisfied that they are located, sited, and designed in such a manner that they will not be detrimental overall, either on an individual or cumulative basis.

5.15 NPF4 provides an updated perspective on landscape and visual matters, set out within Policy 11(e)(ii) which states that significant landscape and visual impacts are to be recognised and expected for some forms of renewable energy. It states that “*where impacts are localised and/ or appropriate design mitigation has been applied, they will generally be considered to be acceptable.*”

Siting and Design

5.16 As defined within the Spatial Framework for Onshore Wind Energy for the Inner Moray Firth LDP Area, the proposed development site sits partly within an area classed as *Group 3: Areas with potential for wind farm* development. Given its potential for wind farm development as designated within local policy, coupled with strong wind resources, distance from settlements and residential properties as well as an established pattern of onshore wind energy development within the area, the site was progressed.

5.17 The proposed development is located approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack and 7.5km east of Beaully in the Highlands within an undesignated area of the Rugged Massif - Inverness landscape character as defined by the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment (2019).

5.18 Wind farm development is now a landscape characteristic of many areas of Scotland, including the Highlands and within NatureScots description of this LCT it is recognised that wind farms and transmission lines are key features of this landscape type. This is the case for the proposed development with the undulating nature of the site and relatively simple landform used to produce a cohesive design. In addition to the specific characteristics of the Site informing the overall strategy, some general design principles were also applied. This included:

- The avoidance of overlapping or 'stacked' turbines, where possible, through careful placement in order to form a well-spaced group or array when viewed from the receiving landscape including key design viewpoints.
- The avoidance of outlying turbines which appear separate or stand apart within the landscape in order to reduce the lateral spread of the Proposed Development.

- The selection of an appropriate turbine height which respect the scale of the receiving landscape and achieves a balanced composition when viewed from the surrounding landscape whilst recognising that current wind turbine technology has progressed with larger turbines required for greater energy efficiency.
- The development of a layout which relates well to other existing and proposed wind farms within the local area, as well as being coherent in isolation.

- 5.19 Consultation has been undertaken with THC and NS who commented on aspects of methodology, sources of information, viewpoint selection, scope of assessment and cumulative development. Post-scoping consultation was also undertaken with THC and NS to further agree the LVIA viewpoints and several aspects of the assessment, which was agreed through subsequent email correspondence and online meetings with planning and landscape officers from THC.
- 5.20 As part of the design process, a pre-application consultation workshop was held with THC on the 21st January 2025 to discuss the composition of the proposed development and its relation to the surrounding landscape. The design review process is set out within Chapter 4 of the EIA report, as well as the Design and Access Statement provided with this planning application.

Landscape Effects

- 5.21 The proposed development is not located within any designated landscapes or WLAs, however, it is located 171m east of the Central Highlands WLA.
- 5.22 None of the landscape planning designations including the SLQs of the Glen Strathfarrar NSA, Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA and Ben Wyvis SLA would be significantly affected by the proposed development. There would however be significant effects of the proposed development on part of WLQ1: *An extensive and awe-inspiring range of large scale, high and rugged mountains* in the eastern flank of the Central Highlands WLA. However, it is recognised that this part of the WLA has a weak or largely absent WLQ in the east. The proposed development would not significantly affect the remaining three WLQs of the Central Highlands WLA.
- 5.23 Significant effects resulting from large-scale wind farm development are unavoidable and the proposed development would have a significant (and cumulative) effect on part of the 'host' *Rugged Massif - Inverness* landscape (*North Rugged Massif* LCA), affecting a local area up to approximately 0.5km north (the limits of this landscape in that direction) and up to approximately 2-2.5km east, west and southeast and 3-4km south / southwest. This level of effect, and geographical extent, is not unusual for wind farm development. Significant effects would also affect a localised area (up to approximately 200 – 300m) of the *Farmed Strath – Inverness* LCT (*Strathglass* LCA) as a result of the proposed access track and Site entrance during the construction phase only.
- 5.24 In relation to the surrounding LCTs, an area of the *Rounded Rocky Hills – Ross & Cromarty* LCT: *South of Strathconon* LCA to the south and southeast of the LCA as the landform falls towards the River Orrin and Orrin Reservoir would be significantly affected by the proposed development up to 2.5-3km from the proposed turbines. A small area of the *Rugged Mountain Massif – Ross & Cromarty* LCT: *Orrin* LCA on its eastern fringes would also be

significantly affected. There would also be significant cumulative landscape effects on both LCTs above and a further significant combined cumulative effect on the *Forest Edge Farming LCT: Auchmore LCA* as a result of the existing Fairburn and Auchmore turbines with the proposed development.

- 5.25 None of the other surrounding LCTs would be significantly affected in terms of their landscape character, although there would be significant visual effects on the views from some of these areas.
- 5.26 Significant landscape effects within this range would constitute localised effects within NPF4, Policy 11(e)(ii) and would generally be expected and acceptable. Furthermore, the design and embedded mitigation of the development would not impact on the qualities of Wild Land. Therefore, landscape effects are consistent with the provisions of the most up to date part of the Development Plan.

Visual Effects

- 5.27 The ZTV (calculated to blade tip) for the proposed development is limited, accounts for 24.15% of the total Study Area, reducing to 20.89% when considering hub height visibility. The viewpoint analysis indicates that significant visual effects are likely to affect limited locations within approximately 15km distance from the proposed development (subject to a clear view of the proposed turbines, landform and vegetation screening), as indicated by Viewpoints 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 17.
- 5.28 Significant visual effects would be limited to views from the southwest, southeast, east and northeast of the proposed development. The greatest magnitude of change is visible at Viewpoint 4 (High-Medium magnitude) (all other viewpoints are assessed as Medium magnitude or less). There is no High magnitude of change assessed at any viewpoint which is as a result of the surrounding low hills around the Site of the proposed development. The effects on all ten viewpoints (and an additional viewpoint 10) would also be cumulative. There would be no significant visual effects from the remaining 17 viewpoints as a result of the proposed development.
- 5.29 There would be significant visual effects on two settlements within 15km including parts of Kiltarlity and Conon Bridge. There would also be significant visual effects from the western fringes of the dispersed communities between 2-4km to the southeast, mainly around Breakachy and Farley. There would be no significant effects from any other defined settlements within the Study Area.
- 5.30 Significant visual effects would also be limited upon transport routes and recreational routes. Where significant effects are expected, these would be limited and intermittent, only visible in open sections of the routes and as such, although significant from parts of the routes and destinations, they would not be 'overwhelming' or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of this route or destination, and the user experience.
- 5.31 The night-time viewpoint assessment concludes that when allowing for the embedded mitigation, none of the viewpoints would be significantly affected by the proposed aviation warning lights operating at either of the two lighting intensities, this being 200cd

and 2000cd. A total of 6 out of 20 turbines would be lit with the maximum brightness only required for approximately 5% of the time when visibility is less than 5km.

- 5.32 It is the established view from both the Scottish Ministers and the Applicant that radar detection systems which switch aviation lights on and off based on flight activity are currently not mandated by aviation regulators and it may be some time before these are available. Appropriate conditions can be applied to any consent that would allow timely review of this position.
- 5.33 Again, similarly to landscape effects, significant visual effects are intrinsic to large scale wind energy development. It is useful to look at representative significant visual effects and assess the suitability and acceptability of them in planning terms.
- 5.34 Significant visual effects are unavoidable with onshore wind farms by the nature of their scale and size, however the proposed development has been sited and designed to provide a wind farm which despite its size and scale, has demonstrable localised significant effects which are acceptable in terms of the Development Plan and NPF4.
- 5.35 NPF4 Policy 11(e)(ii) requires consideration of whether or not the significant effects are localised. It is apparent from the ZTV, and the assessment of viewpoints as contained within Technical Appendix 6.2 of the EIA Report, that significant effects start to dissipate at around 15km.
- 5.36 As set out above, a notable decision by Scottish Ministers in regard to what defines a localised effect can be found in the decision for Bunloinn Wind Farm in the Highlands, and was consented in March 2024 (ECU reference ECU00003304). In this case, the Ministers found that development would have significant effects which *“with the majority of significant effects occurring within 12km of the proposed development and none at a distance greater than 14.7km”* (Decision Notice, page 14).
- 5.37 Other decisions made by Scottish Government again demonstrate that impacts can be considered acceptable at greater distances. In Airgih Wind Farm decision, the ministers accepted the planning authorities position that visual effects up to 14km from the site. *“this is therefore fully acceptable in landscape terms particularly from the viewpoint at Gigha north end which is approximately 14km away”*. (Page 22)
- 5.38 It would be therefore logical and follow Ministerial precedent that significant effects related to the proposed development could also be deemed as localised when following this precedent as the effects of this proposal would be in the region of this distance. Therefore, the proposed development can draw clear support from NPF Policy 11(e)(ii) as well as other decisions made in light of the adoption of NPF4. As the most up to date strand of Development Plan policy concerning significant landscape and visual effects, this takes precedence over the 2012 HwLDP and its provisions on visual effects.

Cultural Heritage

- 5.39 Chapter 7 of the EIAR provides an assessment on the potential effects of the proposed development on cultural heritage, fulfilling Policy 7a) of NPF4 which states that development proposals with a potentially significant impact on historic assets will be

accompanied by an assessment based on an understanding of the cultural significance of the historic asset. Whilst NPF4 Policy 7 provides an updated policy test, the relevant LDP policy pertaining to cultural heritage includes Policy 57 which aims to ensure the design, layout, and massing of the development in relation to designated heritage assets to avoid adverse effects upon the integrity of special qualities of international or nationally designated assets.

- 5.40 NPF4 Policy 7 continues by stating that the assessment should identify the likely visual or physical impact of any proposals for change, including cumulative effects and provide a sound basis for managing the impacts of change. The inclusion of an assessment on setting of identified cultural heritage assets within an extended 10km Study Area is set out in a series of photomontages and wirelines provided from cultural heritage receptors and located in EIAR Volume 2. In agreement with HES, some assets outwith the 10km study area have also been assessed as part of the assessment.
- 5.41 Accordingly, NPF4 Policy 7(h) sets out that development proposals affecting scheduled monuments will only be supported where:
- i. direct impacts on the scheduled monument are avoided;
 - ii. significant adverse impacts on the integrity of the setting of a scheduled monument are avoided; or
 - iii. exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated to justify the impact on a scheduled monument and its setting and impacts on the monument or its setting have been minimised.
- 5.42 Whilst the full assessment is available within Chapter 7 of the EIAR, it is considered important to discuss the assessment of heritage assets closest to the proposed development due to the nature of the proposed development and to demonstrate its compliance with policy.
- 5.43 Detailed assessments were undertaken for the remaining eight heritage assets where there was a medium to high potential for significant effects. These were determined following an initial assessment, or as a recommendation from HES. The detailed assessments are provided within Appendix 7.2: Cultural Heritage Assessment
- 5.44 A key cultural heritage asset is Urchany, barrow 595, SW – Scheduled Monument (ref: SM13523, A38), This is a scheduled monument located 150m southeast of the development boundary and is described as a prominent, circular, grass-covered mound, built mainly of earth but with some stone visible in its sides.
- 5.45 The monument is of national importance due to its potential to make a significant addition to our understanding of the design and construction of burial monuments, the nature of burial practices, and their significance in Bronze Age and later society.
- 5.46 When assessing the impact of the proposed development from this viewpoint, the ZTV indicates that 11 to 15 turbines would, theoretically, have partial visibility from the monument. The nearest turbine would be partly screened by the rise in topography between the monument and the turbine. Views towards the monument from the south would include the proposed development in the background (rather than any foreground obstruction or alteration). The extensive views from the monument looking southwest,

southeast and northeast, would therefore, not be obstructed by the proposed development.

- 5.47 As a heritage asset of High cultural significance, the resulting significance of effect would be **Slight Adverse** (not significant). The significance of effect has been determined as not significant as the proposed development would not impact on how the barrow is understood, experienced and appreciated, with the proposed development only visible in the periphery when looking towards the barrow from the south, and in the background when looking at views from nearby stones featuring Neolithic rock art.
- 5.48 The other Scheduled Monuments, and Garden Designated Landscapes and Listed Buildings within the Study Area which were assessed are detailed in Technical Appendix 7.2
- 5.49 Of the 59 designated heritage assets located within the study area and beyond. No significance of effect above Slight Adverse (Not significant) was reported for any designated heritage assets. As a result, no mitigation measures have been proposed against the setting effects. Residual effects have been assessed as being the same as those identified within the main assessment, with no residual effect above Slight Adverse (Not significant) reported.
- 5.50 Whilst the proposed development has theoretical visibility to and from these Scheduled Monuments and would introduce new, visible, and clearly modern components to views, it is concluded that the effects on setting and integrity would result in no significant effects upon any of the specified receptors. As such, the proposed development accords with key elements Policy 7 of NPF4 as well as sub-policy NPF4 7(h)(ii) due to careful consideration put into the design of the proposed development. There is also no conflict between the provisions of the Development Plan and the findings of the EIAR.

Ecology and Ornithology

- 5.51 Chapters 8 and 9 of the EIAR provide an assessment of the potential effects of the proposed development on ecological and ornithological interests, respectively. From review of the NPF4, Policy 3: Biodiversity and Policy 4: Natural Places of the NPF4 comprise up to date and relevant Development Plan policies whilst HwLDP, policies 58, 59 and 60 are all relevant. The general policy requirements are to conserve, protect and where possible enhance biodiversity and designated sites.
- 5.52 The site has been designed to limit impacts upon watercourses and fish within them, by adhering to 50m buffers from any watercourse, and by managing runoff via a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). Individual Species Protection Plans will be prepared as required, along with monitoring by a qualifying Environmental/Ecological Clerk of Works.
- 5.53 Collision risk for all bird species resulted in no significant effects identified. There were also no identified significant effects upon bat species across the Site.
- 5.54 An Outline Habitat Management Plan (OHMP (Technical Appendix 8.4)) is provided within Volume 4 of the EIA Report, and details measures for the protection and enhancement of

various sensitive receptors as well as an Outline Deer Management Plan. The OHMP also includes provision for the restoration of peat, alongside the Outline Peat Management Plan (EIA Report Volume 4 Technical Appendix 10.4)

- 5.55 Following the implementation of good practice, embedded design mitigation, and detailed additional mitigation as set out within the OHMP, no significant effects are predicted upon ecological or ornithological receptors. Enhancements are made to peatland habitat through the OHMP. As such a total of 522 hectares of peatland will be restored. Further measures set out include additional woodland planting to the south or the site and riparian planting to the north of the site.
- 5.56 When considering the quantity of peatland restoration and the calculation of biodiversity net gain (Technical Appendix 8.5) across the site, it is evident that there is no conflict with the policies of the Development Plan in this regard. Additionally, the contribution of peatland restoration within the Outline HMP provides a key requirement of NPF4 Policy 3 which states that national development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will conserve, restore, and enhance biodiversity, so they are in a demonstrably better state than without intervention and Policy 4 in contributing to enhancement of biodiversity, restoring degraded peat habits, and noting the need for restoration.

Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology

- 5.57 The key policies relating to geology, hydrology and hydrogeology include NPF4 Policy 5: Soils and Policies 55, 62, 63, 64, and 66 of the Development Plan as discussed previously within this Planning Statement.
- 5.58 Policy 5 (c)ii stipulates that Development proposals on peatland, carbon rich soils and priority peatland habitat will only be supported for the generation of energy from renewable sources that optimises the contribution of the area to greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets whilst Policy 5(d) outlines that development on peatland, carbon-rich soils or priority peatland, a site-specific assessment will be required to identify:
- i. the baseline depth, habitat condition, quality, and stability of carbon rich soils;
 - ii. the likely effects of the development on peatland, including on soil disturbance; and
 - iii. the likely net effects of the development on climate emissions and loss of carbon
- 5.59 Potential impacts upon peat, set out in full in Chapter 10 of the EIAR, have been assessed via extensive baseline data collection through Phase 1 and Phase 2 surveys (undertaken from June 2024 to April 2025) along with supplementary ecological information to classify areas of potential groundwater dependence and the quality of peat within the site.
- 5.60 The EIAR concludes that no significant potential effects on hydrological, geological and peat receptors have been predicted when taking account of mitigation by design and embedded mitigation such as the application of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and floated roads over areas of deeper peat. Additionally, design mitigation of the proposed development has minimised potential for adverse effects upon watercourses via implementing a 50m design buffer and reducing watercourse crossings as far as possible, with a total of two proposed across the Site.

- 5.61 In total 2,746 peat probes were advanced across the development site during Phase 1, 2 and 2b. Contouring of the peat probe results from all stages of the work was subsequently undertaken to establish an estimation of the peat depths across the assessment site.
- 5.62 The peat probing undertaken has generally confirmed that the majority of infrastructure has avoided deep peat with the exception of T18 (which is very localised) and some sections of track which are proposed to be floated. The average depth of peat across the site is 0.80m.
- 5.63 Detailed peat surveys identified variable thicknesses of peat across the site, with a maximum recorded peat depth of 4.07m recorded in the north-eastern part of the site. On the basis of the Phase 2 peat probing data, approximately 74% of the probe locations were found to comprise peaty or organo-mineral soil (i.e. <0.5m thick), while peat conditions (>0.5 - <1.0m) were recorded at around 14% of the probe locations, with the remaining 12% of probes encountering deep peat (>1.0m).
- 5.64 Extensive design iteration works were undertaken to avoid siting turbines or other infrastructure on deep peat. This has resulted in areas of deep peat being avoided in the siting of all turbine / hardstanding areas with the exception of T18 (which is considered to be very localised and other constraints). Proposed new track sections are generally sited on areas where peat depth is less than 1.0 m. Thicker peat deposits have been identified on the proposed route of the access track leading to T5, although care has been taken to avoid the deepest areas of peat on-site. The requirement for peat excavation at these locations will be minimised, via the construction of floating road, where required.
- 5.65 From a review of SNH's Carbon Rich Soils and Peatland map, the majority of site is designated and consequently the footprint of development has been categorised as Class 1 and 2 peat. However, the Carbon Rich soils, and peatland mapping exercise contain an allowance for these classifications to change should detailed and site-specific survey determine that conditions are different.
- 5.66 As such, Technical Appendix 8.1 contains an assessment of peatland condition within the Site boundary. Of the 254 polygons, 60 are classified as near natural, 93 are classified as modified, 45 are classed as drained and 56 are categorised as actively eroding. In addition, all blanket bog (or mosaics containing blanket bog) polygons within a 250m radius of proposed infrastructure were also assessed in line with current NatureScot Guidance (2025). A total of 152 polygons were selected for this assessment, of this total 141 were classified as having possible national interest, 11 were not.
- 5.67 This is explored more thoroughly within the EIA and its associated appendices, specifically Chapter 10 of the EIAR and Technical Appendix 10.4: Outline Peat Management Plan.
- 5.68 Based on an extensive peat survey programme, the proposed development layout, including turbines and associated infrastructure, has been designed to avoid the areas of deep peat identified, wherever possible, and areas where peat landslide may occur. The Peat Slide Risk Assessment states that hazard from peat slide on the site is also considered to be low. As such, compliance with NPF4 is apparent through the design principles applied throughout the evolution of the proposed by firstly avoiding and then minimising disturbance to soils as well as protecting soils from damage.

- 5.69 The draft Peat Management Plan also demonstrates that peat can be retained onsite, and no peat will be removed from the site whilst Outline Habitat Management identifies areas of peatland outside of the main turbine area which would be subject to enhancement and restoration, offering carbon and habitat benefits.
- 5.70 Accordingly, with appropriate and standard construction controls there are not anticipated to be significant effects upon hydrology, geology, or peat, and therefore the proposed development accords with the Development Plan and the relevant policies of NPF4.

Noise

- 5.71 An assessment was undertaken to consider potential noise effects associated with the proposed development, the findings of which are presented in Chapter 11 of the EIAR.
- 5.72 Operational noise effects have been assessed using the methodology described in ETSU-R-97 (ETSU) and the proposed Development in isolation would comply with the simplified criterion of 35 dB, LA90,10min described in ETSU-R-97.
- 5.73 The operational noise assessment was carried out to assess potential impacts that may arise from the Proposed Development in isolation. Predicted immission from the proposed turbines were found to be below 31.1 dB(A) at all assessment locations. This suggests that noise impacts would be negligible and not significant.
- 5.74 A cumulative assessment that considered predictions plus a margin of headroom was conducted which demonstrated that all locations would comply with the simplified ETSU-R-97 35dB(A) limit.
- 5.75 Best practice measures will be employed to manage noise during the construction and decommissioning stages of the proposed development, and no effects associated with these stages are considered to constitute significant effects. Construction noise will be limited in duration and confined to working hours as specified by THC and can therefore be adequately controlled through the application of good practice measures and secured by an appropriately worded planning condition. Noise during decommissioning will be of a similar nature to that during the construction phase and will be managed accordingly.
- 5.76 The proposed development is therefore not considered to represent any significant impact to nearby noise receptors, either in isolation or cumulatively.
- 5.77 When referring to relevant policy, NPF4 Policy 11(e) states:
- '....project design and mitigation will demonstrate how the following impacts are addressed:*
- i. impacts on communities and individual dwellings, including, residential amenity, visual impact, noise, and shadow flicker;'*

- 5.78 Accordingly, the proposed development complies with the policies outlined in NPF4, HwLDP policies 67 and 72 as well as the provisions of THC's Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance.

Traffic and Transport

- 5.79 The relevant policies within the Development Plan are Policies 56, 77 and 78 which aim to maintain and improve connectivity, public transport, and ensure Traffic Impact Assessments are undertaken where required in order to preserve the performance and safety of the road network. This is in addition to Policy 67 which also considers traffic and transport related access as well as public access.
- 5.80 Chapter 12 of the EIAR addresses the proposed developments effects on Traffic and Transport. It concludes that the construction programme associated with the proposed development is anticipated to cover an 18-month period, during which there would be 228 daily total HGV trips during the busiest construction month (Month 7) whilst the movement of abnormal loads is not anticipated to exceed six trips per week over the course of four months.
- 5.81 The movement of abnormal loads traffic would also require small scale and temporary remedial works at a number of locations along identified delivery route.
- 5.82 Following an assessment of the road network, significant issues prior to mitigation have been noted particularly for users of the A831 and A862 which would result in delays to road vehicle users, pedestrians, and severance of communities. Through the use of traffic management measures and the successful implementation of these measures, the effects can be considered as non-significant.
- 5.83 It should be noted that the increased traffic is temporary in nature and can be accommodated by the existing road network. Effective management through the implementation of a Construction Traffic Management Plan can also be achieved. The CTMP will ensure that the volume of HGV trips is minimised as much as possible restricting travel during peak periods or at the start/end of the school day and that they adhere to a lowered speed limit. Additionally, the CTMP will ensure that there is signage along the construction routes to make residents aware of the additional HGV traffic and to provide the opportunity to plan accordingly.
- 5.84 As such, it is considered that the relevant policies are adhered to with the assessment demonstrating that there is capacity on the road and there would be no significant effects. Accordingly, the proposed development does not conflict with the Development Plan in this regard.

Socio-economics

- 5.85 An assessment of the proposed development towards socioeconomic and tourism receptors has been undertaken and the findings of this are presented as Chapter 13 of the EIAR with Policy 67 being the most relevant policy from the Development Plan.

- 5.86 In addition to Policy 67, under Policy 11(e)(iii), NPF4 addresses that renewable energy developments will only be supported by the Scottish Government when the project's design and mitigation strategy show consideration of any impacts to public access. Policy 11(c) also addresses that renewable energy developments will only be supported where they:

"maximise net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business, and supply chain opportunities."

- 5.87 Following the assessment, it is concluded that up to £16.8 million will be spent within the area with up to 122 jobs created across the Highlands.
- 5.88 On the basis of 20 turbines with a power output of 134MW, the annual operating cost for the proposed development would be around £13m, and a lifetime operating cost of around £455m. The BEIS report, Electricity Generation Costs 2020 estimates that by 2025, operating costs for onshore wind will be around £23,500 per year, per MW installed. As a result, for the proposed development, this would equal around £3.15m per year, or £110.2m over the lifetime of the development.
- 5.89 As part of the proposed development, a community benefit package in line with prevailing Scottish Government guidance would be delivered during the operational phase of the proposed development. The Applicant is supportive of all potential uses of the community benefit package but recognises that it will be for local communities to decide on how to achieve the greatest benefits. The commitment to maximising net economic gain for the Highlands reinforces that the proposed development accords with policies set out in both NPF4 and the Development Plan.

Other Issues

- 5.90 Chapter 14 of the EIAR outlines the assessment of the proposed development against a variety of 'other issues', including infrastructure, aviation and radar, health and safety, telecommunications and television, and shadow flicker. An assessment on the proposed developments impact on the native woodland plantation is also included in this chapter.
- 5.91 An aviation lighting scheme has been agreed with the CAA due to the height of the proposed turbines. Further dialogue was held with the MoD regarding potential impacts upon safeguarding. A conclusion that the proposed development will have no operational impact was reached and agreed.
- 5.92 As set out within, The Highland Council Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (November 2016) onshore wind energy schemes should be designed to avoid causing shadow flicker at regularly occupied buildings not associated with the development.
- 5.93 Whilst there is no standard guidance for assessing shadow flicker in Scotland, as per THC guidance, a shadow flicker assessment is required if any regularly occupied properties not associated with the development lie within 11x rotor diameter of the wind farm which would give an allowance of 1793m where effects may occur. Given the separation

distances between occupied properties and the proposed development (exceeding 2km), it is unlikely that significant effects relating to shadow flicker would occur.

- 5.94 In terms of ice throw, modern wind turbines are designed and manufactured to withstand the most extreme weather conditions which arise in the UK in terms of wind speeds, turbulence, and temperature. Properly designed and maintained wind turbines are a safe technology and the likelihood of the occurrence of ice throw, given the history of the industry, is very low.
- 5.95 The results of the Carbon Calculator for the proposed development show that it is estimated to produce annual carbon savings in the region of 99,845 tonnes of CO₂e per year, and lifetime savings of 3,494,575 t of CO₂e. These savings come about through the displacement of grid electricity, based on the current average grid mix.
- 5.96 The assessment of the carbon losses and gains has estimated an overall loss of 1,546,340 tonnes of CO₂e, mainly due to embodied losses from the manufacture of the turbines and provision of backup power to the grid, which should be reduced through the provision of on-site energy storage. As such, the estimated payback time (against grid mix) of the proposed development, using the Scottish Government's Carbon Calculator, is estimated at 2.6 years, with a minimum/maximum range of 1.1 to 2.7 years.
- 5.97 This line of assessment links to NPF4 Policy 5 which states that the likely net effects of the development on climate emissions and loss of carbon should be included as part of a site-specific assessment.

THC Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance

- 5.98 Although it is not part of the Development Plan, assessment against the principles contained within the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG) is important to determine the balance that should be afforded to the OWESG and to what extent the proposed development accords with its provisions.

Table 5.1: THC OWESG Landscape and Visual Criteria

Criteria	Measure		Comments / Outcome
(Text in <i>italics</i> is quoted from THC's <i>Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance</i> , pages 18-20)			
Criterion 1: Relationship between Settlements / Key locations and wider landscape respected.			
<i>Relationship between Settlements / Key locations and wider landscape respected.</i>	<i>The extent to which the proposal contributes to perception of settlements or key locations being encircled by wind energy development.</i>	✓	Achieved: The LVIA confirms significant effects on parts of two settlements – Kiltarlity and Conon Bridge, located beyond ~8km and 13km distance. Although significant, the core parts of the settlement would not be significantly affected by the proposed development. None of the other

Criteria	Measure		Comments / Outcome
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	Turbines are not visually prominent in the majority of views within or from settlements/Key Locations or from the majority of its access routes.	✓	settlements would be significantly affected. The proposed development would not contribute to encirclement by wind energy development. None of the Key Views listed in THC's OWESG - Loch Ness Landscape Sensitivity would be significantly affected by the proposed development – most of them are outwith the ZTV.
Criterion 2: Key Gateway locations and routes are respected			
Key Gateway locations and routes are respected.	The extent to which the proposal reduces or detracts from the transitional experience of key Gateway Locations and routes.	✓	Achieved: None of the Key Gateway Locations listed in THC's OWESG - Loch Ness Landscape Sensitivity would be significantly affected by the proposed development – the majority of them outwith the ZTV. Short sections of three Key Routes noted in the Loch Ness Landscape Sensitivity are significantly affected by the proposed development: A833 – up to approximately 1.6km of the 15km route (northbound views) between Culmill and the Balgate junction to Kiltarlity. This section of the route is not within Glen Convinth, therefore the overall route is respected. A831 - up to approximately 3.8km of the 45km route between Crelevan and Struy Bridge for northbound users. This section of the route is not within Glen Urquhart, therefore the overall route is respected. Great Glen Way - 1km around Ladycairn. Whilst a short section of this route would experience significant visual effects, the proposed development would not detract from any distinctive 'gateway' or transitional experiences. The Landscape Character Type at this location would not be significantly affected by the proposed development. None of the above views would be so significant to 'overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from landscape characteristics which contribute the distinctive transitional experience'
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise detract from landscape characteristics which contribute the distinctive transitional experience found at key gateway locations and routes.	✓	

Criteria	Measure		Comments / Outcome
			The proposed development would not significantly affect any National Scenic Areas (NSA), Special Landscape Areas (SLA) including the Glen Strathfarrar NSA and the Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA. There would however be significant effects of the proposed development on part of WLQ1: <i>An extensive and awe-inspiring range of large scale, high and rugged mountains</i> in the eastern flank of the Central Highlands WLA. However, it is recognised that this part of the WLA has a weak or largely absent WLQ in the east. The proposed development would not significantly affect the remaining three WLQs of the Central Highlands WLA.
Criterion 3: Valued natural and cultural landmarks are respected			
<i>Valued natural and cultural landmarks are respected.</i>	<i>The extent to which the proposal affects the fabric and setting of valued natural and cultural landmarks.</i>	✓	Achieved: The Site is not included in the areas examined by the OWESG Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal and no natural / cultural landmarks have been identified during consultation or assessment.
<i>Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:</i>	<i>The development does not, by its presence, diminish the prominence of the landmark or disrupt its relationship to its setting.</i>	✓	The proposed development would also not significantly affect any National Scenic Areas (NSA), Special Landscape Areas (SLA) including the Glen Strathfarrar NSA and the Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA. There would however be significant effects of the proposed development on part of WLQ1: <i>An extensive and awe-inspiring range of large scale, high and rugged mountains</i> in the eastern flank of the Central Highlands WLA. However, it is recognised that this part of the WLA has a weak or largely absent WLQ in the east. The proposed development would not significantly affect the remaining three WLQs of the Central Highlands WLA. In landscape terms the proposed development would not significantly affect the fabric and setting of valued natural / cultural landmarks or diminish the prominence of the landmark.
Criterion 4: The amenity of key recreational routes and ways is respected			
<i>The amenity of key recreational</i>	<i>The extent to which the proposal affects</i>	✓	Largely Achieved:

Criteria	Measure		Comments / Outcome
<i>routes and ways is respected.</i>	<i>the amenity of key recreational routes and ways (e.g. Core Paths, Munros and Corbetts, Long Distance Routes etc).</i>		The LVIA has identified significant visual effects on views from the following recreational routes, and recreational destinations including hill summits, as follows: Core Path RC30.01 Orrin Dam track (overlapped with Scottish Hill Track 283) - intermittently for 4.7km (Core Path RC30.01), and for an additional 5.5km above Loch Orrin (Scottish Hill Track 283); Core Paths south of Balblair – 0.5km on IN03.04: Lovat Bridge to Black Bridge and 0.5km on IN20.05 – East Lodge to West Lodge, Beaufort Castle; Core Paths around Kiltarlity – 1.1km on IN20.02: Belladrum Kennels to Belladrum Farm and 0.4km on IN20.09: Farm Walk to School; Core Paths around Conon Bridge and Maryburgh – the majority of RC09.02: Burnside Lane to Station Road and 0.3km on RC31.04 – Brahan North Lodge to Balnain; Core Paths around Contin – part of RC10.01: View Rock through open scrub and young forestry between Cul Mor and Tor Atchitty, reducing to non-significant levels as forestry matures over time. There would be no significant effects from the promoted viewpoint of View Rock; Core Paths around Strathpeffer – gaps in vegetation and Knock Ardaging from RC45.01: Loch Kinellan circuit, and eastern end of route from RC45.02: Knockfarrel; Scottish Hill Track 279: Muir of Ord to Struy (Strathglass); Heritage Path A: Old Road to Milton of Redcastle – 1.7km from Balvaird towards Spittal Woods; Moray Firth Tourist Route / NC 500 Tourist Route (also A862 / A832) – 0.6km along the A862 section between Achnagairn Bridge and West Croft and between north of Muir of Ord and approach to Marybank along the A832 section for 1.5km (eastbound views), and 0.5km (westbound views)) in intermittent
<i>Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:</i>	<i>Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of key routes and ways.</i>	✓	

Criteria	Measure		Comments / Outcome
			open sections of the route between Clash Wood and Arcanside; Sustrans Cycle Route 1 (also A835) – 3.3km between west of Tore and approach to Conon Bridge; Great Glen Way / Loch Ness 360 – 1km around Ladycairn. The summit of Ord Hill (Cnoc Croit na Maoile); Heights of Brae Monument; Parts of three GDLs – Beaufort Castle, Belladrum Estate and Brahan; and Corbett summit of Beinn a'Bhathaich Ard. Although significant from parts of the routes and destinations, they would not be 'overwhelming' or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of this route or destination, and the visitor / walker experience.
Criterion 5: The amenity of transport routes is respected			
<i>The amenity of transport routes is respected.</i>	<i>The extent to which the proposal affects the amenity of transport routes (tourist routes as well as rail, ferry routes and local road access).</i>	✓	Largely Achieved: The LVIA has identified significant visual effects on the views from the following transport routes. Up to approximately 3.8km of the 45km route of the A831 between Crelevan and Struy Bridge for northbound users; Up to approximately 1.5km of the 203km route of the A832 (eastbound users) and 0.5km (westbound users)) in intermittent open sections between Clash Wood and Arcanside – this section of the route is overlapped by the NC500 Tourist Route; Up to approximately 1.6km of the 15km route of the A833 (northbound views) between Culmill and the Balgate junction to Kiltarlity; Up to approximately 3.3km of the 107km route of the A835 (westbound users) intermittently between Brahan and Wester Moy; Up to approximately 2km of the 16.7km route of the B9169 (westbound users) between Knocknafanaig and Highfield Park; Up to approximately 1km of the Far North (Inverness to Wick) Railway Line /
<i>Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:</i>	<i>Wind Turbines or other infrastructure do not overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of transport routes.</i>		

Criteria	Measure		Comments / Outcome
			Inverness to Kyle of Lochalsh Railway Line in glimpsed views and open views north of Riverford; and The A862 would also be significantly affected for approximately 0.6km of the route, however, this route overlaps with the NC500 Tourist Route. None of these views from these routes would be so significant to 'overwhelm or otherwise significantly detract from the visual appeal of transport routes'. The site of the proposed development is located within undesignated <i>Rugged Massif - Inverness</i> landscape typology and includes the characteristics of large-scale, simple, landform and moorland (and some forestry) cover with perceptions of openness and exposure, that reduce its susceptibility to wind farm development. The quality of the wind farm design also limits the potential for adverse effects on the amenity and visual appeal of these routes.
Criterion 6: The existing pattern of Wind Energy Development is respected			
<i>The existing pattern of Wind Energy Development is respected.</i>	<i>The degree to which the proposal fits with the existing pattern of nearby wind energy development, considerations include:</i> <i>Turbine height and proportions,</i> <i>density and spacing of turbines within developments,</i> <i>density and spacing of developments,</i> <i>typical relationship of development to the landscape.</i> <i>previously instituted mitigation measures</i> <i>Planning Authority stated aims for development of area.</i>	✓	Achieved: The layout of the proposed development which relates well to other existing and proposed wind farms within the local area, as well as being coherent in isolation. The selection of an appropriate turbine height which respect the scale of the receiving landscape and achieves a balanced composition when viewed from the surrounding landscape whilst recognising that current wind turbine technology has progressed with larger turbines required for greater energy efficiency. The design evolution process removed / relocated dominant turbines and re-considered the turbine height between 200m and 230m to blade tip. It is also to be noted that the nearby existing Fairburn and Auchmore wind farms would be decommissioned approximately 30-32 years prior to the end of the operational period of the proposed development resulting in the proposed development appearing coherent in isolation.
<i>Development should seek to</i>	<i>The proposal contributes positively</i>	✓	

Criteria	Measure		Comments / Outcome
achieve a threshold where:	to existing pattern or objectives for development in the area.		
Criterion 7: The need for separation between developments and / or clusters is respected			
The need for separation between developments and / or clusters is respected.	The extent to which the proposal maintains or affects the spaces between existing developments and / or clusters.	✓	Achieved: Overall, the proposed development would integrate positively with the existing and consented baseline pattern of wind farm development and would maintain appropriate and effective separation between developments – similar to the existing separation between other wind farms. Appropriate separation between the proposed development and other existing wind farms is also illustrated in the viewpoints. The settlement assessment also did not identify settlement encirclement.
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	The proposal maintains appropriate and effective separation between developments and / or clusters.	✓	
Criterion 8: The perception of landscape scale and distance is respected			
The perception of landscape scale and distance is respected.	The extent to which the proposal maintains or affects receptors' existing perception of landscape scale and distance.	✓	Largely Achieved: There would be more limited visibility of the proposed development from closer range viewpoints due to the surrounding intervening landform where perceptions of scale and distance would be retained. However, some of the close-range viewpoints including some mid-range viewpoints are unavoidably significant and perceptions of scale would be challenged.
Appearance Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	The proposal maintains the apparent landscape scale and / or distance in the receptors' perception.		
Criterion 9: Landscape setting of nearby wind energy developments is respected			
Landscape setting of nearby wind energy developments is respected.	The extent to which the landscape setting of nearby wind energy developments is affected by the proposal.	✓	Achieved: Please refer to answers for criteria 6 and 7.
Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:	Proposal relates well to the existing landscape setting and does not increase the	✓	

Criteria	Measure		Comments / Outcome
	<i>perceived visual prominence of surrounding wind turbines.</i>		
Criterion 10: Distinctiveness of Landscape character is respected			
<i>Distinctiveness of Landscape character is respected.</i>	<i>The extent to which a proposal affects the distinction between neighbouring landscape character types, in areas where the variety of character is important to the appreciation of the landscape.</i>	✓	Largely Achieved: The proposed development is well contained within the host <i>Rugged Massif – Inverness</i> LCT and does not otherwise weaken the distinctiveness and variety of different landscape character types within the study area which would broadly remain instantly recognisable.
<i>Development should seek to achieve a threshold where:</i>	<i>Integrity and variety of Landscape Character Areas are maintained.</i>	✓	

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This document provides a clear policy and legislative support for renewables and specifically onshore wind energy as a principle, in order to reach our Net Zero obligations by 2045 as set out in law.
- 6.2 The Scottish Government and The Highland Council are both supportive of the principle of onshore wind and have both declared their respective climate emergencies. The principle is not in doubt and the pace of change and deployment needs to be urgent to meet the challenging 2030 interim targets.
- 6.3 The Planning Statement assesses the relative merits of the proposed development in relation to the policies of the NPF4 and HwLDP as organised by the evidence and assessment collected within the EIA Report.
- 6.4 The proposed development draws immediate support from its status as a national development. This means that the principle and concept of renewable energy should not be in question by decision makers. It is therefore a question of siting and design, and associated subject-specific policy, upon which the acceptability of this proposed development must be based.
- 6.5 Given the nature of the proposed development drawing immediate support from its designation as a national development, coupled with the significant increase of proposed onshore wind, national policy provides an overwhelmingly supportive background to decision making.
- 6.6 However, it is recognised that development cannot come at any cost and careful consideration has been given to all the topics set out within the EIAR. The merits of the proposed development have been assessed within this document and an analysis against the policies set out within the HwLDP, OWESG and NPF4 as organised by the conclusions drawn within the EIAR has been carried out. It is important to note the NPF4 forms the newest part of the Development Plan and therefore is to be given primacy where any parts of the development plan are not in tandem.
- 6.7 It is therefore a question of siting and design, and associated policy, upon which the acceptability of this proposed development must be based.
- 6.8 Significant visual effects are likely to affect limited locations within approximately 15km distance from the proposed development (subject to a clear view of the proposed turbines, landform, and vegetation screening). This is in keeping with localised effects which are constrained to approximately 10-15km aligning with the conclusions of recent S36 Public Local Enquiries in which Reporters have deemed impacts within this distance to be 'localised', and generally acceptable in accordance with NPF4.
- 6.9 Whilst there are Scheduled Monuments in the vicinity of the proposed development, it is judged that their setting and appreciation would not be adversely affected due to the

orientation of views and how they contribute to that setting. There are found to be no departures from Development Plan policy in this regard.

- 6.10 In respect of NPF4, recent decisions in 2023 since its adoption clearly and unequivocally change the goalposts for the consenting of wind farms, with an overwhelming policy position in favour of onshore wind. At the time of writing, 28 of 35 Section 36 wind farms have been approved since NPF4, with Reporters noting that matters have shifted considerably in policy terms.
- 6.11 There are no other significant adverse effects found within the EIA Report subject to appropriate mitigation, nor are there any other material considerations which would outweigh the considerable benefits of the proposed development.
- 6.12 The proposed development also brings significant restoration of a large, degraded area of peatland, which will provide benefits to habitats and ornithological species.
- 6.13 In light of other material considerations including the need for Net Zero in law, it is the view of the Applicant that the case for the proposed development is therefore very strong.
- 6.14 The Applicant is committed to providing community benefit in line with the prevailing Scottish Government. Although this is not a material planning consideration per se, the resultant potential socio-economic benefit is a material consideration in itself.
- 6.15 Fundamentally, the proposed development can draw support from NPF4, LDP and OWESG in terms of the siting and design of the wind farm. With the use of the mitigation measures which have been carefully inbuilt to the development and the additional mitigation measures that have been supplied within Chapter 15 of the EIA Report (and would be subject to planning condition).
- 6.16 It is concluded that the proposed development when considered within a planning balance is in accordance with the Development Plan, is in accordance with national policy and is in strong accordance with other relevant material considerations as set out within this statement.
- 6.17 It is respectfully requested that the Scottish Ministers, The Highland Council and other relevant consultees, stakeholders, and members of the public support this application for the reasons stated within this document and based on the evidence collected within the EIA Report.

>> Ballach Wind Farm

Design and Access Statement

July 2025

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1 INTRODUCTION

Context

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Energiekontor UK Ltd ("the Applicant") to accompany an application under Section 36 of The Electricity Act 1989 (Section 36 Application) to Scottish Ministers for a wind farm consisting of up to 20 wind turbines and associated infrastructure ("the Proposed Development") located approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack.
- 1.2 This Design and Access Statement explains the design rationale behind the layout, providing an explanation of the design principles and concepts that have informed the Proposed Development (as described in Chapter 3 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)) and how transport and access issues have been taken into consideration.

The Applicant

- 1.3 Energiekontor UK Ltd (EK) is a renewable energy development company with offices in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Leeds. The company was formed in 1999 and develops small to medium-sized onshore wind farm and solar farms throughout the United Kingdom. The company operates seven existing wind farms in the UK and also has a number of other wind and solar projects at various stages of the development process throughout the UK.
- 1.4 EK 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, having built more than 118 wind farms in Europe.

Methodology

- 1.5 Design and Access Statements are not a statutory requirement for Section 36 applications, however, are seen as positive tools to assist understanding of the Design Evolution.
- 1.6 The process involved in formulating the design of the Proposed Development has been led by a combination of environmental design and engineering requirements. The aim has been to arrive at an appropriate layout in terms of energy yield whilst seeking to avoid or reduce environmental effects.
- 1.7 The EIA process also provides opportunities for positive design, rather than merely seeking to avoid adverse

environmental effects. The Design and Access Statement is seen as having an important role in contributing to the design process through the clear documentation of design evolution. Wind farms are a sustainable form of development, and the potential environmental effects are usually associated with the construction period and the temporary effects during the operational period of wind turbines on landscape and visual amenity. The Proposed Development has therefore been developed with environmental considerations at the forefront of both site selection and site design.

The Application

- 1.8 The Ballach Wind Farm application is submitted in full and in addition to this Design and Access Statement is accompanied by the following documents which should be read together:

- EIAR Volume 1: Main Text;
- EIAR Volume 2: Figures
- EIAR Volume 3 : NatureScot Visualisations
- EIAR Volume 4: Technical Appendices
- EIAR Volume 5: The Highland Council Visualisations
- Environmental Impact Assessment Report Non-Technical Summary
- Pre-Application Consultation Report
- Planning Statement



2 SITE SELECTION

Introduction

- 2.1 This section of the Design and Access Statement describes the Site and the surrounding area before setting out the approach to site selection.

The Site

- 2.2 The Site is located approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack within the Erchless and Farley estates and lies entirely within the administrative boundary of the Highland Council. The present land use is open moorland with limited forestry found within the Site boundary.
- 2.3 The topography of the Site reaches a high point of 490m AOD at Beinn name Fitheach in the west. The northern boundary is bound by the Allt Goibhre. Access to the site is taken utilising the estate track to the south which runs from the A831 at Erchless Castle.
- 2.4 A number of watercourses cross the Site with a few scattered lochans. This includes Loch Ballach, Loch nan Eun and associated drainage channels. Other watercourses which lie within the Site boundary include Allt an Torta Dhuinn, Allt Tobar nan Cat and Allt a Chrochadair.
- 2.5 There are no environmental designations within the site boundary. In terms of other environmental designations within 10km of the site, these include:
- Glen Strathfarrar NSA;
 - Strathpeffer WPA and
 - Wild Land Area 24: Central Highlands
- 2.6 Approximately 3km northwest of the site, sits the operational Fairburn Wind Farm (20 turbines, 100m to tip). 5km to the northwest of the site the proposed Fairburn Wind Farm Extension (14 turbines, 200m to tip) which is currently in the scoping stage.

Site Selection Criteria

- 2.7 The overall approach to wind farm site selection is to identify areas of land where the siting of a wind farm would result in minimal environmental effects, be free from overriding technical constraint and be viable on an economic basis. The criteria involved in the selection of Acheilidh Wind Farm were based on:
- A review of the planning context for renewables in Scotland and at the local authority level;

- Geographical Information System (GIS) constraints mapping;
- Analysis of wind speed data;
- Site access and transportation

- 2.8 These are discussed further below.

GIS Constraints Mapping

- 2.9 A Geographical Information System (GIS) "sieve mapping" exercise was carried out as part of the site selection process. This involved identifying and mapping constraints to wind farm development in order to identify potential sites. The various constraints considered as part of the site selection exercise for the Proposed Development included but were not limited to:

- Hydrological, geological, and hydrogeological constraints including effects on groundwater, water resources and local geology;
- Landscape designations including National Parks and Special Landscape Areas;
- Ecological designations including Ramsar sites, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- Cultural heritage designations – including Gardens and Designated Landscapes, Registered Battlefields, World Heritage Sites, Listed Buildings, Properties in Care, Conservation Areas, and Scheduled Monuments
- Aviation interests including local licensed aerodromes and visibility to radars, both military and civilian.
- The pattern of settlements; and
- Existing, approved, or proposed wind farms.

Review of Planning Context

- 2.10 Information on the planning context for renewables in the local planning authority of The Highland Council was reviewed as part of the site search exercise, which is set out fully in Chapter 5: Renewable Energy and Planning Policy and the Planning Statement which accompanies the application. Planning policy considerations include:

- National Planning Framework 4 (2023)
- Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP)(2012)
- Inner Moray Firth LDP (2024)
- Onshore Wind Energy: Supplementary Guidance (2016) with addendum ((2017)

Wind Speed Data

- 2.11 The predicted wind resource in any given location is an important consideration in identifying potentially suitable wind farm sites. The electricity that can be generated by a wind farm is directly affected by the wind speed. Wind speed increases with height above ground level and the amount of electricity generated increases disproportionately with increases in wind speed. This in turn affects the carbon emission savings and the commercial viability of a site.

- 2.12 The information on unconstrained areas from the GIS sieve mapping exercise was therefore compared with data on wind speed to identify suitable locations for wind farm development. This was done using the then Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) wind speed database NOABL which provides annual mean wind speeds on a kilometre grid square basis.

Access Suitability

- 2.13 An assessment is required to ensure that appropriate access to a potential wind farm site is available for the transportation of wind turbine components. Further information on access can be found in section 5 of this Design and Access Statement.

Selection of Ballach Wind Farm

- 2.14 The information from the sieve mapping exercise was combined with relevant planning policy and wind speed data to identify suitable areas within the study area for potential wind turbine development. From the various land areas identified, Ballach Wind Farm was selected due to a number of factors, including:

- **Energy capture** – software modelling indicates that the Site offers a strong wind resource with few obstacles or areas of pronounced topography close enough to interrupt wind flow.
- **Environmental designations** – the Strath SSSI and the Caithness & Sutherland SAC, SPA and RAMSAR designations lie partially within the Site Boundary however through careful siting and design, a sufficient distance from this designation has been maintained.
- **Residential separation distances** – the Site is able to provide separation distances of approximately 2.5km from the nearest residential property while having potential for a high installed capacity.
- **Landscape** – There are no landscape designations covering the Site. The Central Highlands Wild Land Area :24 sits to immediate southwest of the site, with the Glen Strathfarrar NSA and Strathpeffer WPA within 10km of the site.
- **Transport infrastructure** – the Site benefits from suitable access for turbine component delivery.

3 DESIGN INFLUENCES

Introduction

- 3.1 Once a site has been selected, the design of the wind farm is optimised in order to produce a layout which maximises the use of land available for power generation, balancing this against the overall environmental, social, and economic effects of the development. Optimising the layout of a wind farm in this way depends on a range of technical, economic, planning, and environmental criteria.

Design Criteria

- 3.2 Technical requirements and constraints are parameters that can physically constrain wind farm design. For the Proposed Development these have included:

4 Energy capture – the NOABL database indicates that the Site has a favourable wind resource.

5 Land availability – as agreed with the landowner, the land available for the wind farm.

- 5.1 In addition to the technical requirements and constraints, a range of environmental considerations have also had an influence on the design of the wind farm. These include:

6 Landscape and visual – the design of the Proposed Development seeks to match the scale of the turbines and the scale of the overall development with the scale of the landscape. Computer modelling was used as a tool to aid design and 3D model/wireframes were generated for views from key design views around the Site.

7 Ecology – the layout takes account of the ecological interests of the Site and the surrounding area.

8 Archaeology – all known on-site archaeological features have been plotted, assessed and avoided as far as possible.

9 Residential properties – a minimum separation distance from residential properties of 2.3km was included in the design.

10 Deep peat – turbine positions have been located to avoid areas of deep peat present on the Site.

11 Hydrology – all watercourses within the Site have been considered in the design, with appropriate buffers from all infrastructure provided in the design to safeguard the hydrogeology of the area.

- 11.1 In addition to the above considerations, planning guidance and discussions with statutory and non-statutory consultees and the local community have also had an influence over the evolution of the design. Views from the tenanted crofters have been taken into consideration when developing infrastructure design and turbine placement to ensure the proposed development is in keeping with existing land use and crofting activities.

Planning History

- 11.2 The EIA studies commenced at an early stage in the evolution of the proposed development, with the scoping process commencing in August 2024. These studies defined the environmental sensitivities, and constraints associated with the Proposed Development, the Site, and its surroundings.

- 11.3 There is no planning history of wind farm applications on this Site.

Design Guidance

- 11.4 The inherent nature of wind turbines as tall, modern structures means that the form of the wind farm as a whole is important. The appearance of the wind farm as an object or composition in the landscape has been a key factor in generating the layout. In this respect the design evolution has taken account of the following guidance:

12 Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape, SNH (2014);

13 Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance, The Highland Council (2016); and

14 Spatial Framework for Onshore Wind Energy, August 2016 - Caithness and Sutherland LDP Area.

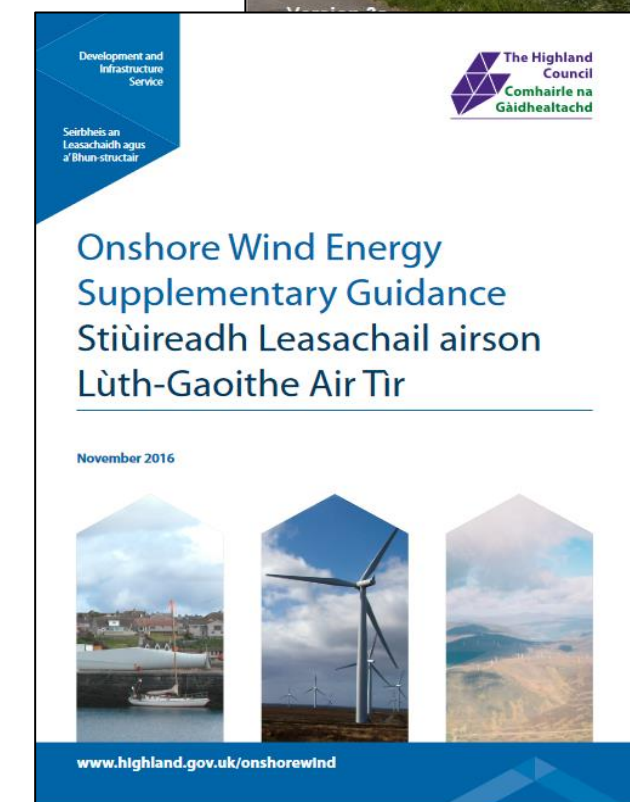
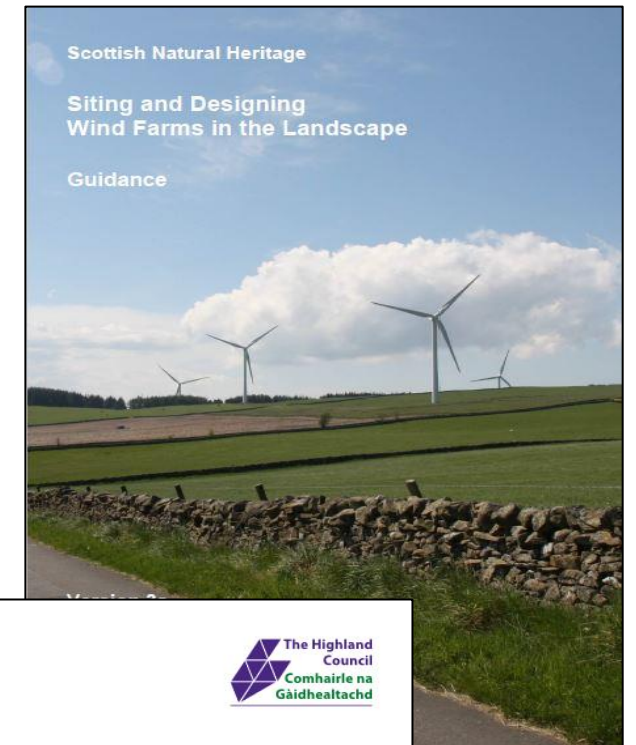
Design Consultation

- 14.1 The Applicant has undertaken a programme of consultation prior to the submission of this planning application, which is detailed within the Pre-Application Consultation Report.

- 14.2 A Scoping Report was submitted in June 2024 for a wind farm layout of up to 36 turbines up to 230m with subsequent public exhibitions held in January 2025 and June 2025 to introduce the proposals to the public.

- 14.3 Consultation with a range of stakeholders has also been ongoing since the submission of the pre-application enquiry and these have been documented within each of the assessment areas as detailed in Volume 1 of the EIA Report.

- 14.4 This process of consultation has identified a number of potential design constraints which the Applicant has subsequently sought to address as part of the EIA and design process. Further details are set out in the various stages of the design iterations below and relevant chapters of the EIA Report.



15 DESIGN EVOLUTION

Introduction

- 15.1 The wind farm layout in its proposed form takes account of stakeholder feedback received during pre-application discussions as well as environmental and technical constraints identified throughout the site selection and iterative design process. In designing a layout which is simple in composition and restrained in size, the final design results in a development which takes into account the constraints associated with the site and is sympathetic to its local and wider setting.
- 15.2 The overall design layout principle of the Proposed Development has been to achieve a coherent and compact design, which minimises direct and indirect adverse effects on the local and wider landscape, whilst balancing commercial considerations and maximising energy production.

Constraints Mapping

- 15.3 The starting point for the design of a wind farm is the preparation of a detailed constraints map which sets out all relevant buffer distances, key features and other factors that may constrain the location of wind turbines,
- 15.4 The process of EIA plays an important role in this as it enables all the technical constraints to be identified which could restrict the location of wind turbines. The evolution of design has as such been informed by matters including standoff distances to residential properties, ecological buffers, and separation distances between existing and proposed wind turbines.

Technical Constraints

- 15.5 The following technical considerations were taken into account in the design process:
- A minimum separation distance between the turbines of 3.0 rotor diameters in order to minimise turbulent interactions between wind turbines (wake effect);
 - Distance from residential properties; and
 - Civilian and military aviation radar coverage of the Site.

Relevant Planning Policies

- 15.6 The relevant policies identified in section 3 have been taken into consideration in the site selection process and also subsequently, where relevant, in the design of the Proposed Development.

Landscape and Visual

- 15.7 The principal design objectives of the Proposed Development has been to achieve a coherent and compact design, which minimises direct and indirect adverse effects on the local and wider landscape, and is designed in accordance with guidance set out by The Highland Council.

Noise

- 15.8 The wind farm design has been developed to ensure that a standoff distance of at least 2.3km can be achieved between wind turbines and residential properties.

Ecology and Ornithology

- 15.9 A full suite of ecological and ornithological studies has been undertaken which has allowed the layout to be designed around sensitivities on and around the site.

Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

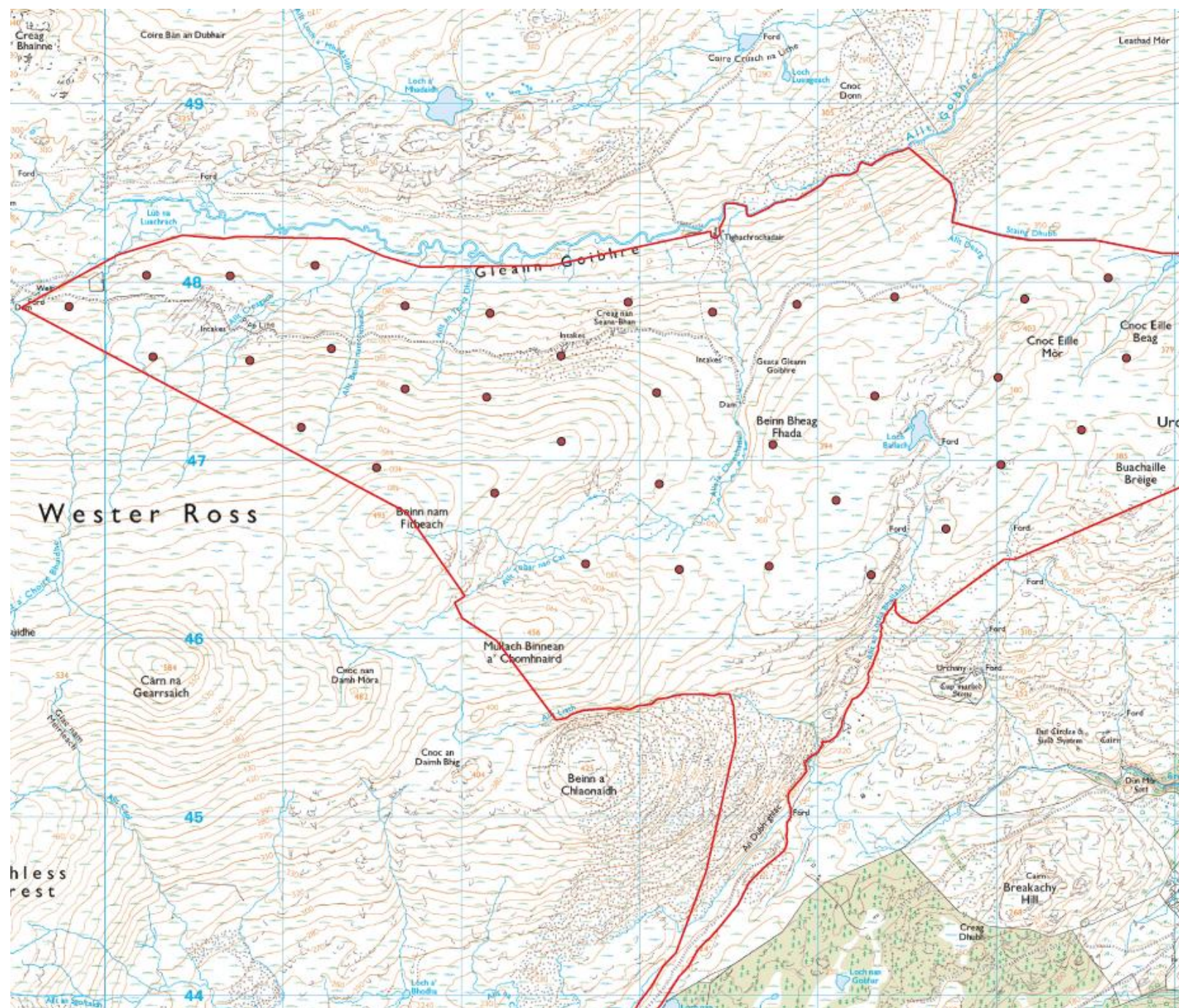
- 15.10 Certain assets that are deemed to be of particular importance are given legal protection. The importance of heritage assets and the protection of these and their settings is recognised in legislation as well as national, regional and local planning policy.
- 15.11 There are no statutorily designated cultural heritage assets within the Site however Scheduled Monuments and listed buildings within 10km of the Site boundary have been taken into consideration and an assessment on setting effects have been carried out.
- 15.12 Careful siting and design has been undertaken to minimise potentially significant effects on these assets.

Design Iterations

- 15.13 The design process has been undertaken over a prolonged period and the proposal has been progressively revised and refined during this time to take account of the information arising from pre-application consultation and the findings of EIA assessments. As a result, the design and EIA process has been highly iterative and all aspects of the final design, including the location of the wind turbines, turbine compounds, the Site access, layout of the access tracks, the locations of the substation, construction compound and borrow pits have been influenced by various technical, environmental and planning considerations.
- 15.14 Design iterations were taken forward from the initial ideas expressed within the Scoping Proposal and subsequently refined through receiving baseline environmental data as described above. Details of some of the key iterations of this design process are outlined below.

Layout 1: Scoping Layout

- 15.15 The First Iteration consisted of 36 wind turbines of up to 230m in height to blade tip, illustrated in Figure 4.1.
- 15.16 This layout was the basis for the Scoping Report submitted in August 2024 with the resultant Scoping Opinion provided by Scottish Ministers in November 2024. The Scoping layout presented a theoretical maximum number of turbines which could be accommodated on site and took account of the following environmental and technical constraints:
- Application of a 50m buffer on watercourses;
 - Application of a 2km residential buffer;
 - Ornithological considerations relating to the site;
 - Avoidance of ecological designations
 - Phase 1 peat depths; and
 - Landscape designations.
- 15.17 At this stage of the project, a key focus of this design was to determine landscape suitability whilst considering the initial buildability of the turbine locations.
- 15.18 This layout was also presented at a public exhibition, held in Kilmorack Village Hall in January 2025, where feedback from the local community was gathered.
- 15.19 During the first consultation period, feedback was provided by members of the public who attended, as well as feedback being received online (as set out within the accompanying PAC report). This feedback helped shape the emerging designs of the proposed development in a number of ways.
- 15.20 It was evident that the development site was popular for recreational purposes. Mountain biking, horse riding and walking. Given this, the design sought ways to ensure this would still be possible. This gave focus to the layout and design of the wind farm to ensure that public connectivity can still be achieved through the site to facilitate these pursuits. By utilising and upgrading many of the existing tracks on site, allowed the development to maintain accessibility for users of the area.
- 15.21 Feedback received on the number of turbines proposed, as well as the heights of turbines proposed was another topic which was raised during the consultation. This was taken into account at the next design review and saw a reduction in the number of turbines then being proposed.



Layout 2: Pre Application Layout

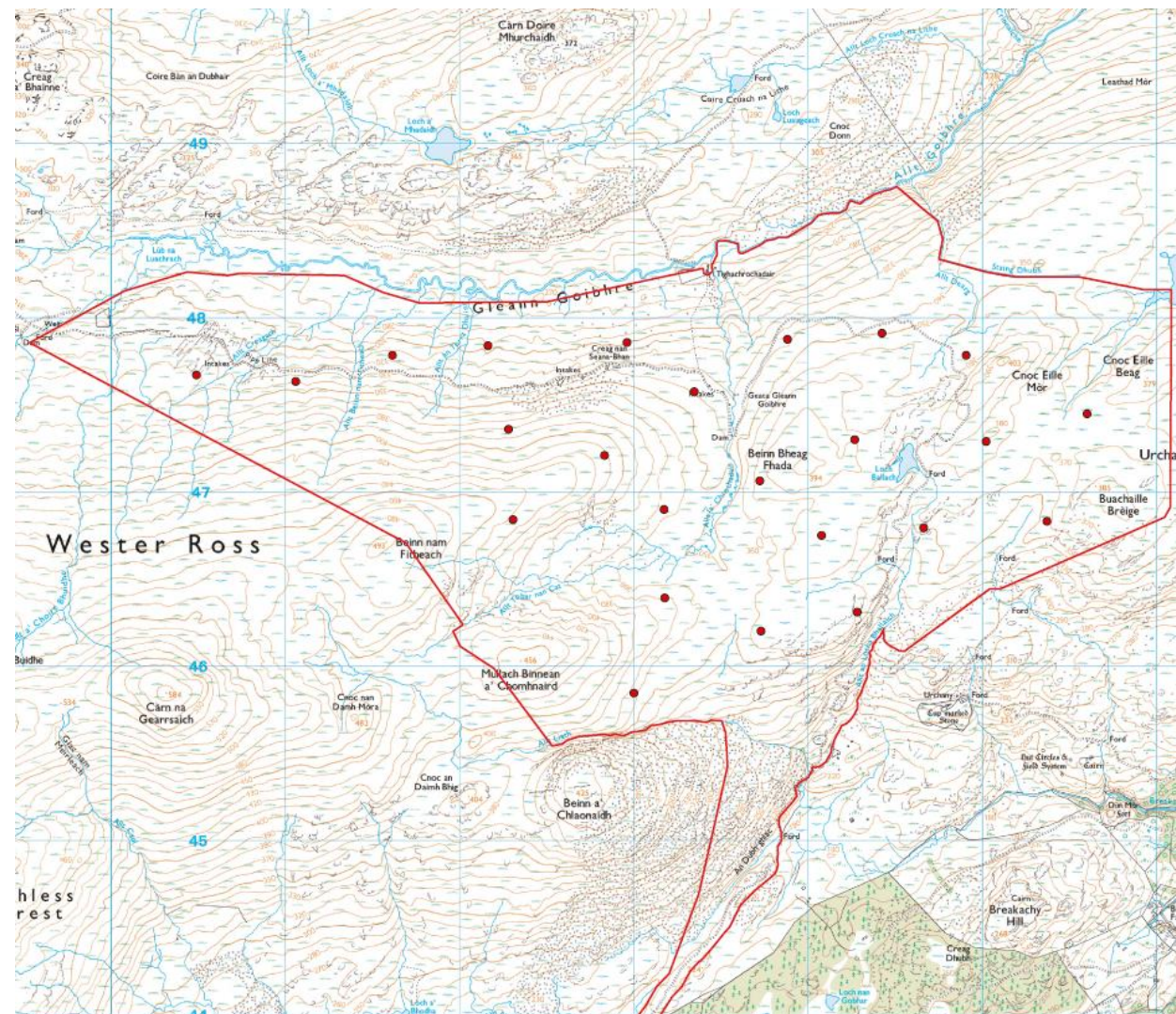
- 15.22 Illustrated in Figure 4.2, the Second Iteration comprised 24 wind turbines of up to 230m to blade tip, but with a number of turbines now lowered to 200m to blade tip. This layout was the basis for the pre-application sought from The Highland Council. The layout maintained the buffers around watercourses and residential properties and also took account of ecological and ornithological onsite constraints. Following further survey works undertaken within the site boundary, the layout was amended to avoid areas of deep peat where possible, and areas of pocket bog. The angle of the slopes within the site boundary were also taken into consideration for construction purposes.
- 15.23 As a follow on from the initial discussions with the landscape officer at The Highland Council, and feedback from the community consultation feedback, further detail into views of the development from the wider highland area were considered. A design process was carried out with The Highland Council to ensure that a true representation of the development could be assessed from a variety of views within the 45km study area of the proposed development. As a result of this, a Viewpoint assessment list of 27 locations was agreed in accordance with the council and NatureScot. This also included nighttime viewpoint locations to capture the effects of visible aviation lighting in the hours of darkness. This was an increase in an additional 5 viewpoints from the list originally proposed at the initial design meeting with The Highland Council in August 2024.
- 15.24 Based on an updated ZTV (zone of theoretical visibility), we are able to identify areas on the map where it would be beneficial to reduce turbine visibility on receptors. Using a number of design mitigation techniques; the surrounding landscape, site topography, reducing the development area of the site and finally, reducing the turbine heights, it was possible to reduce the theoretical visibility of the proposal upon the study area.
- 15.25 Key examples of this included a significant reduction in views when viewed from the west of the site, notably the Glenstrathfarrar National Scenic Area, the Glen Affric National Scenic Area and the Central Highland Wild Land Area 24. By removing a number of turbines away from the western boundary of the site, and down the steeper areas of the site comprising the Beinn nam Fithesach (493m AOD) saw a much visibly reduced development from these areas.
- 15.26 To the east of the site lay a number of populated settlements, firstly the local dispersed settlements of Torgormack, Breakachy and Kilmorack, to the larger villages of Beauly and Muir of Ord. Taking account of feedback from the first public consultation, a key theme was to reduce as best possible the visual impact of the proposed development for

those living in these settlements. By moving placement of turbines away from the eastern edge of the site boundary, the views of turbines perceived from these settlements was reduced, benefiting from the screening of higher land between the site and these locations.

- 15.27 Consideration was also given to settlements north of the site, such as Fairburn, and Contin. Not only is Contin a village north of the site, but it is also located on the A835 and is popular route for road users heading to and from Ullapool. By reducing the number of turbines on the site, and by altering the heights of turbines along the northern boundary of the site helped to limit visibility from these locations, with no visibility from Fairburn and very limited views from Contin.
- 15.28 To the south of the site lie a number of designated hill fort assets, again these were a key factor in the redesign of the site based on inputs received during the Scoping Response from Historic Environment Scotland.
- 15.29 From a cumulative perspective, this layout was also influenced by the existing Fairburn Wind Farm, located to the

north of the site, as well as the in scoping proposal "Fairburn Extension" which sits adjacently north of the site.

- 15.30 The second iteration of the proposal was then finalised and presented to the Highland at a formal pre application meeting, along with various statutory consultees who also attended. Wirelines and photomontages were prepared to test the visual effects from several locations and demonstrate areas within the study area where the development may have visibility.
- 15.31 Finally, infrastructure design for this layout was developed at this stage and sought to reduce the visual impact of onsite tracks, as well as take into account other constraints such as watercourses and deep peat. The infrastructure has also been designed to utilise as much of the existing on site track as possible, whilst still allowing these tracks to be utilised by the hill walkers, mountain bikers and horse riders who currently use this track to and from the Orrin Reservoir.



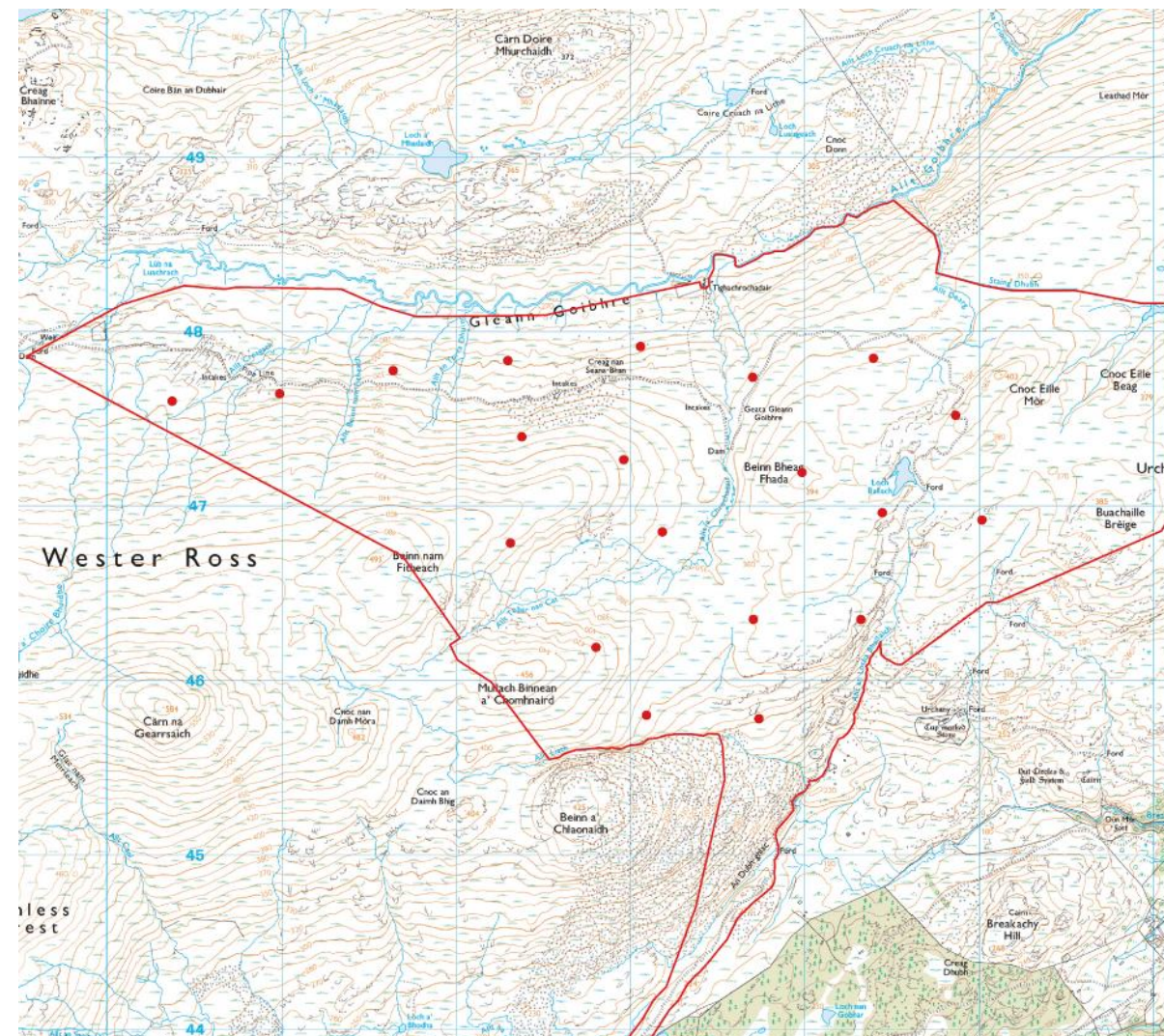
Layout 3: Final Application Layout

- 15.32 Illustrated in Figure 4.3, the Third Iteration comprised 20 wind turbines of up to 230m to blade tip. This composition of turbines resulted in an overall mix of 9x turbines at 200m to blade tip and 11x 230m turbines to blade tip.
- 15.33 Following further feedback from the pre-application process and public consultation exercises carried out, work was undertaken to determine the appropriate height for turbines, when combining predicted wind yield, commercial factors, transportation factors, visual impact, residential amenity and ecological and ornithological considerations. Cultural heritage considerations were considered throughout and phase 2 peat probing was undertaken to identify peat depths on and round turbine and infrastructure placement.
- 15.34 A review of the phase 2 peat depths allowed the final infrastructure layout to be designed around the final turbine positions, with the general principles of sufficient space and gradient for ancillary infrastructure generally followed throughout the turbine positioning process (i.e. turbines were not placed where it would be difficult to link them via road, for example).
- 15.35 The peat survey results showed that the majority of infrastructure had been placed on areas of no or shallow peat depths with the exception of a small number of changes:
- T20 crane pad moved slightly and track leading into new turning head at T20;
 - Track south of T9 moved by about 20m to east;
 - Turning head at T11 moved slightly north;
 - New additional turning head to SW of T5, and one directly south of T5 move slightly;
 - Turning head south of T13 moved slightly south; and
 - Substation moved slightly north to be on shallower peat.
- 15.36 These changes were consulted with SEPA following previous discussions to confirm acceptability of the proposal turbine layout and infrastructure before being finalised.
- 15.37 Infrastructure design is available in Figure 3.1 and is detailed further within the EIA Report, however the following can be noted as key design principles or notes:

- Track layout accommodates the abnormal loads associated with turbine deliveries. The exiting track dissecting the site will be upgraded with improvements to levels, widths and strengthening, to ensure where possible the track is being utilised and result in the creation of as little new track as possible on site.
- Crane pads have been positioned where possible to ensure that, when on steeper gradients, they will be cut into the land from rather than being raised resulting in more fill required on site.
- Watercourse crossings were minimised as far as possible, along with areas of deepest peat. This was agreed with SEPA during pre-application consultation.
- The substation compound was situated to the south of the proposed development in order to minimise the footprint of a grid connection corridor that will inevitably travel south – southeast.

- The borrow pit search areas identified on site have been selected to utilise areas where there is no or shallow peat and with availability suitable material that can be extracted to use on site with as little visual impacts as possible.

15.38 This 'final' design iteration was presented at public exhibitions with wire lines and photomontages produced to visually demonstrate the designs appearance from key viewpoints in the surrounding area. Information detailing the public exhibition and consultation process is displayed within the PAC report.



16 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

- 16.1 The Proposed Development consists of the construction, 35-year operation and subsequent decommissioning of a wind farm consisting of 20 wind turbines together with associated infrastructure.
- 16.2 The wind farm would provide circa. 134MW of generating capacity with an additional 5MW of battery storage, depending on the final turbine selection. This would be made following the grant of consent and be subject to a competitive tendering exercise.
- 16.3 The planning application includes an allowance for potential micro-siting of the wind farm infrastructure. If consent is granted, the Applicant would commission detailed ground investigations and geotechnical surveys to determine the overall ground conditions.
- 16.4 It is possible that there may be a requirement for micro-siting of other infrastructure following these investigations and any other pre-construction environmental surveys. Consequently, the planning application boundary seeks a potential micro-siting allowance of 100 metres for turbines and associated development such as tracks and crane pads.

Key Elements of the Proposal

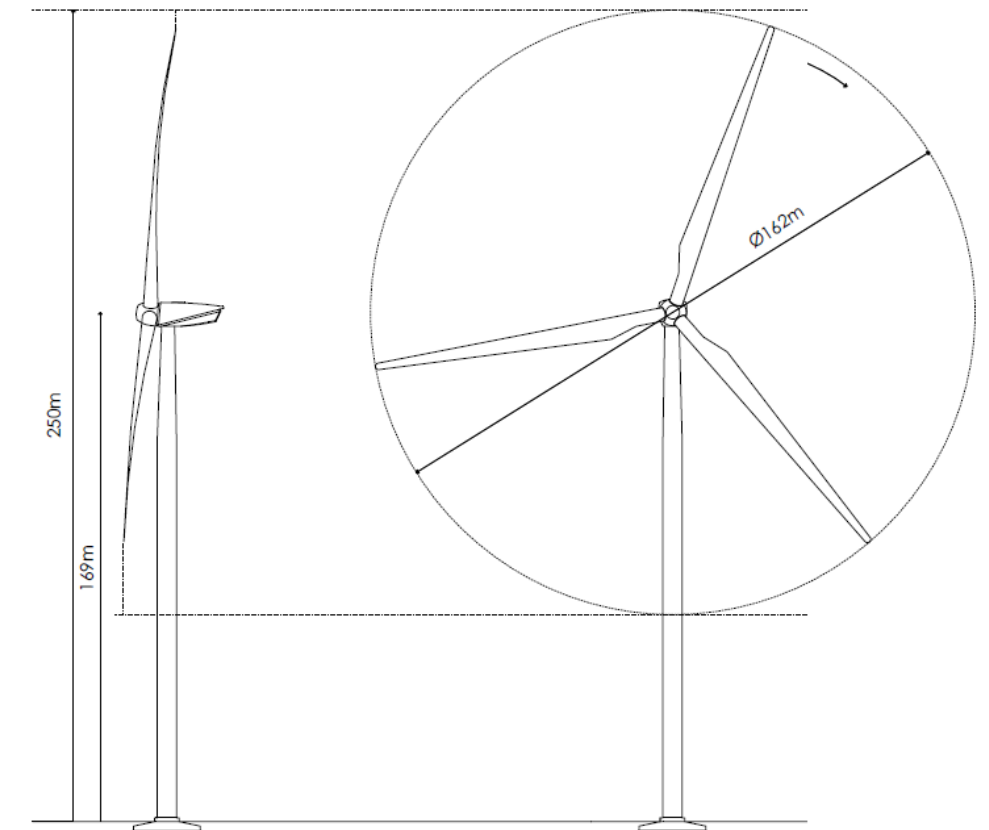
- 16.5 The principal elements of the Proposed Development include:
- **Wind turbines** – up to 20 wind turbines, each comprising 3 blades.
 - **Turbine foundations** – The foundations could be either reinforced concrete gravity structures or piled foundations. This would be dependent on the ground and hydrological conditions at the turbine locations would also determine the overall size of the support structure.
 - **Crane hardstandings** – To provide a level and firm base for the cranes at the location of each turbine and would be surfaced with coarse aggregate.
 - **Site tracks** – To provide access for construction and maintenance vehicles from the site access to the substation and wind turbines. These would be constructed at the commencement of the construction phase and would remain until the end of the decommissioning phase. They would have a running width of 6m, the final width dependent on turbine supplier requirements. The tracks would

feature local widening on corners and would be surfaced with coarse aggregate.

- **Borrow Pits** - Up to three borrow pits would be utilised as a source of aggregate for the construction of the Proposed Development infrastructure, including access tracks, hardstandings, turbine foundations etc. The final location of the three borrow pits within the search areas (shown in EIA Report Volume 2, Figure 3.1) will be confirmed following final geological investigation.
- **High voltage and control cables** – To form power and control circuits linking each turbine to the on-site substation, cables would be placed in trenches (dimensions to be determined by the ground conditions, but typically 0.5m x 1m deep) routed alongside the tracks.
- **Substation / switchgear housing building** – A 90mx90m space would be required for the construction of a 132kV substation
- **Energy Storage Compound**- The energy storage equipment would be housed within ISO shipping containers with a 2.4m high palisade fence in a compound 17.5m by 31.9m. Battery containers will be positioned a minimum of 2.5m apart to facilitate access to all sides Battery energy storage equipment will be factory assembled and delivered to site in standard 12.2m long x 2.4m wide ISO shipping containers. A plan is presented as figures 3.9. Figure 3.1 shows the construction compound area that this would be housed within.
- **Construction compound/storage area** – The construction compound is to facilitate construction of the Proposed Development, and would also provide a storage area for plant and materials and is temporary during the construction phase. A typical construction compound is set out in Figure 3.6.
- **Site access** – The proposed access point to the Site is via the A831, which lies immediately to the south of the Site.

Wind Turbines

- 16.6 It is proposed to erect up to 15 wind turbines on the Site. They would be of a typical modern design comprising a three bladed rotor hub mounted on a rotatable nacelle (containing a gearbox and a generator), a tower and foundation.



17 ACCESS

Introduction

- 17.1 This section of the Design and Access Statement sets out the issues and options considered during the development of the proposals to ensure that the transport and construction of the Proposed Development causes the minimum disruption to the highway network and highway safety.
- 17.2 The site access point and accompanying internal track layout have been designed to accommodate the range of vehicles anticipated during the construction and operation of the Proposed Development.

Existing Highway Environment

- 17.3 The preferred option for access for turbine components to the Site is detailed in Chapter 12 of the EIA Report. Although the vehicles used to deliver turbine components are large, the delivery route is considered suitable for commissioning of the Site.
- 17.4 The main transport movements during the construction phase would be associated with the movements of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) to and from the Site. Vehicle movements would be associated with delivering turbine components, concrete and the travel of workers to and from the Site.
- 17.5 The traffic generated by construction of the Proposed Development (over an 18-month period) will result in a temporary increase in baseline traffic levels. With mitigation in place, the potential traffic and transport related environmental effects during construction are considered to be not significant in line with the EIA regulations.
- 17.6 Once the development is operational, it is envisaged that the amount of traffic would be minimal. Occasional visits may be made to the Site for maintenance activities. The vehicles used for these visits are likely to be a 4x4 or similar and there may be occasional need for HGV's to access the Site for maintenance and repairs.

Access to Site

- 17.7 The preferred option for access for turbine components to the Site is detailed in Chapter 12 of the EIA Report. Although the vehicles used to deliver turbine components are large, the delivery route is considered suitable for commissioning of the Site.

- 17.8 To determine appropriate access routes to the Site, detailed consideration and assessment of the surrounding road network has been undertaken in the form of a comprehensive desk-based study. This established that the most likely route for general construction HGV traffic is from the A9 trunk road network to the A831 corridor via the A836 and A839.
- 17.9 The proposed route is indicated below in Figure 6.1.

Access Design Process

- 17.10 Swept Path Analysis assessments were undertaken to identify whether the delivery route could accommodate the swept path of the abnormal load delivery vehicles carrying components such as the turbine blades and nacelle. This type of analysis is consequently used to identify any necessary works.
- 17.11 The design of the Proposed Development has taken into consideration the movement and subsequent access of vehicles involved with the construction and operation of the wind farm. The initial site selection considered potential access restrictions associated with the movement of vehicles required to transport large turbine components.

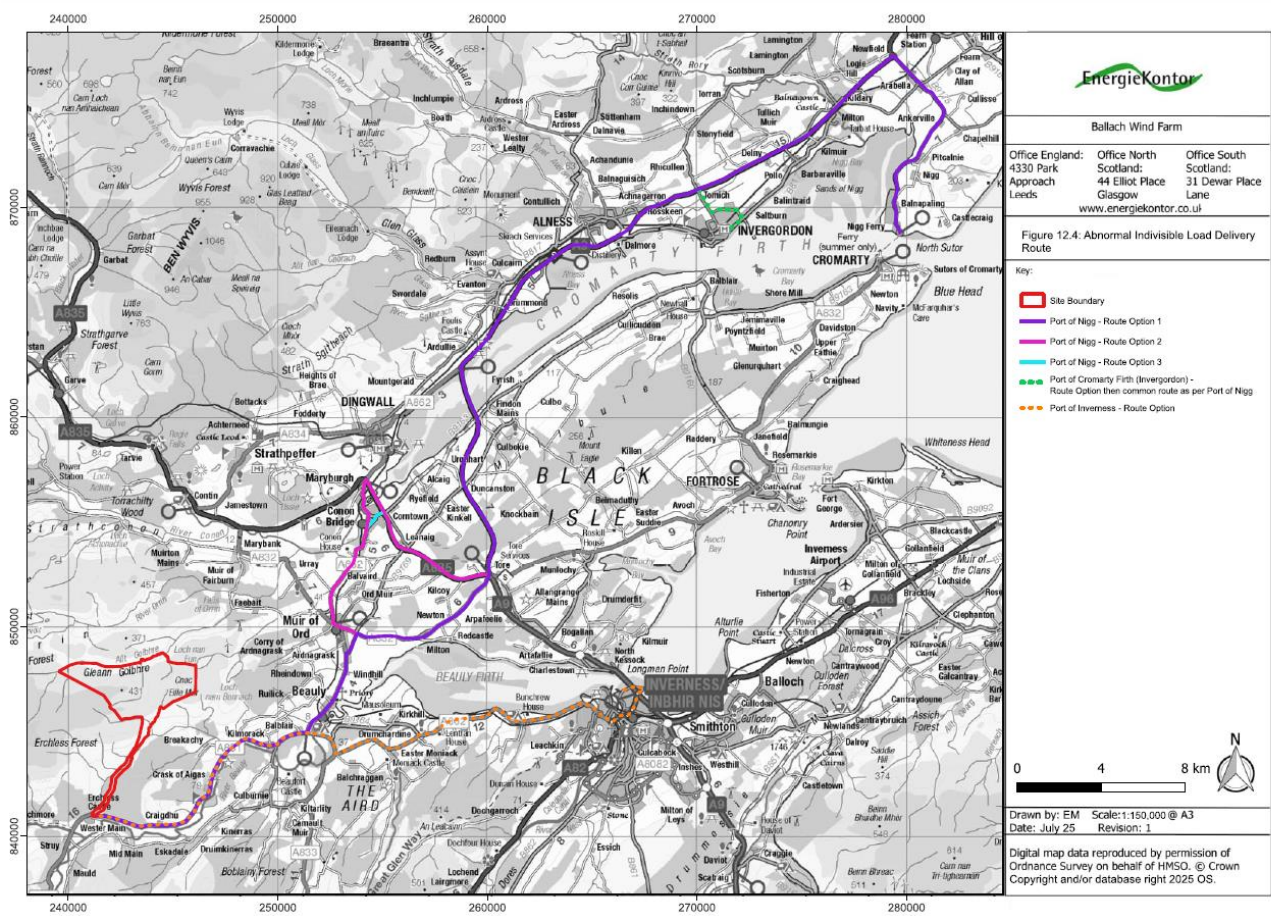


Figure 12.4 Construction Traffic and Abnormal Indivisible Load Delivery Route Plan

Site Junction Design

- 17.12 An upgraded access junction from the A831 will be constructed to allow access to the Site. The upgraded access junction will accommodate abnormal load deliveries from the east and will then join with the existing junction and forestry track, utilising the current infrastructure as far as possible. An indicative access area has been provided on plans; however, a detailed site access junction has been provided in Figure 12.5, located in Volume 2 of the EIAR.
- 17.13 All overrun areas will be constructed with crushed stone with all track and over-run surfacing within the limits of road adoption to be surfaced to adoptable standards. The existing junction will be resurfaced, and an asphalt strip will also be incorporated. Once abnormal load deliveries have been completed, the additional widening required for overrun surfacing will be removed.
- 17.14 The site access point and accompanying internal track layout have been designed to accommodate the range of vehicles anticipated during the construction and operation of the proposed development.

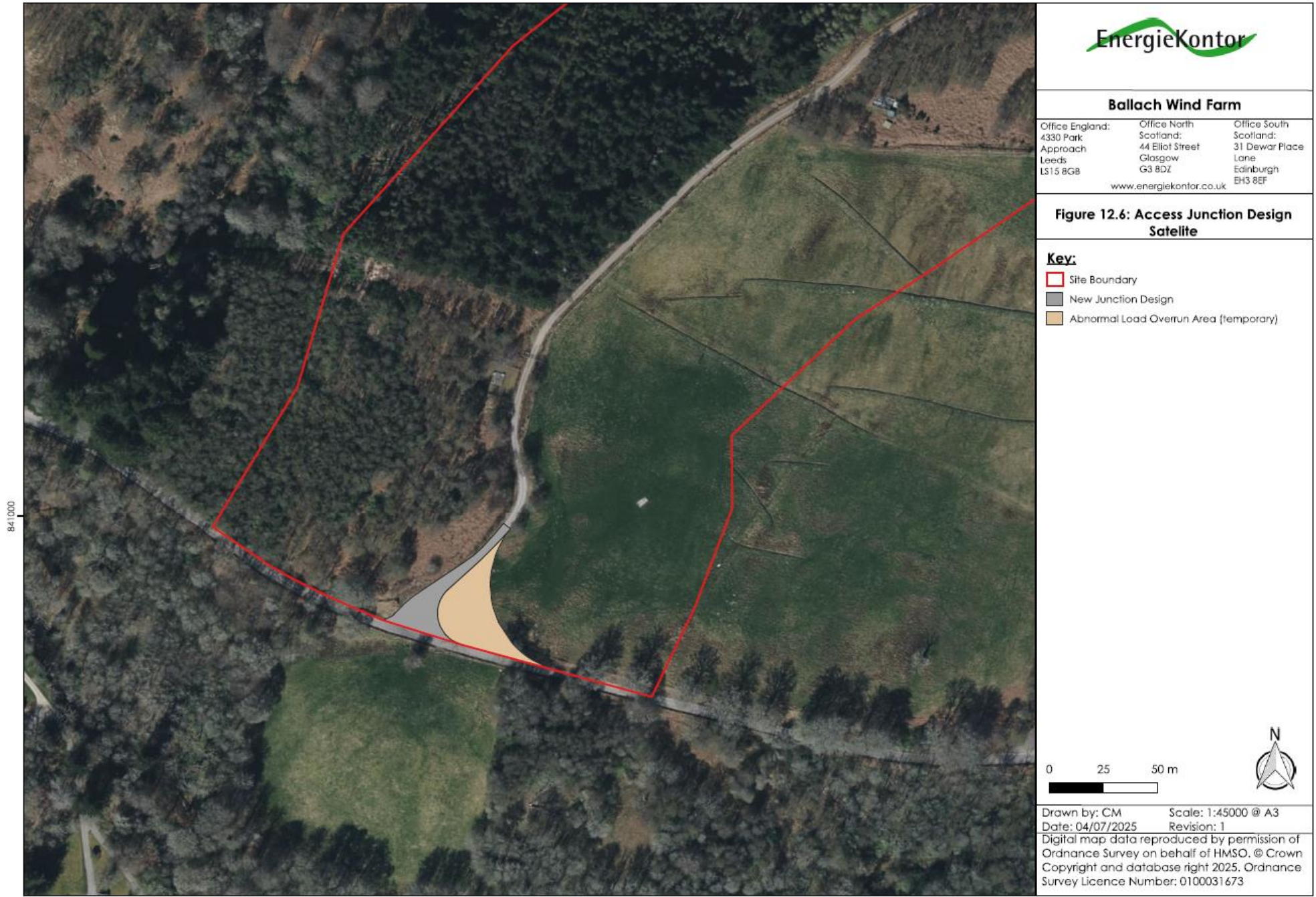
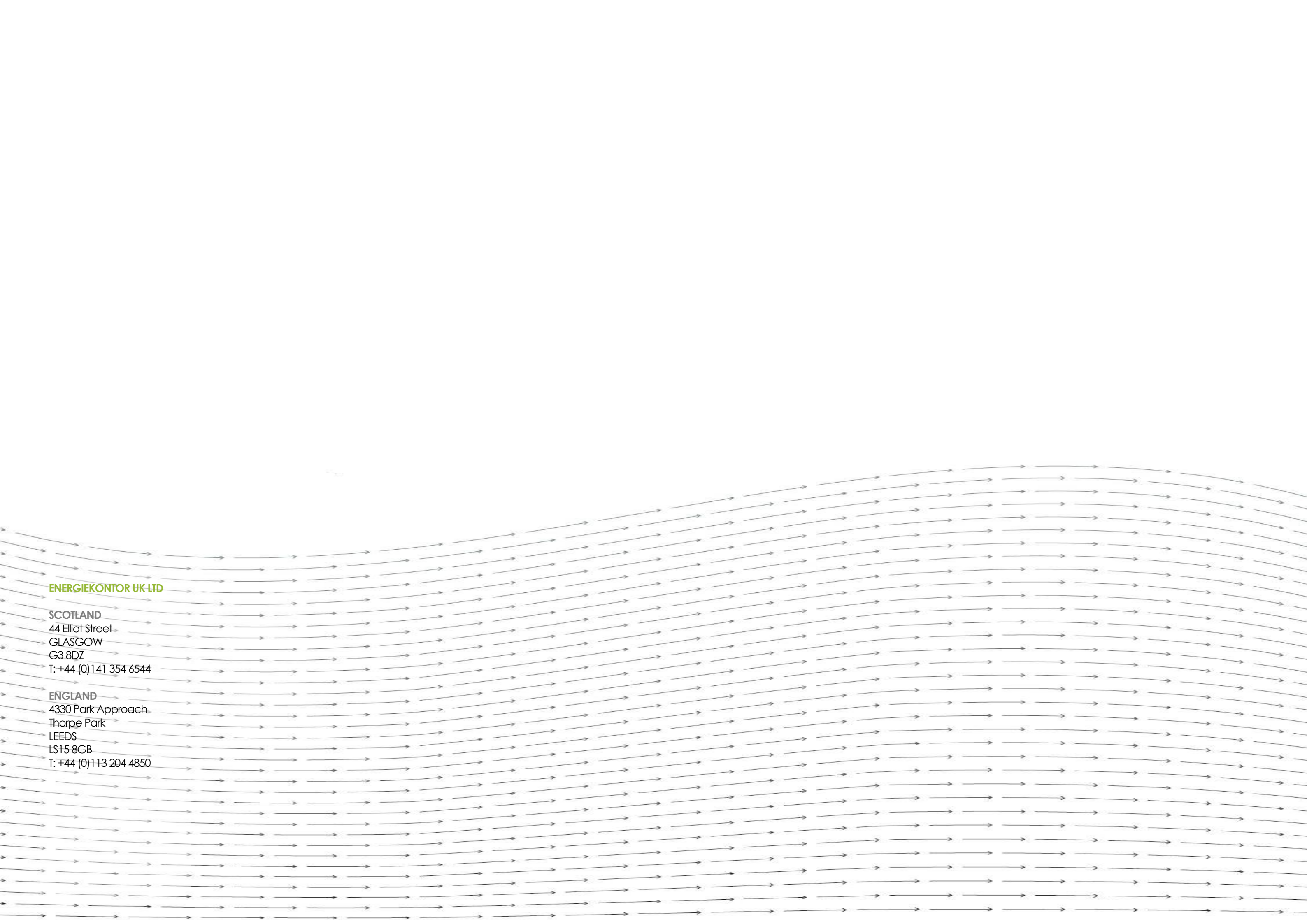


Figure 12.6 Junction Design



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Ballach Wind Farm Pre-Application Consultation Report

Prepared for EnergieKontor UK Ltd

July 2025

Contents.

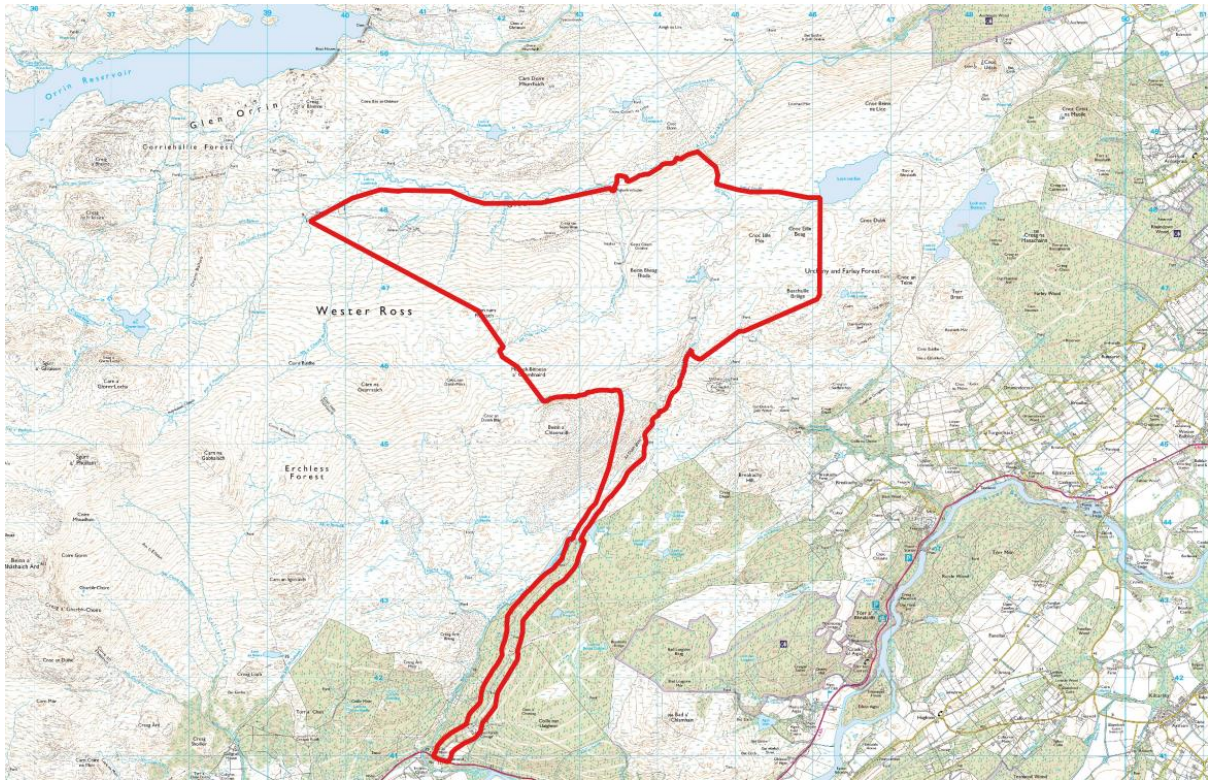
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1. Background.

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report has been prepared by Cavendish Consulting on behalf of Energiekontor UK Ltd ('The Applicant'). Detailed within this report is a schedule of consultation activity which was carried out in relation to proposals for the Ballach Wind Farm ('The Proposed Development').
- 1.1.2 The description of the Proposed Development is as follows: *"Development of a wind farm of up to 20 wind turbines, including associated development such as crane pads, access tracks, a substation temporary construction compound, and 5MW onsite Battery Storage"*.
- 1.1.3 With a generating capacity over 50MW, the Proposed Development is subject to Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989, administered by the Energy Consents Unit (ECU). A full section 36 application for consent has been submitted to the Energy Consents Unit and this report has been produced to accompany the formal application.
- 1.1.4 Albeit not a statutory requirement for Section 36 applications, the Applicant has applied the principles of the consultation process recommended for 'major' planning applications as set out in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2022 and Planning Circular 3:2022-Development Management Procedures. This enables the local community and all those with an interest in the proposals a clear opportunity to view the proposals and importantly comment and feedback.
- 1.1.5 This PAC Report outlines the programme of consultation activity undertaken by the Applicant, including formal information events and wider engagement with the community and stakeholders.
- 1.1.6 Where possible, this report outlines the feedback received at formal public consultation events and through meetings with community groups, and how the Applicant has responded within the final application.



INITIAL RED LINE BOUNDARY (SEPTEMBER 2024)

2. Consultation overview.

2.1 Best practice

2.1.1 The Applicant is aware of the value of engaging with and seeking to involve local people in development proposals, both prior to and following the submission of any application and through to the construction and operation should the Applicant's proposals obtain consent.

2.1.2 Planning Advice Note (PAN) 3/2010 – Community Engagement is an update of PAN 81 which advises that in order for the community engagement to be successful, it is important that everyone interested in the future development of the community, village, town, or city they live in, should understand the planning process. Developers are advised to involve residents at the earliest opportunity so that they can feel confident that engagement in the process has been meaningful.

2.1.3 PAN 3/2010 highlights that the term “consultation” is used to mean the:

“Dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups based on a genuine exchange of views and, normally, with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action. The terms ‘engagement’ and ‘involvement’ are generally interchangeable and are taken to mean the establishment of effective relationships with individuals or groups. Participation is everything that enables people to influence the decisions and get involved in the actions that affect their lives. In the context of this document engagement is, in effect, giving people a genuine opportunity to have a say on a development plan or proposal which affects them; listening to what they say and reaching a decision in an open and transparent way to ensure they are taking account of all views expressed (page 3, paragraph 1).”

2.1.4 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (2023) also highlights the important role of effective engagement, stating:

“Throughout the planning system, opportunities are available to engage in development planning and decisions about future development. Such engagement, undertaken in line with statutory requirements, should be early, collaborative, meaningful and proportionate. Support or concern expressed on matters material to planning must be given careful consideration in the determination of development proposals.”

The Applicant is committed to undertaking effective and early consultation methods in this way, including tailoring its strategies to suit individual communities. Residents’ values and issues of importance vary, and the consultation programmes are designed to reflect that.

2.2 Timeline

2.2.1 The Applicant's plans for the Proposed Development were launched in September 2024 when key stakeholders were notified of the submission of a Scoping Opinion to the ECU.

2.2.2 Following the submission, the ECU informed several consultees, listed below:

The Highland Council	Historic Environment Scotland
NatureScot	SEPA
Transport Scotland	Scottish Forestry
AGS (Glasgow Airport)	GIP Aerodrome Safeguarding (Edinburgh)
British Horse Society	BT
Civil Aviation Authority	Crown Estate Scotland
Defence Infrastructure Organisation	District Salmon Fisheries Board
Fisheries Management Scotland	Fisheries Trust
Glasgow Prestwick Airport	Highlands and Islands Airport
John Muir Trust	Joint Radio Company
Mountaineering Scotland	NATS Safeguarding
RSPB Scotland	Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (ScotWays)
Scottish Water	Scottish Wild Land Group (SWLG)
Scottish Wildlife Trust	Kilmorack Community Council (Host)
Strathglass Community Council	Marybank, Scatwell and Strathconon Community Council
Muir of Ord Community Council	Beaully Community Council

2.2.3 The first phase of consultation for the development was announced on 15th January 2025 when stakeholders were notified of the upcoming public exhibition. The letter (Appendix 1) included details such as the consultation date, the location of the proposed site, and an outline of the infrastructure included in the plans.

2.2.4 The email was sent to:

- Aird and Loch Ness Ward Councillors
- Dingwall and Seaforth Ward Councillors
- Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Ward Councillors
- Leader of Highland Council
- Convener of Highland Council
- Vice-Convener of Highland Council
- Leader of Opposition on Highland Council
- Chair of Highland Council South Planning Applications Committee
- Vice-Chair of Highland Council South Planning Applications Committee
- Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross MP
- Inverness, Skye and West Ross-shire MP
- Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch MSP
- Highlands and Islands MSPs
- Local Community Councils:
 - Beaully
 - Kilmorack

- Kiltarlity
 - Marybank, Scatwell and Strathconon
 - Muir of Ord
 - Strathglass
- 2.2.5 Dialogue has been maintained with local community councils up to the point of submission via written and verbal communication and will continue through determination of the planning application and, should this planning application be approved, into the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. To date, this communication has included information on upcoming consultation events, and general information on the application.
- 2.2.6 Two rounds of formal public consultations were held in the Kilmorack Community Hall (Beauly, IV4 7AH). A first public consultation event took place on 29 January 2025 with a second event taking place on 4 June 2025.
- 2.2.7 The timings and venues of the public exhibitions were also intended to provide members of the public with the best opportunity at which to attend, view the proposals and importantly provide feedback.
- 2.2.8 All comments and feedback received from the consultation period, as well as those received through additional community engagement programme have been collated and analysed as part of this PAC Report (Section 6), which also illustrates how feedback has, where possible, helped shape and inform the Proposed Development.

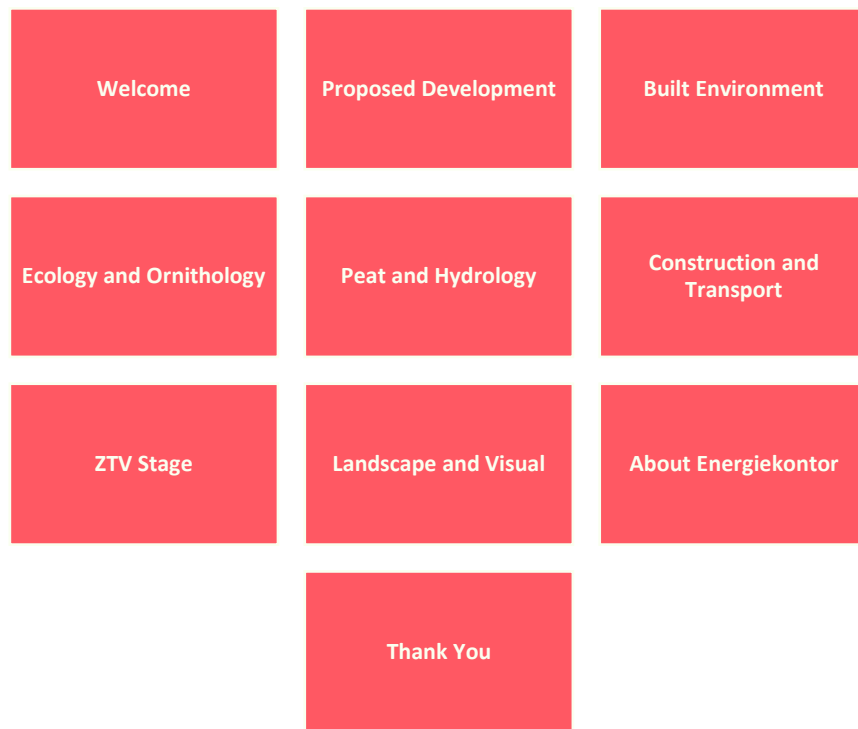
3. First consultation.

2.3 Overview

- 2.3.1 The first round of consultation for the development took place on 29th January 2025 from 2:00pm to 7:00pm at the Kilmorack Hall, Kilmorack, Beaulieu, IV4 7AH.
- 2.3.2 As stated, the first phase of consultation for the development was announced on 15th January 2025 when stakeholders were notified of the upcoming public exhibition. The letter (Appendix 1) included details such as the consultation date, the location of the proposed site, and an outline of the infrastructure included in the plans.
- 2.3.3 In addition to notifying political stakeholders, a flyer (Appendix 2) was sent to 3239 residences within the vicinity of the site (map available in Appendix 3).
- 2.3.4 The flyer was subsequently sent to an additional 207 addresses in Beaulieu following a request from a local resident.
- 2.3.5 In addition, public notices (Appendices 4, 5, 6 & 7) were placed in the January 17th edition of the Ross-shire Journal and the January 21st editions of The Press and Journal and Inverness Courier.
- 2.3.6 A poster (Appendix 8) was shared with the local community councils to be posted on social media and around the local area.
- 2.3.7 A number of enquiries were received once the Proposed Development became public. The Applicant responded by providing answers to questions over the phone and by email where possible, confirming details about the Proposed Development, and the consultation process.
- 2.3.8 A feedback form (Appendix 9) was available at the exhibition and online at <https://energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/ballach-wind-farm/> from the same date which included an opportunity to provide general feedback on the proposals as well as suggestions for community benefits. The opportunity to provide feedback remained open from January 29th to February 25th.

2.4 In-person exhibition event

- 2.4.1 In total, 157 people attended the first consultation event.
- 2.4.2 At the event, ten information boards were on display (Appendix 10). Paper copies of the boards were also on display to be taken home on request and the information was available at <https://energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/ballach-wind-farm/> from 29th January 2025.
- 2.4.3 The subjects of the boards were as follows:



2.4.4 Printed visualisations were (Appendix 11) were also on display. These showed:

- LVIA Viewpoint Wirelines
- Red Line Boundary
- Scoping Layout
- LVIA Study Area and ZTV of Proposed Development (to Blade Tip) (120k Scale)

2.4.5 The feedback period for the first phase of consultation ended on 25th February 2025. In total, 41 forms were received at the event, online and via post.



IMAGE FROM FIRST CONSULTATION EVENT, 29TH JANUARY 2025

4. Second consultation.

4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 In June 2025, the Applicant returned to Kilmorack Community Hall to reconsult with the community and demonstrate the changes which had been incorporated into the design following the first round of consultation.
- 4.1.2 Stakeholders were again notified via email (Appendix 12) on 14th May 2025. The email included details of the second consultation event, and information about changes made to the scheme following feedback received from the local community.
- 4.1.3 Following the undertaking of analysis of the feedback received at the first event, the Applicant made changes to the proposals, including reducing the number of turbines to 20. The revised site map showing these changes can be seen in Appendix 13.
- 4.1.4 As with the first round of consultation, a flyer (Appendix 14) was sent to 4184 residences within an increased radius following feedback from the first consultation event (Appendix 15). The increased radius included further homes to the southeast edge of the site in areas such as Kiltarlity as well as the homes in Beaully that were added to the initial radius.
- 4.1.5 A public notice (Appendices 16, 17, 18, & 19) was placed in the May 22nd edition of The Press and Journal and the May 23rd edition of the Inverness Courier and Ross-shire Journal.
- 4.1.6 Enquiries continued to be received between the first and second consultation periods, and the Applicant responded by providing answers over the phone and by email to questions wherever possible, confirming details about the Proposed Development and explaining that a second public consultation event was being planned for June.
- 4.1.7 As with the first round of consultation, a poster was drafted (Appendix 20) and sent to community councils to be put on social media and around the local area.
- 4.1.8 A feedback form (Appendix 21) was available to be filled out at the event or taken home to fill out at a later date. The feedback form was available online at <https://energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/ballach-wind-farm/> from 4th June. Respondents were given four weeks to provide feedback.

4.2 In-person exhibition events

- 4.2.1 The second consultation event was held at the Kilmorack Community Hall from 2:00pm to 6:30pm and was attended by 70 people over the session. Members of the project team were on hand to answer questions and discuss the proposals with members of the public.
- 4.2.2 Information boards were on display, with eight new boards (Appendix 22), combined with two boards from the previous consultation. The boards provided an overview of the updated proposals which included (as stated) a reduction of turbines to 20, as well as the utilisation of topographical features of the site to position turbines at lower elevations, thus reducing their overall visual height,

along with the turbines being set back from the periphery of the site as far as possible to reduce turbine intrusion towards residential areas to the east of the site and avoiding elevated land to the west of the site.



4.2.3 The subjects of the boards were as follows (new boards in black):

4.2.4 Print outs of various viewpoints and visualisations (Appendix 23) were also available around the room.

4.2.5 These visualisations showed:

- ZTV to Blade Tip with Viewpoint Locations and Cumulative Wind Farms
- Viewpoints:
 - Torgormac
 - Struy
 - Beaully
 - Kiltarlity
 - Contin
 - Kessock Bridge.

4.2.6 In total, 18 feedback forms were received over the course of the consultation period by the time the period of feedback ended on 3rd July 2025.



IMAGE FROM SECOND CONSULTATION EVENT, 4TH JUNE 2025

5. Additional engagement.

5.1 Meetings

5.1.1 As part of the Applicant's ongoing engagement with the local community regarding the proposed development, several meetings took place as part of the pre-application consultation.

5.1.2 The Applicant met with Highland People's Power (HPP) on MS Teams on 11th March 2025.

5.1.3 HPP is a Community Benefit Society registered with the Financial Conduct Authority. Launched in November 2024, the society's main aim is pushing for community and public ownership of renewable energy generation through potential shared ownership and joint ventures.

5.1.4 The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the potential of a shared ownership model between Energiekontor and HPP, with HPP discussing three potential shared ownership structures (split ownership, joint venture, and revenue share).

5.2 Contact details

5.2.1 To ensure that as many interested parties as possible were able to access information regarding the proposals and speak to a member of the project team, a dedicated website, email address and phone number were established. The relevant contact details are listed below.

5.2.2 Website: <https://energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/ballach-wind-farm/>

5.2.3 Phone number: 0141 674 8680

5.2.4 Email address: ballachwindfarm@energiekontor.com

5.2.5 The website contained information about the Applicant and the Proposed Development. The relevant consultation materials were uploaded to the project website in tandem with the first and second phase of the consultation.

6. Feedback and responses.

6.1 Feedback from consultation

- 6.1.1 The consultation introduced the Proposed Development to the local community and provided an opportunity for all stakeholders to provide feedback.
- 6.1.2 A feedback form was made available at both events, online and by request, with the option for interested parties to send feedback via multiple channels.
- 6.1.3 The Applicant's contact details (email, print and phone) were also prominent throughout.

6.2 Response to key consultation topics

- 6.2.1. The following section sets out the key topics raised during the pre-application consultation period and those raised in the various meetings and discussions the Applicant had with stakeholders.
- 6.2.2. Where appropriate, a response has been made to show how these issues have been addressed or indeed, highlight where adjustments have been made to the site layout as a direct result of the feedback received.

Key issue	Applicant response
Number of turbines	The design of the Proposed Development has been refined throughout the consultation process following completion of detailed environmental and technical surveys and assessments, as well as comprehensive analysis of the feedback received. As such, the Applicant made the decision to reduce the number of turbines from 36 to 20. Specifically, the number was reduced in the western area of the site to reduce proximity to Wild Land.
Site Access	The site access will be taken from port of Invergordon or Nigg, south via A9 to Tore, then west towards Muir of Ord and then Beauly, finally along A831 to site. Takes existing estate track east of Erchless
Site Design	The Applicant carefully selects and designs wind-farm sites to maximise renewable-energy output while protecting the character of the surrounding landscape. Robust local planning procedures ensure that only well-designed schemes receive consent. This particular site combines a strong wind resource, limited ecological constraints, good access, and close proximity to a viable grid connection. With an appropriate design, the development aligns with National Planning Framework 4, enjoys clear policy support, and makes a meaningful contribution to Scotland's Net-Zero targets.
Cumulative Impact	The Scottish Government has committed to reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045, with a target of delivering 20GW of onshore wind capacity by 2030. However, achieving net zero will require exceeding this target, as further renewable generation is essential.

	Crucially, carbon reductions must be delivered across all sectors - particularly heat, transport, and industrial processes-which remain heavily dependent on fossil fuels. As these sectors transition to electricity, Scotland's peak electricity demand is expected to at least double over the next two decades. Meeting this rising demand will require a significant expansion of renewable energy infrastructure, including a substantial increase in onshore wind capacity. In addition to its environmental benefits, onshore wind contributed £3.4 billion to Scotland's economy in 2023 and supports over 12,300 jobs, underlining its role as a key driver of sustainable economic growth.
Community Benefit	The Applicant is committed to building positive, long-term relationships with communities neighbouring its projects by working openly, collaboratively, and with a focus on delivering tangible local benefits. One of the most direct and meaningful ways a project like Ballach Wind Farm can benefit the local area is through the creation of jobs and opportunities for local businesses and contractors. The use of local services and amenities during construction and operation can generate significant investment and support the local economy. The Applicant is dedicated to maximising local involvement throughout all phases of the project. A community benefit package will be provided in line with the Scottish Government's guidance - or equivalent guidance in place at the time of commissioning - delivering sustained value to the community for the lifetime of the wind farm.
Battery Storage	The Applicant understands the concerns raised by local residents regarding the inclusion of the 5MW Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) the Proposed Development. BESS plays a crucial role in improving the overall efficiency and reliability of any wind farm by storing excess energy generated during periods of low demand and releasing it when demand is higher or when wind conditions are not optimal. This helps reduce reliance on fossil fuels, stabilises the grid, and maximises the value of renewable energy.

7 Conclusion.

7.1 Concluding statement

- 7.1.1. From the project launch, the Applicant sought to engage and consult comprehensively with the local community and relevant stakeholders to gather feedback on the proposals.
- 7.1.2. While not mandated by statute for a Section 36 planning application, the Applicant has actively pursued and exceeded best practices in the community engagement and public consultation, as evidenced by the two extensive rounds of public consultation.
- 7.1.3. The Applicant extends sincere appreciation to those who participated in the in-person public exhibitions, reviewed the proposals online, and provided valuable feedback via email and telephone. The feedback received has been invaluable, directly influencing and shaping the project's design in significant ways including a which included a reduction of turbines to 20, as well as the utilisation of topographical features of the site to position turbines at lower elevations, thus reducing their overall visual height, along with the turbines being set back from the periphery of the site as far as possible to reduce turbine intrusion towards residential areas to the east of the site and avoiding elevated land to the west of the site.
- 7.1.4. These modifications underscore the Applicant's commitment to ensuring that the development is responsive to local needs and priorities. By integrating community feedback into the project's design, the Applicant has not only met regulatory requirements but also demonstrated a genuine commitment to creating a development that reflects the concerns and values of the local community. This collaborative approach has resulted in a scheme that is both environmentally and socially considerate, highlighting the meaningful impact of the consultation process on the final design.

Appendices.

Appendix 1: 29th January Event Stakeholder Letter



14th January 2025

Dear [REDACTED],

Energiekontor UK Ltd: Ballach Wind Farm

I would like to take this opportunity to make you aware that Energiekontor UK is exploring the potential of developing a wind farm development approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack, within the Erchless and Farley estates; and invite you to our upcoming consultation event:

29th January | Kilmorack Community Hall | 2pm to 7pm

Energiekontor UK Ltd, established in 1999, is a leading developer in the renewable energy sector and a key subsidiary of Germany-based Energiekontor AG. Energiekontor UK operates from offices in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Leeds, driving forward the UK's renewable energy transition with particular focus on Scotland. Combining technical expertise, innovation, and a commitment to sustainability, the company plays a vital role in delivering high-quality wind and solar projects that contribute to the UK's green energy goals.

Ballach Wind Farm

Following a scoping request in October 2024, our initial assessments for the site suggest it could accommodate a wind farm of up to 36 turbines, and an onsite Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) which would allow renewable energy stored and released during peaks in demand. The site, located approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack, has been selected due to its high wind speeds, proximity to the electricity grid and relative distance from concentrations of residential properties and other key environmental sensitivities.

As the project will have a generating capacity greater than 50MW, it will require consent under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 meaning that the consenting process will be administered through the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) of the Scottish Government.

In addition to enabling progress towards Scotland's ambitious Net Zero and onshore wind targets, Energiekontor is committed to a community benefit package, in line with the Scottish Government's best practice guideline, of £5,000 per megawatt.

Public Consultation

Energiekontor is dedicated to engaging with the local community regarding the proposals. The event will provide an opportunity for members of the public to view the proposals, discuss the proposals in person and leave feedback with the project team. This includes information on our proposed Community Benefit Fund, to benefit local projects and improvements in the nearby areas. Feedback from the event will be used to shape and inform the proposals ahead of the second round of consultation, currently planned for March 2025.

The information shared during the consultation, along with the opportunity to provide feedback, will also be accessible on the dedicated project website (<https://energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/ballach-wind-farm/>) from the 29th of January. The opportunity for members of the public to provide feedback will remain open until February 24th.

Next Steps

We would be delighted to meet with you to discuss this project in greater detail and to answer any questions you may have. We would also be delighted to hear of any local groups that you consider it would be useful to hold discussions with. To arrange a meeting, please contact my colleague Cahal Smith on 0141 674 8680 or by email at cahal.smith@cavendishconsulting.com

Yours sincerely,

Calum Morris

Project Manager, Energiekontor UK Limited

Appendix 2: 29th January Event Flyer

Ballach Wind Farm Public Consultation

EnergieKontor



29th January 2025 | Kilmorack Community Hall | 2pm to 7pm

Energiekontor UK Ltd is delighted to be hosting a first round of consultation events for the proposed Ballach Wind Farm, approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack, within the Erchless and Farley estates.

Members of the public are encouraged to attend the events at the above venues to find out more about the proposals, ask questions of the project team, and provide feedback.

If you are unable to attend the events, the consultation materials and a link to provide feedback will be available from **January 29th to February 24th** on the project website at

<https://energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/ballach-wind-farm/>.



Ballach Wind Farm is proposed to be located approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack, within the Erchless and Farley estates.

Our initial assessments for the site suggest it could accommodate a wind farm of up to 36 turbines, with an upwards capacity of 50 megawatt (50MW)

The proposals also include an onsite Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) which would allow renewable energy to be stored and released during peaks in demand.

The site has been selected due to its high wind speeds, proximity to the electricity grid and relative distance from concentrations of residential properties and other key environmental sensitivities.

If approved, Ballach Wind Farm will include a generous community benefit package, in line with the Scottish Government's guidance, of **£5,000 per MW**. At the public consultation event, Energiekontor will be seeking feedback from the community on how the fund can best be administered and seeking ideas for specific projects and initiatives that could be funded.

The upcoming consultation will provide an opportunity for Energiekontor to answer any questions you may have and collect valuable feedback from members of the public which is crucial to the project development process.

Those unable to attend this event can view project materials and provide feedback from **January 29th to February 24th 2025** at the following website:

<https://energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/ballach-wind-farm/>



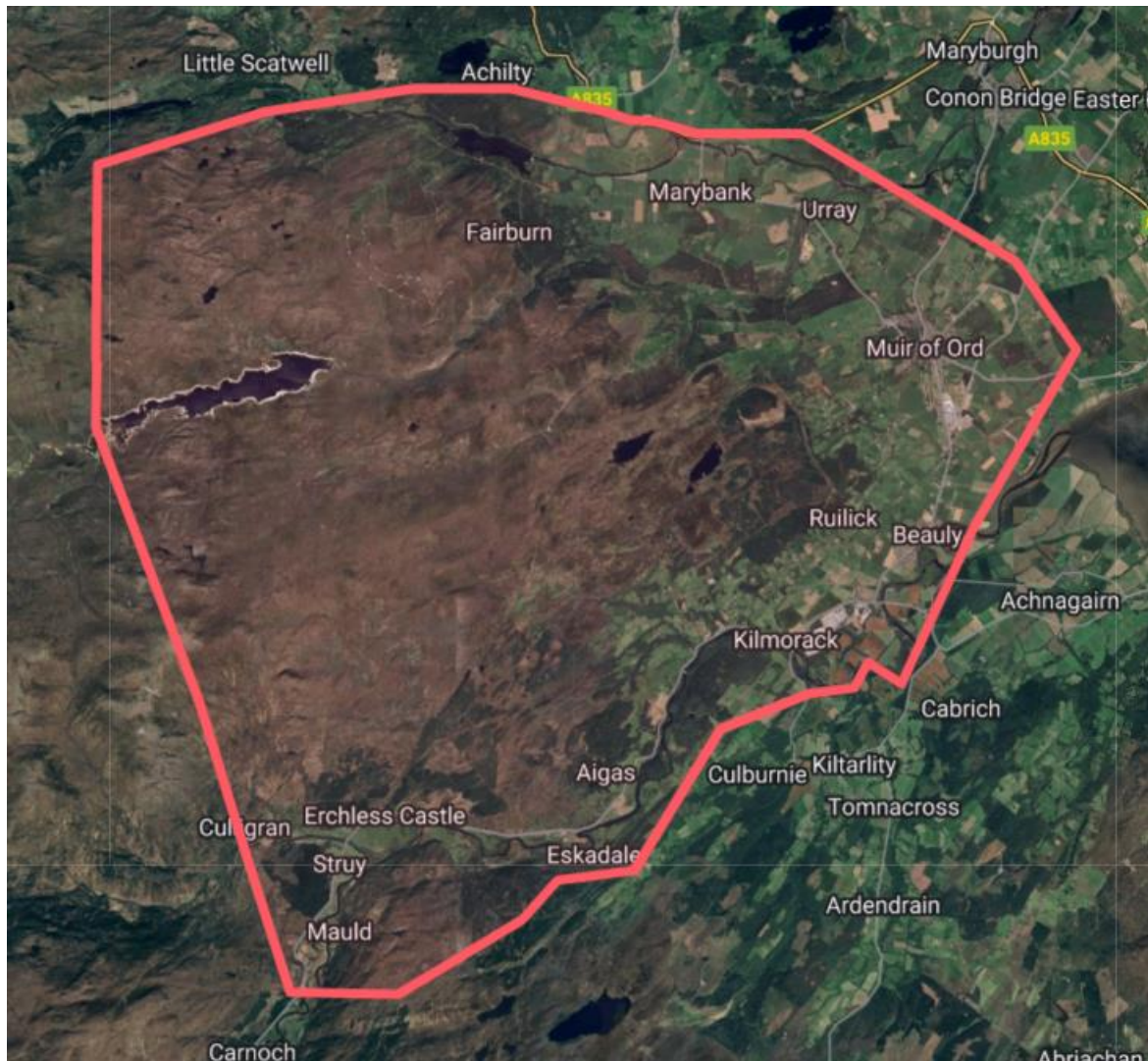
Scan our
QR code

📞 0141 674 8680

✉ **ballachwindfarm**
@energiekontor.com



Appendix 3: Flyer Mailout Radius – 29th January Event



Appendix 4: Public Notice – 29th January Event

Ballach Wind Farm PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENT

Energiekontor UK is exploring the opportunity to develop a new wind farm comprising of up to 36 turbines, approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack, within the Erchless and Farley estates. The project team invite members of the public to attend the below consultation event, where there will be an opportunity to view and comment on the proposals:

**29th January | Kilmorack Community Hall
2pm to 7pm**

The event will provide an opportunity to view the proposals, as well as information on surveys which have been undertaken and the community benefit funding which would be delivered. Members of the project team will be in attendance to answer any questions and receive feedback on the proposed development.

Energiekontor UK is committed to open discussion with members of the public and would encourage feedback and suggestions that could help shape development of the proposals. Feedback forms will be available at the event or on the project website (<https://energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/ballach-wind-farm/>) from January 29th. Please note, all feedback should be returned by February 24th.

For further information, please contact the project team via email at ballachwindfarm@energiekontor.com or in writing to Ballach Wind Farm c/o Cavendish Consulting, Orega Serviced Offices, 220 Saint Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5SG.

Appendix 5: Public Notice – Ross-shire Journal, 17th January 2025

32 Ross-shire Journal

www.ross-shirejournal.co.uk

Friday, January 17, 2025

familynotices

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generalnotices

GENERAL NOTICES

Jamie Stone MP Advice Surgery

Friday 24th January 2025

10.00am to 11.00am
Edderton Community Hall, Edderton

12.00pm to 1.00pm
Mercat Centre, Milton

No Appointment Necessary

Constituency Office: George Street, Wick, Caithness, KW1 6DG
Wick, Market Street, Tain, Ross Shire, TD15 5AA
T: 01752 328064 • email: jamie.stone.mp@parliament.uk

classifiednorth

ELECTRIC BLANKET
- brand new, never used, still in box. £20. Tel: 07840 298904 (evenings)

PINK GYM BALL
- brand new, still in box. £10. Tel: 07840 298904 (evenings)

MOTORCYCLE CLOTHING:
- Richa jacket, size 4XL and trousers, size 3XL; leather jacket, size 52" chest, Glover jacket, size small; Richa trousers, size small, all hardly worn. Tel: 07739 007714 (evenings)

Advertising Deadline
12 Noon Tuesday

publicnotices

www.hIGHLAND.gov.uk

ONLINE ENROLMENT FOR 2025 PRIMARY 1 & EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE PLACES IN A LOCAL AUTHORITY ELC SETTING, PARTNER SETTING AND COMMISSIONED CHILDMINDERS

If your child will be five years of age on or before 28 February 2025, they are eligible to enrol for **Primary 1**.
Children born between 1 March 2021 and 28 February 2023 are entitled to a funded **Early Learning and Childcare** place.
The new session starts on 19 August 2025.
The **P1 enrolment** week for Highland schools is Monday 27 January to Friday 31 January 2025.
For **Early Learning and Childcare** places, enrolment week will be Monday 10 February to Friday 14 February 2025.
To enrol your child, or for further information on completing the online form, the enrolment process, catchment areas, Gaelic Medium education, school transport and placing requests visit www.hIGHLAND.gov.uk/enrol.
Please note that once you have enrolled your child online, the school/setting will contact you to arrange the necessary induction for your child.
Although you may wish your child to attend a school other than your local primary school, you must first enrol at your catchment area primary school and then make a placing request.
If you do not have access to the online enrolment process, please contact your catchment school or preferred ELC setting during enrolment week.

www.hIGHLAND.gov.uk

CLÀRACHADH AIR-LOIDHNE 2025 AIRSON CLAS 1 & TRÀTH-IONNSACHADH IS CÙRAM-CHLOINNE ANN AN SUIDHEACHADH TICC UGHDARRAIS IONADAIL, SUIDHEACHADH COM-PAIRTICHE IS NEACH-CÙRAIM CHLOINNE COIMISEANAICHTHE

Mà bhris ur pàiste còig bliadhna a dh'aois air no ro 28 Gearran 2026, faodar an clàrachadh airson **Clas 1**.
Tha làn-chòr aig clann a rugadh eadar 1 Mhàrt 2021 agus 28 Gearran 2023 air àite ro-muichte **Tràth-ionnsachaidh** is **Cùram-chloinne**.
Tha an seisean ur a' tòiseachadh air 19 Lùnastal 2025.
S e an t-seachdain clàrachaidh airson **Clas 1** airson sgòilean na Gàidhealtachd Diluan 27 Faoilleach gu Dhàine 31 Faoilleach 2025.
S e an t-seachdain clàrachaidh airson àiteachan **Tràth-ionnsachaidh** is **Cùram-chloinne** Diluan 10 Gearran gu Dhàine 14 Gearran 2025.
Gus ur pàiste a chlàrachadh no airson tuilleadh fiosrachaidh mu bhith a' lèachd an fhoirm air-loidhne, pròiseas clàrachaidh, sgìrean-sgoile, Foghlam Iron Ghàidhlig, comhail sgoile agus iarrasan àiteachan-sgoile, tadhalibh air www.hIGHLAND.gov.uk/enrol.
Nuair a tha sibh air ur pàiste a chlàrachadh air-loidhne, cuiridh an sgoil/suidheachadh fios thughaibh gus inntrigeadh a chur air dòigh.
Mà tha sibh airson 's gun tèid ur pàiste gu sgoil eile seach a' bhun-sgoil ionadail agabh, fhaodaidh an àite gum faum sibh an clàrachadh an toiseach an an bun-sgoil na sgoil-sgoile agabh agus seisean àite-sgoile a dhèanamh às dèidh sin.
Mura h-eil cothrom agabh an pròiseas clàrachaidh a dhèanamh air-loidhne, cuiribh fios gu oifis na sgoil-sgoile agabh no dhun an ionaid TICC a' fàis air leth tron t-seachdain-clàrachaidh.

www.hIGHLAND.gov.uk

PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION AT KINLOCHWEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

The Highland Council has published a consultative paper on a proposal to discontinue the provision of education at Kinlochwey Primary School, and to reallocate the school's catchment area to that of Gairloch Primary School. The paper has been issued under the terms of the Council's procedure under The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended. The consultation period began on Monday 13 January 2025 and will finish on Friday 28 February 2025. During this period members of the public are invited to comment on the consultative proposal. Arrangements have been made for representatives of the Highland Council to meet with parents, children and other members of the public to discuss the proposal at a public meeting to be held on:

28 January 2025, 6.30pm at Kinlochwey Village Hall

All comments made in writing or at the public meeting will be presented in due course to the Highland Council's Education Committee for consideration. As this is a public consultation, written submissions, and a note of the meeting, will be made available to the public and any comments submitted may be published on the Council's website – www.hIGHLAND.gov.uk. Hard copies of the report have been made available at Gairloch Primary School and Shieldaig Primary School. Alternatively the proposals can be viewed online at: <http://www.hIGHLAND.gov.uk/schoolconsultations>

www.hIGHLAND.gov.uk

Ballach Wind Farm PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENT

Energiekontor UK is exploring the opportunity to develop a new wind farm comprising of up to 36 turbines, approximately 4km northwest of Kinloch, within the Erchless and Farley estates. The project team invite members of the public to attend the below consultation event, where there will be an opportunity to view and comment on the proposals:

29th January | Kinloch Community Hall | 2pm to 7pm

The event will provide an opportunity to view the proposals, as well as information on surveys which have been undertaken and the community benefit funding which would be delivered. Members of the project team will be in attendance to answer any questions and receive feedback on the proposed development. Energiekontor UK is committed to open discussion with members of the public and would encourage feedback and suggestions that could help shape development of the proposals. Feedback forms will be available at the event or on the project website (<https://energiekontor.co.uk/four-projects/balach-wind-farm/>) from January 29th. Please note, all feedback should be returned by February 24th. For further information, please contact the project team via email at balachwindfarm@energiekontor.com or in writing to Ballach Wind Farm c/o Cavendish Consulting, Omega Serviced Offices, 220 Saint Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5SG.

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Appendix 6: Public Notice – Press & Journal – 21st January 2025

42 **CLASSIFIED**

THE PRESS AND JOURNAL
Tuesday, January 21, 2025

The Press and Journal Classified

Email.	Phone.	Post.
Email your advert to: advertising@cpjohnson.co.uk Please remember to give your name, address, postcode and telephone number.	Aberdeen 01224 691212 Inverness 01463 272333 Our lines are open: Mon. to Fri. 9am - 5pm	Aberdeen Journals Ltd., Classified, 1 Marischal Square, Broad Street, Aberdeen AB10 1BL Stoneyfield Business Park, Stoneyfield, Inverness IV2 7PA

Notice Board Public Notices The Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) and The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 Regulation 7(2) (as amended) - Notice of Pre-Application Consultation Public Event Anesco give notice of their intention to submit a planning application for the proposed development as follows: "Proposed installation of a Grid Battery Energy Storage Facility (up to 50MW), with associated development" at Land at the Waters, Glenbervie, Stoneyfield, AB39 3YR. Further information on the proposed development will be available at two public exhibitions, being held on a drop-in basis as follows: 13:00-19:00 on 29th January 2025 & 13:00-19:00 on 6th March 2025 at: Auchenblae Village Hall, 1, Monboddio Street, Laurencekirk, AB39 1XQ. Any persons wishing to make comments relating to the proposal or wishing to obtain further information may also do so by contacting: Colin Lavery - Stantec (Agent) colin.lavery@stantec.com or 07769 350 653, or by post to Colin Lavery, Stantec, 5th Floor, Lomond House, 9 George Square, Glasgow, G2 1DY. Comments should be submitted to the prospective applicant at the address above by 20th March 2025. Please note, comments on these proposals are to the prospective applicant and are not formal representations to Aberdeenshire Council. If a subsequent planning application is submitted, there will be a further opportunity to make formal representations on the application to Aberdeenshire Council during the statutory notification period.	Public Notices GOODS VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENCE DAVID AND JEAN MCKERRROW of UPPERMILL FARM, TARVES, ELLON, ABERDEENSHIRE, AB41 7NP is applying for a licence to use UPPERMILL FARM, TARVES, ELLON, ABERDEENSHIRE, AB41 7NP as an Operating Centre for 1 goods vehicle and 0 trailers. Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harshill Lane, Lewis, LL59 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representations must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's Office.	Retail Shop Antiques and Collectables  WANTED MEDALS Experienced knowledgeable buyer looking for British campaign medals, Badges & Militaria ANY GOLD JEWELLERY (rings, bracelets, earrings, watches) purchased for top prices ALL SILVER (flatware/cutlery/scrap/teasets) ANY COIN COLLECTIONS (Gold, Silver, Royal Mint) Appraisals given, cash paid Antiques/collections purchased Tel: 07795 555654 Email: grayser1974@yahoo.co.uk Mobility RISE AND RECLINE CHAIRS NOW IN STOCK MOBILITY CENTRE Haudagain Roundabout AB24 2BR TAKE HOME TODAY LIST - Breeze 50 in new colours - Mobility Scooters small to large - TEL: 01224 699973 - Rise & Recline Chairs - Walking Aids - Part Exchange Old Scooter No Obligation Home Demo, Free Delivery, Get it touch today 817 Great Northern Road AB24 2BR www.mobilitycentre-aberdeen.co.uk	Services Gardening Services J & J TREE SURGEONS Fully Qualified & Insured 12b Garden Place, Aberdeen AB10 1UR HARD & SOFT LANDSCAPING All types of Walls Built, Painted or Repaired • Driveways • Fencing • Turfing • Patios • Paths • Powerwashing • Gravel Supplied & Laid Call John for a FREE estimate Mobile: 07782 958370 Office: 01330 482014 or 01224 953142 Find us on Google 14 days cooling off period offered if required Roofing Services JMS PROPERTY MAINTENANCE • ROOFS CLEANED AND SEALED • ROOF COLOUR COATINGS • DRIVES, PATIOS, PATHS ETC CLEANED • EXTERIOR PAINTING (Masonry, Glass & Woodwork) • APPLEXES • EPDM FLAT ROOF APPROVED INSTALLERS • GET YOUR FREE WINTER ROOF CHECK FREE ESTIMATES AND ADVICE CALL ELGIN 01343 506964 or ABERDEEN 01224 942762 Email: jmspropertymaintenance@ymail.co.uk	CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTANCE OF ADVERTISEMENTS The Publishers retain full discretion as to the contents of "The Press and Journal" and reserve the full right to refuse to publish an advertisement or omit or suspend any advertisement for which an order has been accepted in every case without stating any reasons for so doing. 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We may contact you by mail, email, telephone or fax to let you know about other products, services or promotions which may be of interest to you. Full details of our Conditions of Acceptance can be obtained at our office: Aberdeen Journals Ltd, Your Ads, P.O. Box 43, 1 Marischal Square, Broad Street, Aberdeen AB10 1BL
Ballach Wind Farm PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENT Energiekontor UK is exploring the opportunity to develop a new wind farm comprising of up to 36 turbines, approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack, within the Erchless and Farley estates. The project team invite members of the public to attend the below consultation event, where there will be an opportunity to view and comment on the proposals: 29th January Kilmorack Community Hall 2pm to 7pm The event will provide an opportunity to view the proposals, as well as information on surveys which have been undertaken and the community benefit funding which would be delivered. Members of the project team will be in attendance to answer any questions and receive feedback on the proposed development. Energiekontor UK is committed to open discussion with members of the public and would encourage feedback and suggestions that could help shape development of the proposals. Feedback forms will be available at the event or on the project website (https://energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/balach-wind-farm/) from January 29th. Please note, all feedback should be returned by February 24th. For further information, please contact the project team via email at ballachwindfarm@energiekontor.com or in writing to Ballach Wind Farm c/o Cavendish Consulting, Omega Services Offices, 220 Saint Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5SG.	To insert your notice in The Press and Journal Call 01224 691212 The Press and Journal Classified	DRIVE COBRA MOBILITY SCOOTER All Terrain, 4 big wheels, 8mph, 30 mile radius, carry up to 28 stone, charger and manual, lights, indicators, all round suspension, excellent condition, cost over £4,000. £1,300 o.n.o. Tel: 07503 808251 KINTORE To book your advert call 01224 691212	To book your advert simply call 01224 691212 Pets and Accessories  BICHON FRISE Vet checked, vaccinated, micro-chipped, home reared. Ready now. Tel: 07926 876527 ELLON The Press and Journal Classified	NotePad ITEM: TEL: ITEM: TEL: ITEM: TEL: ITEM: TEL: ITEM: TEL: ITEM: TEL: The Press and Journal Classified

Appendix 7: Public Notice – Inverness Courier – 21st January 2025

27 The Inverness Courier

www.inverness-

**classified
north**

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ELECTRIC BLANKET
- brand new, never used,
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publicnotices

Ballach Wind Farm

PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENT

Energiekontor UK is exploring the opportunity to develop a new wind farm comprising of up to 36 turbines, approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack, within the Erchless and Farley estates. The project team invite members of the public to attend the below consultation event, where there will be an opportunity to view and comment on the proposals:

29th January | Kilmorack Community Hall | 2pm to 7pm

The event will provide an opportunity to view the proposals, as well as information on surveys which have been undertaken and the community benefit funding which would be delivered. Members of the project team will be in attendance to answer any questions and receive feedback on the proposed development.

Energiekontor UK is committed to open discussion with members of the public and would encourage feedback and suggestions that could help shape development of the proposals. Feedback forms will be available at the event or on the project website (<https://energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/balach-wind-farm/>) from January 29th. Please note, all feedback should be returned by February 24th.

For further information, please contact the project team via email at ballachwindfarm@energiekontor.com or in writing to Ballach Wind Farm c/o Cavendish Consulting, Orega Serviced Offices, 220 Saint Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5SG.

Appendix 8: Poster – 29th January Event



EnergieKontor

Ballach Wind Farm
Public Consultation Event

Proposed wind farm of up to 36 turbines, approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack

As part of the statutory pre-application consultation process for the above development, a first consultation event for the proposals will take place:

29th January 2025 | 2.00pm – 7.00pm | Kilmorack Community Hall (IV4 7AH)

The event will provide information on the proposed development and the chance to discuss the proposals and ask questions of the project team.

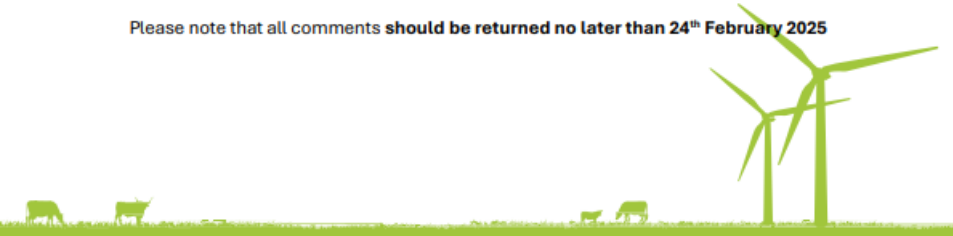
The exhibition material will also be available to view (**from 29th January**) on the dedicated project website: <https://energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/ballach-wind-farm/>

Further information relating to the proposed development can be obtained by contacting **0141 674 8680** or by email at ballachwindfarm@energiekontor.com

Persons wishing to make comments on the proposals may do so at the event, via the website (online feedback form), email, or in writing to:

**C/O Cavendish Consulting,
220 St Vincent Street
Glasgow, G2 5SG**

Please note that all comments **should be returned no later than 24th February 2025**



Appendix 9: Feedback Form – 29th January Event

Ballach Wind Farm Feedback Form



Privacy Statement:

By filling in this form, you are agreeing that Cavendish Consulting can hold and process your personal data in relation to this public consultation exercise.

- Cavendish will only share your personal data with the project team for planning evaluation purposes.
- Your identifiable, personal data will not be used for any other purposes without your consent.

Cavendish and the project team will use your data to:

- Send you updates about the project (where you provide us with your contact details).
- Develop a Pre-Application Consultation Report (or similar document) about this public consultation that will be submitted to the Energy Consents Unit. Your comments will be anonymous, and we will not identify you in this report without your permission.

Cavendish acts on behalf of EnergieKontor UK Ltd to run public consultation activities.

Your Details

Title (Miss/Mrs/Ms/Mr/Other):	Postcode:
First Name or Initial:	Age Group (please circle):
Surname:	Under 13 13-17 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65-74 75-84 85+

Your Contact Details

We will use these details to contact you and update you on the proposals. You don't have to fill in this section if you'd rather we didn't contact you.

Address:	
	Email:
	Telephone:

*PLEASE COMPLETE ALL SECTIONS IN BLOCK CAPITALS

Data Protection

We process all Personal Data in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (together the "GDPR") and the Data Protection Act 2018. Your Personal Data will not be transferred outside the UK or European Economic Area (the EU member states plus Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein). To see our full Privacy Notice and find out how to exercise your data subject rights, please visit cavendishconsulting.com/dp or contact us by phone on 01962 893 893, or email at dataprotection@cavendishconsulting.com.

1. How do you feel about the preliminary plans for the Ballach Wind Farm?

☐ I am supportive ☐ I am neutral ☐ I am opposed

2. What do you think about the proposed preliminary design layout of Ballach Wind Farm?

☐ I am happy about the proposed layout ☐ I am neutral towards the proposed layout
☐ I have concerns about the proposed layout ☐ I don't like onshore wind farms in general

3. EnergieKontor UK Ltd is committed to a Community Benefit Fund of £5,000 per MW. Please tell us about any activities, local groups or ideas that could benefit from this fund?

4. Did you find today's exhibition to be helpful and informative?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No Opinion

5. Do you have any further comments? For example, any local information that can help inform environmental studies and assessments going forward?

Thank you for taking the time today to complete the form

If you would like more time to consider the questions, please print off a copy of the form and return it by **24th February** to: **C/O Cavendish Consulting, 220 St Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5SG**

Email: **ballachwindfarm@energiekontor.com**

Further information on the proposals can be obtained by contacting the project team at the address above or by telephone at **0141 674 8680**.

The feedback form along with more information regarding the proposals can be found at:
www.energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/ballach-wind-farm/



Appendix 10: Consultation Boards – 29th January Event



>>> Welcome to the Ballach Wind Farm Public Exhibition

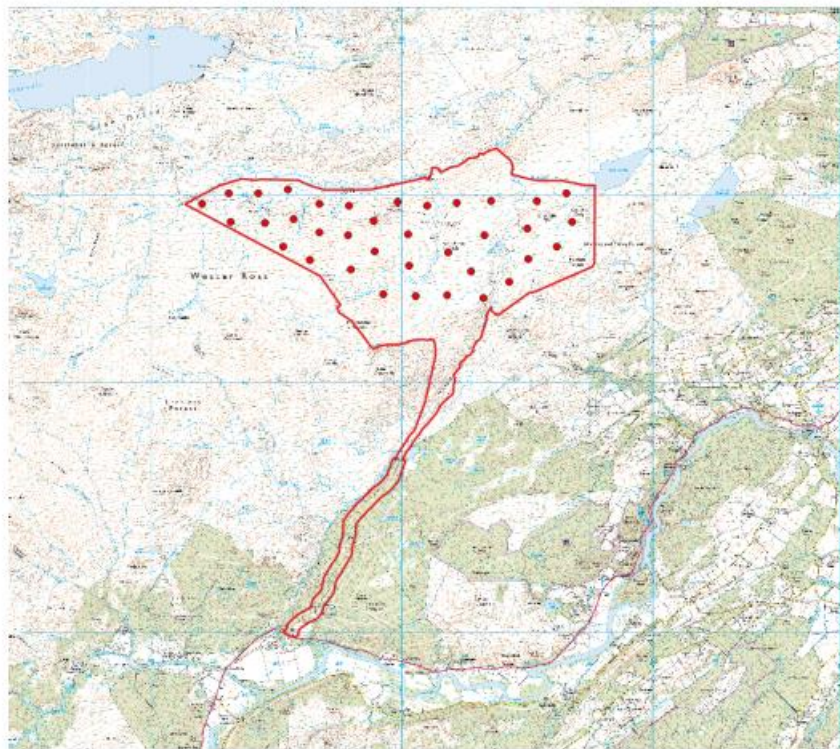
Thank you for coming along.
Should you have any questions, please direct them to a member of the
Energiekontor Team who will be happy to assist.



>> The Proposed Development

BALLACH WIND FARM

- The Site lies approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack, within the Erchless and Farley estates. The Site is primarily open ground. The Orrin Reservoir lies approximately 2km from the Site boundary and the A831 lies immediately to the south of the Site.
- The proposed layout presents a total of 36 turbines.
- The proposed turbines will be to a tip height of up to 230m. These heights are in line with current wind farm technology, economics, and similar applications throughout the country.
- The proposed development will also include access tracks, an on-site substation, borrow pits, a temporary construction compound and 5MW of battery storage.
- As part of our site design and assessment, we have prepared a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) model, which assesses potential visibility out to 45km from the site centre and have prepared wirelines from key design viewpoints.



Why Ballach Wind Farm?

BUILT AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

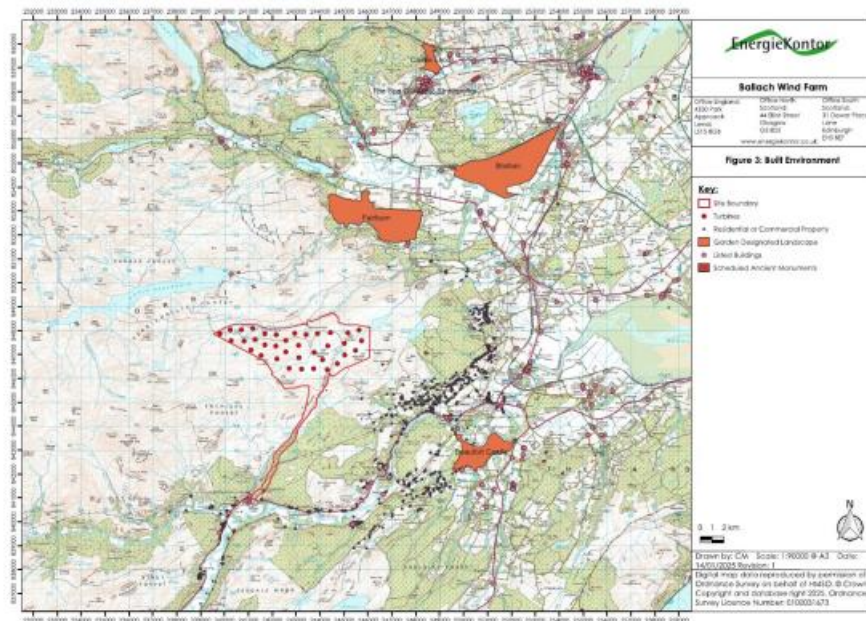
An important consideration to gain an appreciation of the site location in relation to nearby properties and the wider built and historic environment. An initial step with site identification is to understand if there are any built and historic environment constraints and designations which may be impacted, for example:

- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Garden and Designed Landscapes
- Listed Buildings
- Conservation Areas
- Inventory of Historic Battlefields
- Residential Properties

Energiekontor considers that Ballach Wind Farm is situated within a good location and respects the surrounding built environment. The above constraints have been considered in reaching the current design.

Special consideration will be given to the design of the layout and separation distances as well as taking into consideration any relationships with wider built environment.

Fairburn GDL is an example of an asset which has been considered as part of the design process and used as a design viewpoint within the landscape and visual assessment. The map below identifies the relevant designations and constraints that require due consideration throughout the assessment.

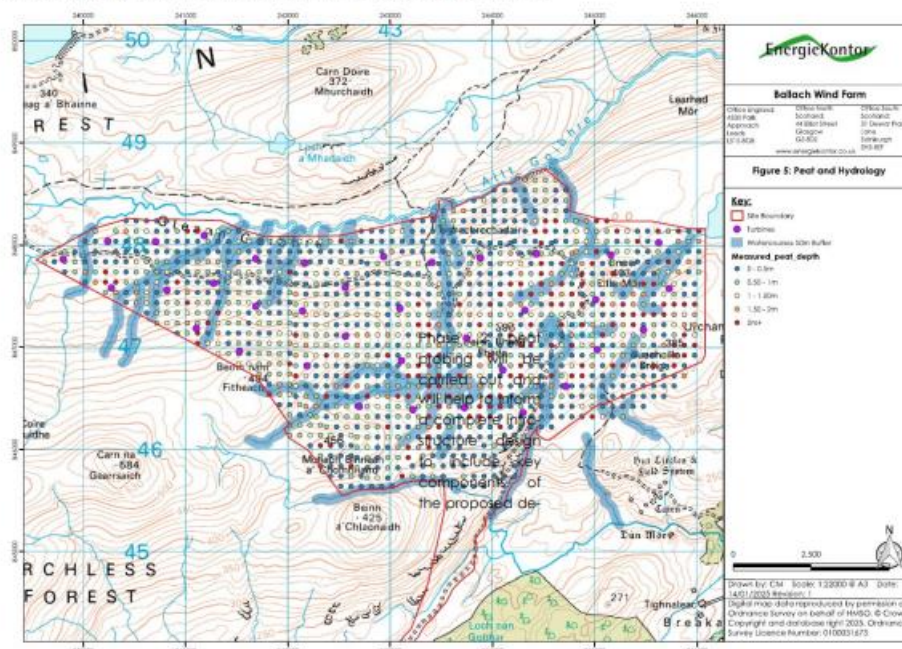


Why Ballach Wind Farm?

PEAT AND HYDROLOGY

Following further site investigation, Phase 1 peat surveys were completed with results shown below. As shown, the site comprises areas of both shallow and deeper peat. When considering constraints and design of the turbine locations across the site, areas of peat greater than 1m in depth are avoided as far as possible.

In addition to the Phase 1 peat probing, a peatland condition assessment has been carried out to assess the quality of the peatland on site and determine if the peat has been eroded or remains in a near natural condition. Areas of degraded/modified peat will be restored as part of this development, enhancing the carbon capture of the site.



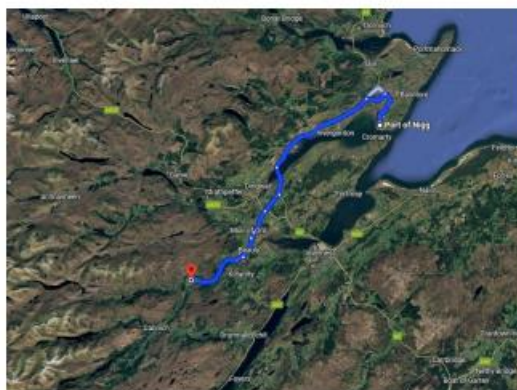
Construction & Transport

PROPOSED ACCESS TO SITE

Access routes have been assessed for the transportation and delivery of turbine components. The preferred option for delivery is illustrated on the map below, routing from Port of Nigg to site.

The turbine components would then be brought to site by abnormal loads vehicles northwards via the A9, A832, A862 and A831 with police escort.

Other traffic movements associated with construction (e.g. concrete and aggregate) will be dependent on the location of the nearest supplier.



CONSTRUCTION PHASE

We appoint specialist contractors and use local suppliers, where possible, to construct our wind farms. The entire process is overseen by our finance and construction teams who have considerable experience in the construction process.

The entire construction period for a wind farm typically takes approximately eighteen months, depending on the particular site. Work starts with the formation of the site access, followed by the laying of the internal access roads and the turbine foundations. These works make up the bulk of construction activity.

During the construction period, on-site working hours would be controlled through planning conditions set out by the local planning authority. Construction traffic associated with the development would also be managed through a Traffic Management Plan. This is typically required as part of a planning condition and would be agreed with the Highland Council highway and planning authorities, prior to construction.

COMMISSIONED & CONNECTED

Once a wind farm has been commissioned and is operational, electricity would be exported from the site to the electricity network to power homes and businesses.

Modern wind turbines are fully automatic, continually reconfiguring themselves to extract the most energy out of the prevailing wind conditions and are managed using remote communication from an off-site operations centre.

WHAT ARE WE DOING TO MINIMIZE EFFECTS?

During the course of the Environmental Assessment, a number of topics will be assessed, and while a worst case will need to be demonstrated, we can look at reducing the overall traffic movements, this can be achieved by:

- Sourcing stone from on site borrow pits
- Plan timings of turbine delivery
- Separate general construction traffic from turbine delivery route
- Liaison between locals and contractors during construction
- Local publicity and advertisement of construction details

EnergieKontor

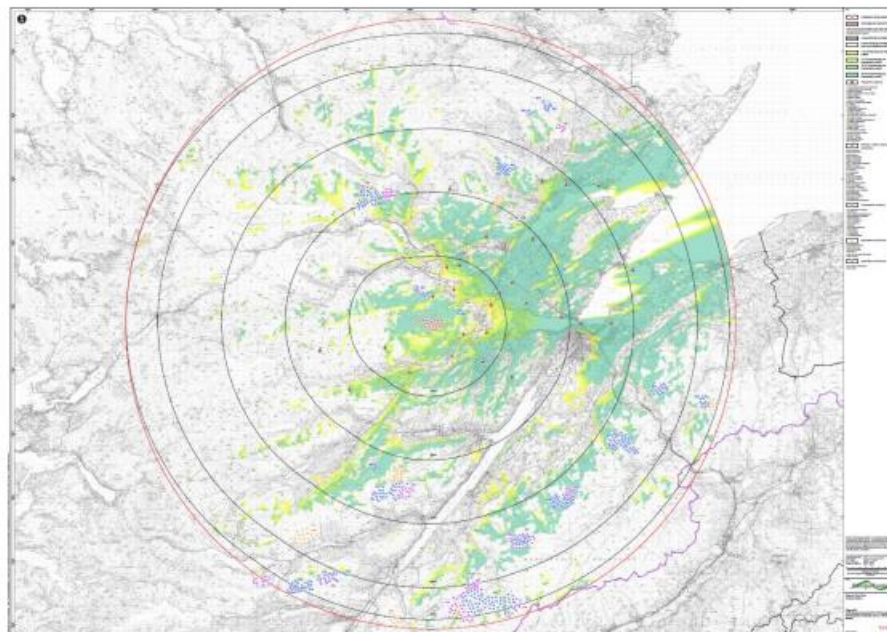
Zone of Theoretical Visibility — 45km

BLADE TIP HEIGHT WITH VIEWPOINTS: 45KM RADIUS

In terms of potential visual effects, the preliminary Zone of Theoretical Visibility, based on the 36 turbine layout and blade tip height of up to 230m, illustrates that theoretical visibility would be limited locally with greater visibility when viewed from the north east at 10-20km. Visibility then becomes increasingly fragmented with distance due to the surrounding topography and landscape.

This is based on a bare ground model of topography that does not account for trees, vegetation or buildings screening views.

The viewpoints selected represent the views of residents, road users, visitors, recreational users and tourists to the area through a combination of elevated summits, popular hill walking destinations as well as key transport routes used by residents and visitors in the area.



A series of wire frames from key design viewpoints has been provided as further visual aid to the proposed turbine layout.



Landscapes and Visual: Method and Viewpoints

LVIA Assessment

Landscape and visual impacts are a key consideration in any Energiekontor project.

As part of our landscape and visual assessment, we follow industry standard guidance produced by The Highland Council and NatureScot to present a robust assessment of the likely significant effects which may arise as part of the proposed development.

Each photomontage which will accompany the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is produced from viewpoints within the 45km LVIA Study Area and are selected to represent what the wind farm will look like in the wider area. These viewpoints are often close to residential areas, prominent hilltops and areas which are frequently used by receptors such as tourists, walkers and road users.

A map showing the proposed viewpoints is provided below. These will be agreed with The Highland Council and NatureScot ahead of an EA application.



>> Who Are We?

ENERGIEKONTOR UK LTD

Energiekontor UK Ltd was founded in 1999 and is part of the Energiekontor AG group of companies which develop wind farms across Europe and North America. Our UK projects are developed by our teams in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Leeds. As a complete service company, we manage our projects from site selection through planning, finance, construction and on to operation and maintenance of the wind farm.



Since 1990, Energiekontor has developed over 100 wind farms in Germany, France, Portugal, the USA and the UK, with a total capacity of over 1GW.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

We have achieved planning permissions for over 515MW of clean, locally produced, renewable energy in the UK—with 110MW already built and generating. A further 10 sites are in construction, adding over 400MW of renewable energy.

Energiekontor has a long international history of developing wind energy projects, and has seen the industry grow from a niche technology aimed at combating climate change to a fully-mature, major power provider, capable of producing electricity that is not only clean but is also low-cost and able to match new-build gas costs. This experience alongside our strong project portfolio, is what gives us the security and confidence to continue developing large-scale wind in a zero-subsidy market.

Community Benefit Funds provide a way in which local people can become more involved with local projects on a day-to-day basis. Energiekontor endeavors to deliver Community Benefit in accordance with good practice to provide communities with the funding they need, to make the changes they want. We understand that the wind farms can present both opportunities and challenges to local communities—we are always willing to listen and work with communities on both.

LOCAL SUPPLY CHAIN

We have local Highland supply chain development as part of how we work.

We have set up a local Highland Suppliers List where we hope to gather contacts in the area to supply to main contractor, should the wind farm be consented and go ahead.

If this project proceeds the range of services that will be needed will include:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Construction companies | • Cleanings and waste solutions |
| • Reinforced steel manufacturers | • Concrete suppliers |
| • Planet hire—excavators, wagons | • Electrical contractors |
| • Local stone quarries and aggregates | • Drainage |
| • Accommodation | • General suppliers |



Energiekontor

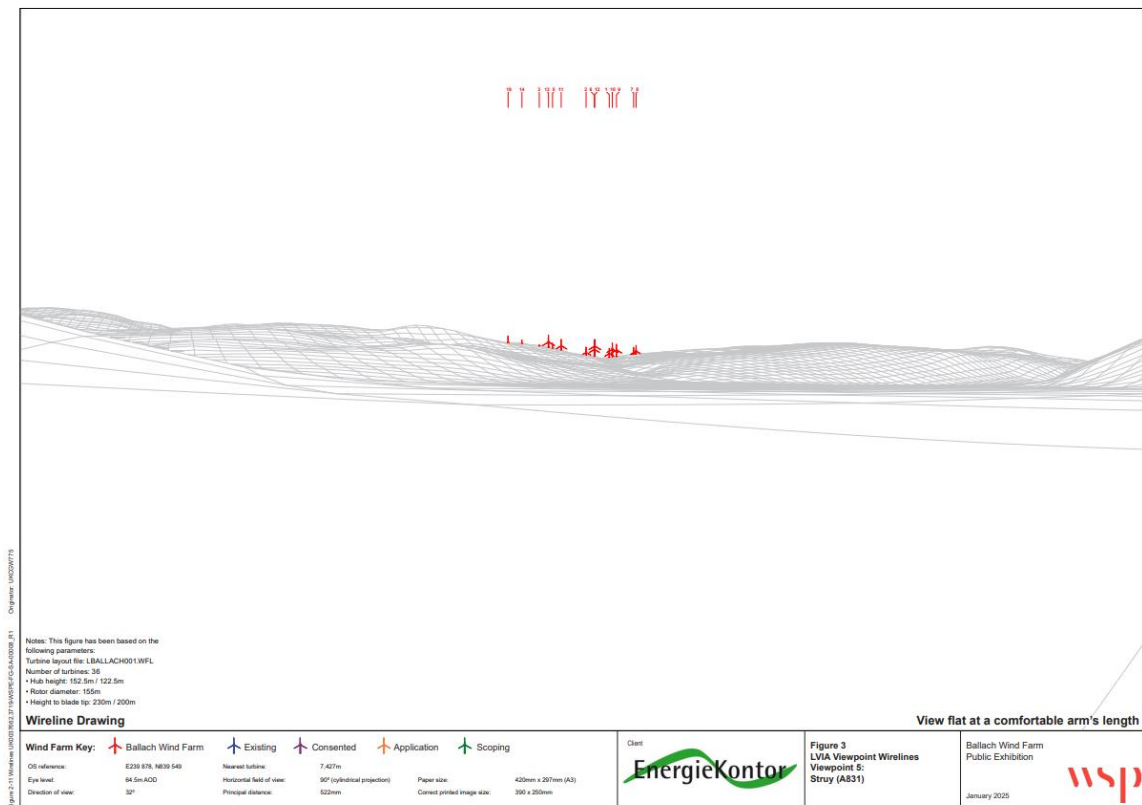


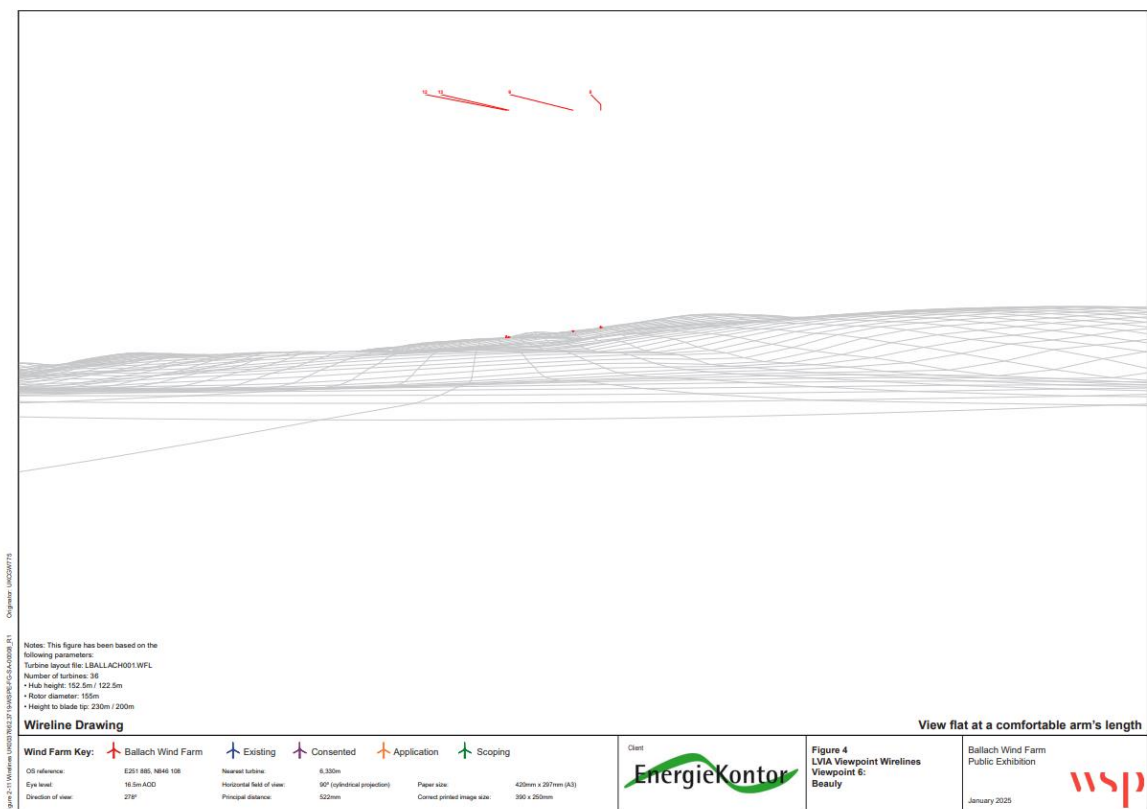
Thank you for taking part in the Ballach Wind Farm Exhibition

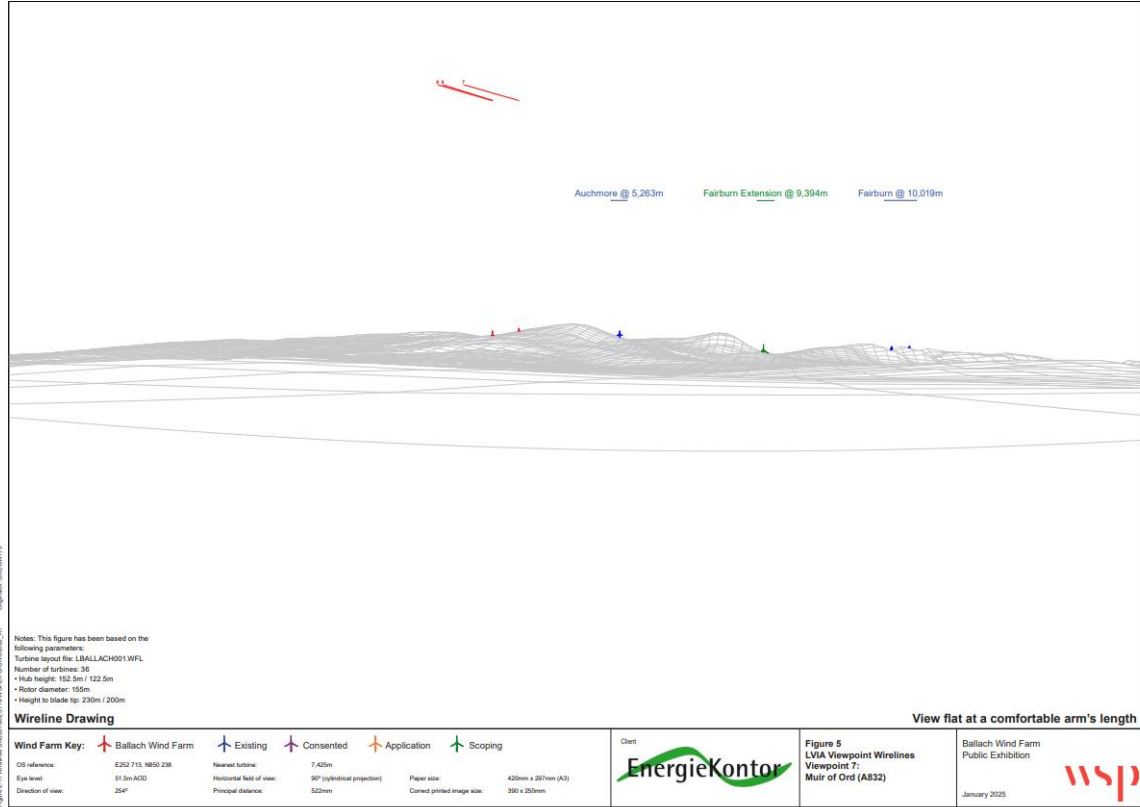
If you have any questions or would like further information on the project,
please get in touch via email (ballachwindfarm@energiekontor.com)

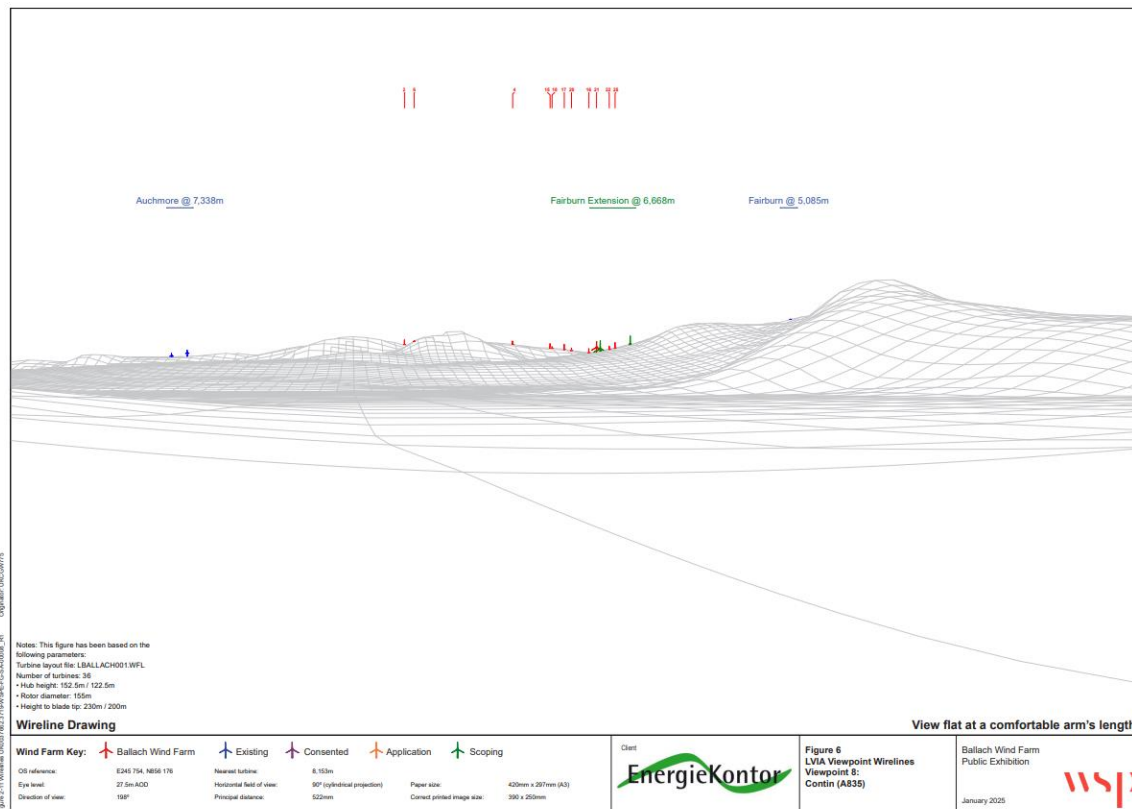


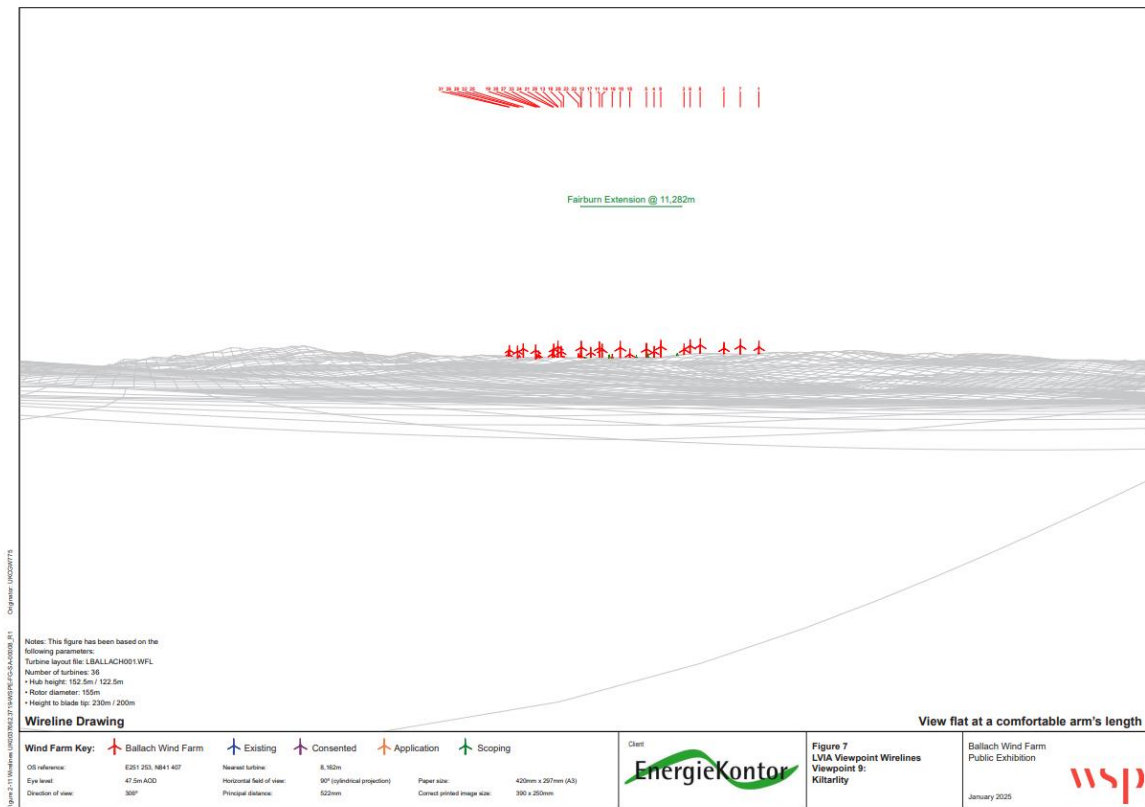


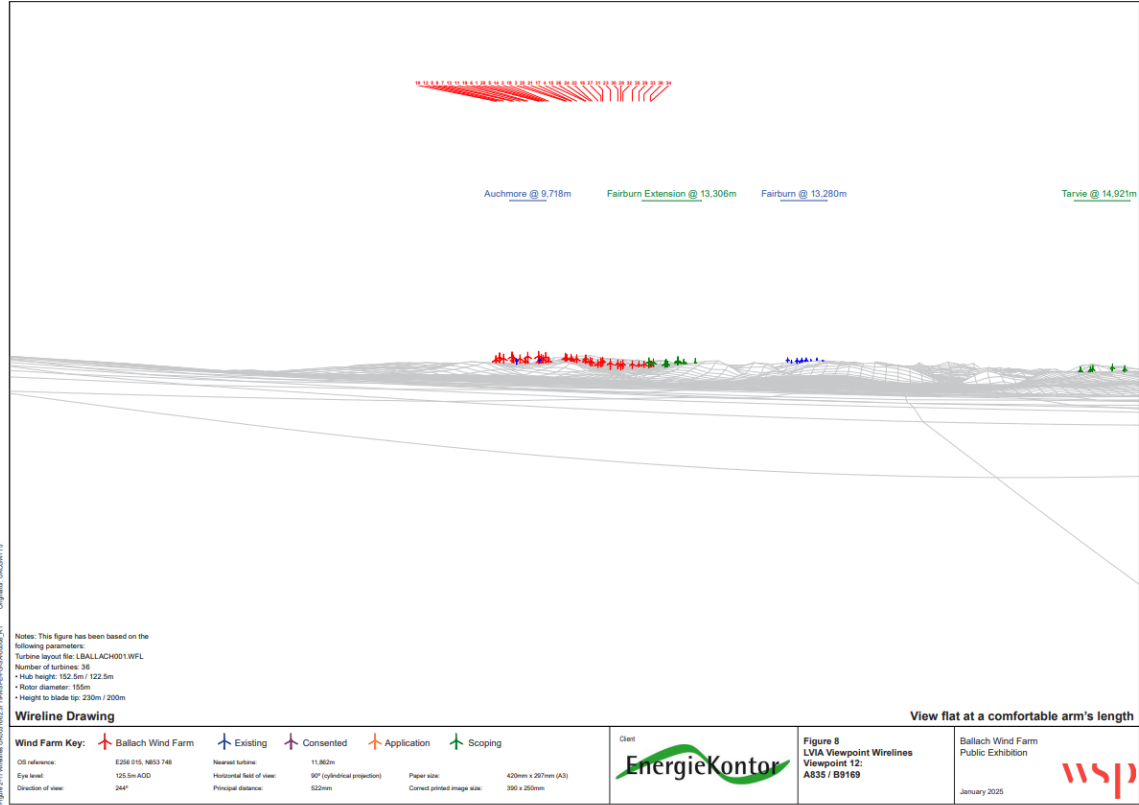


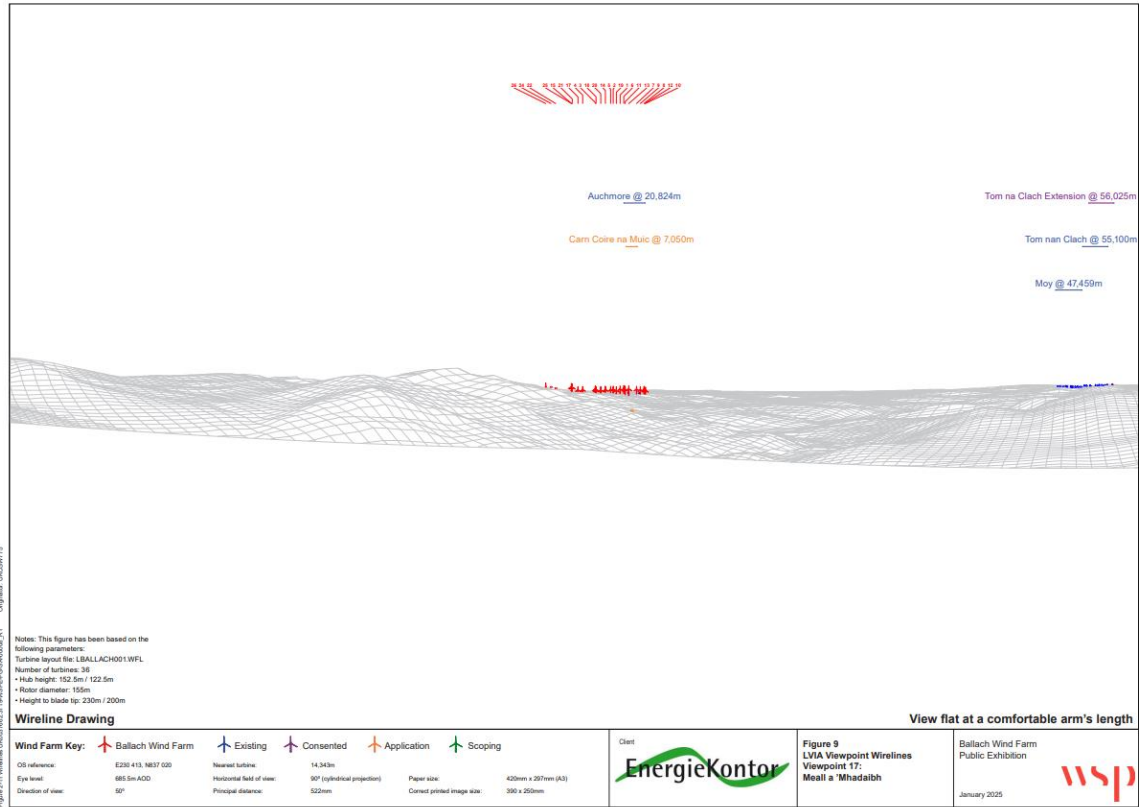


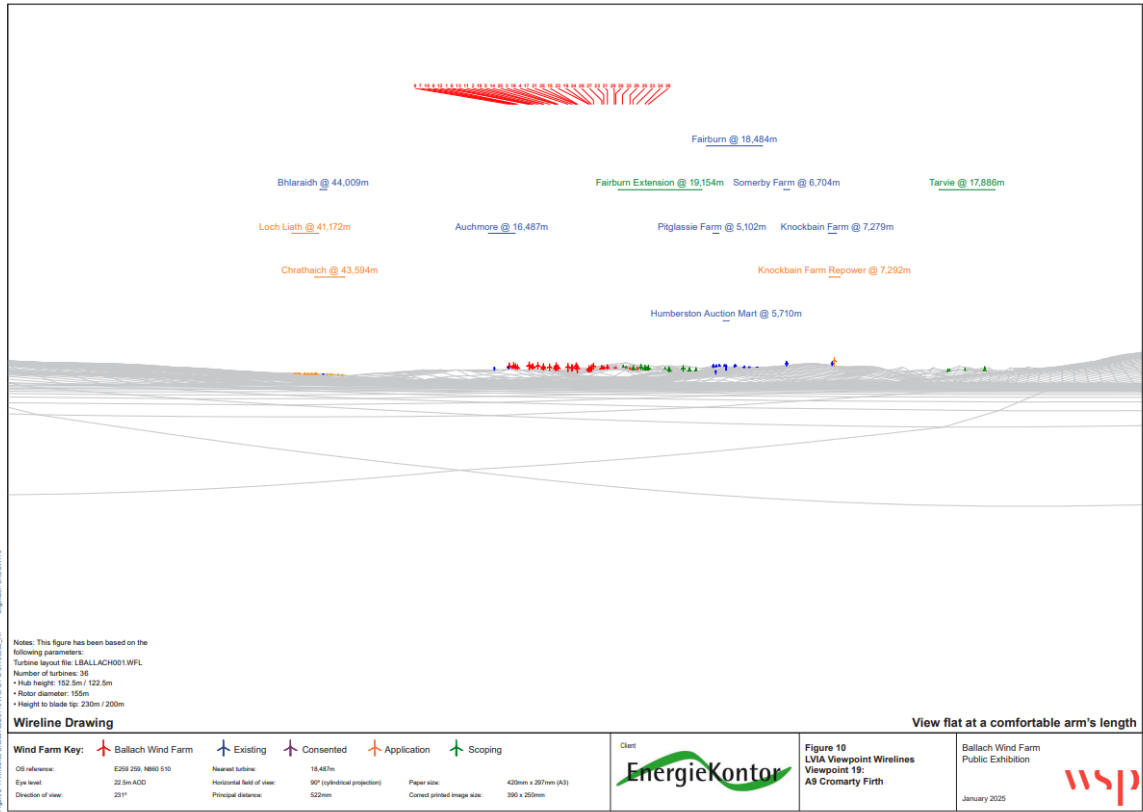


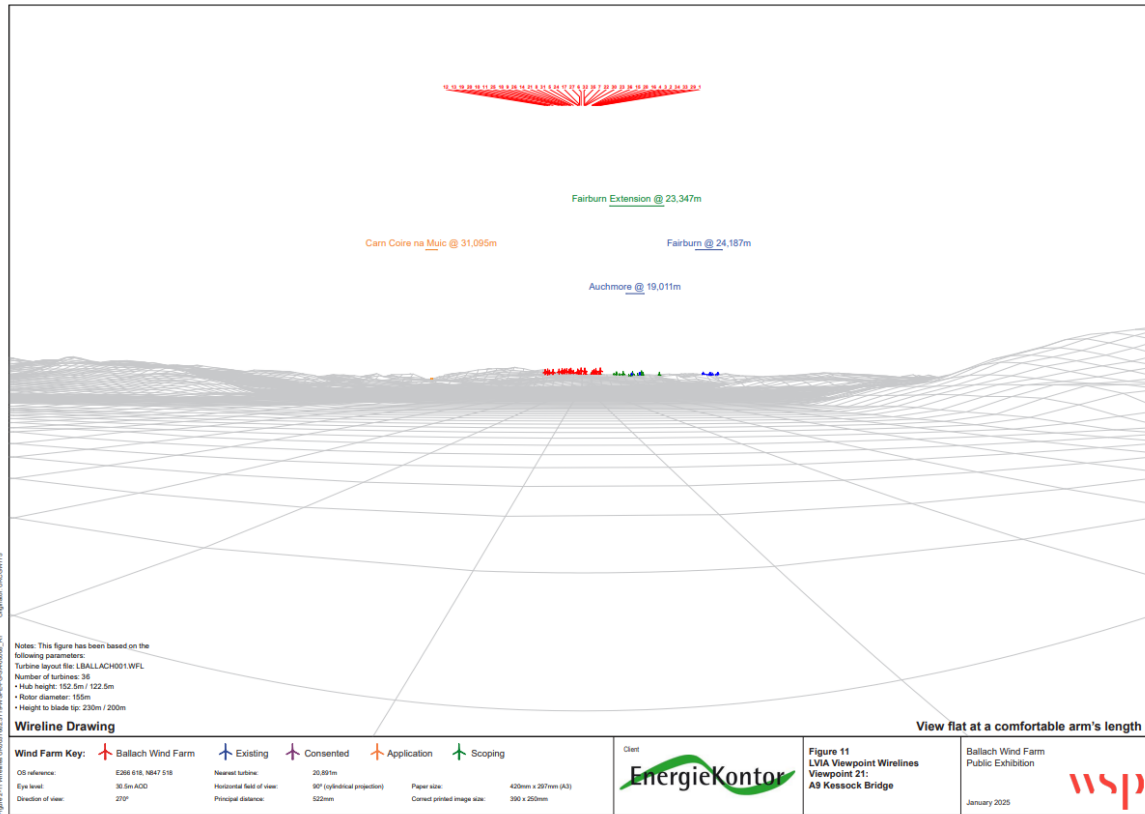


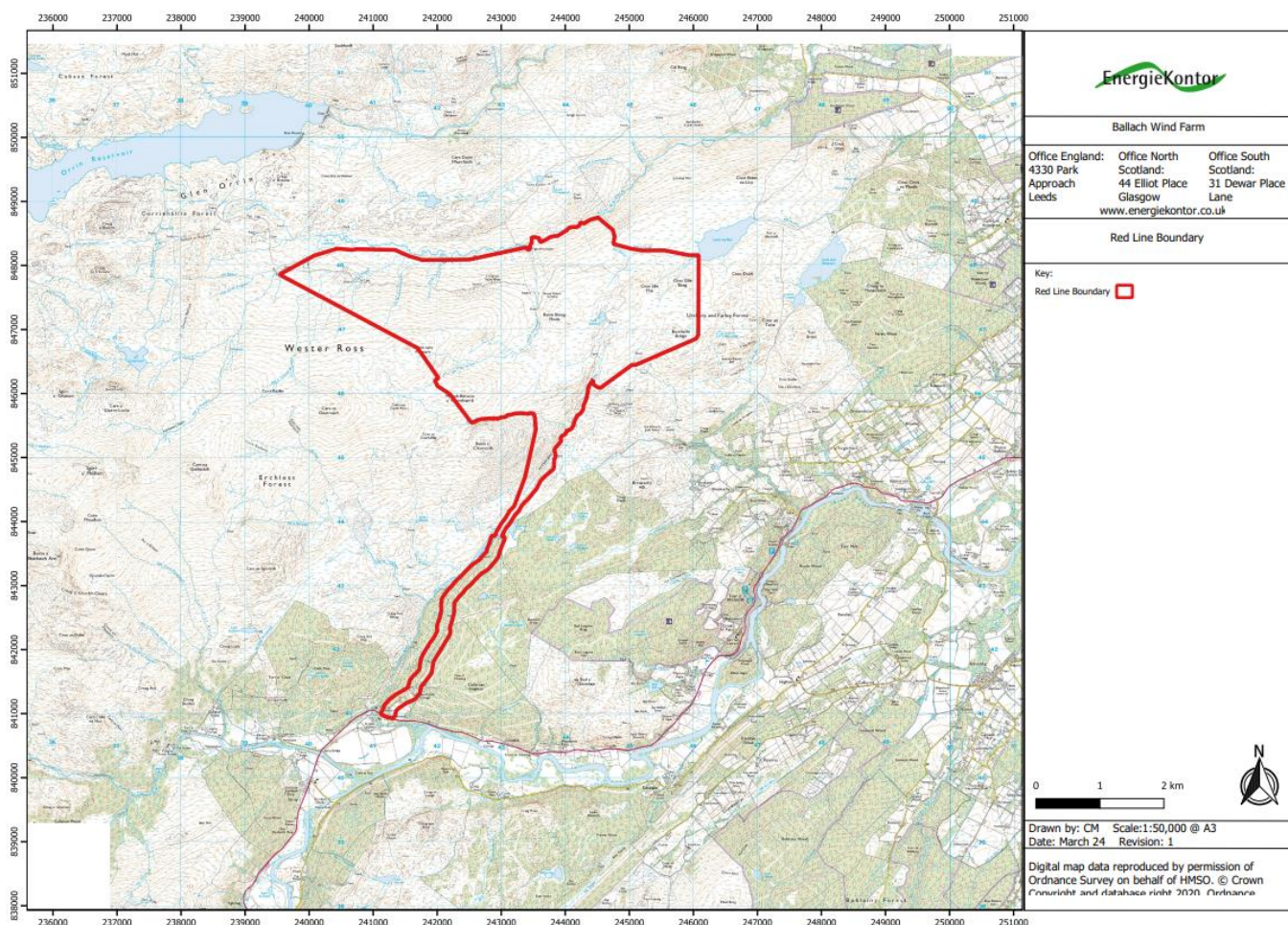


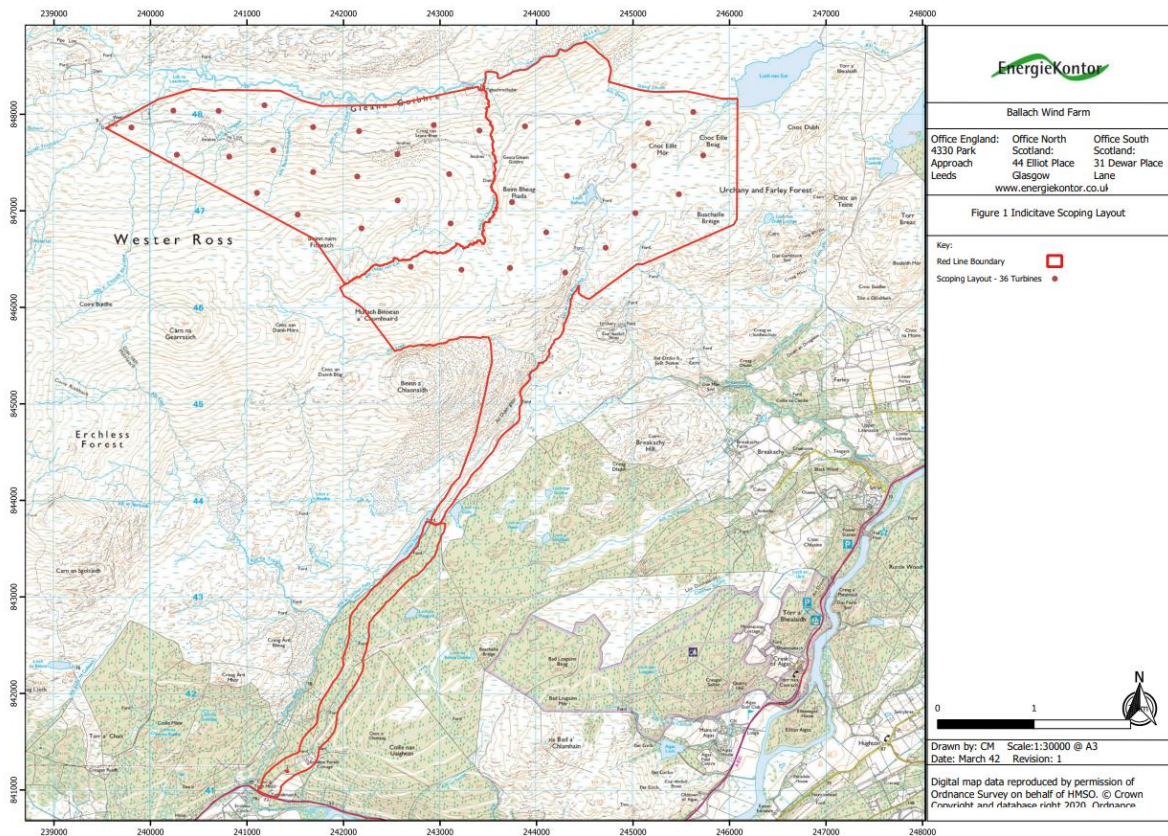


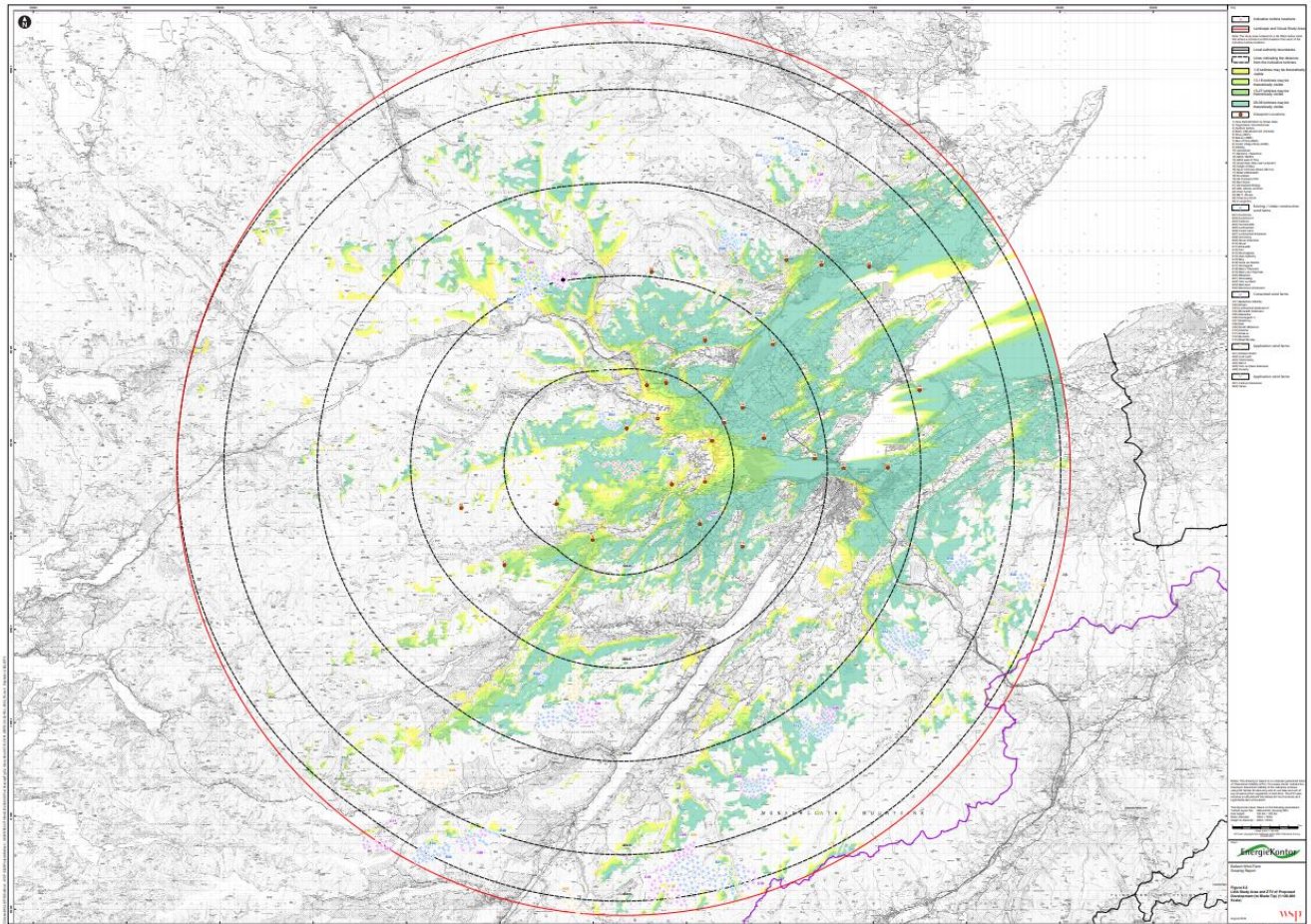












Appendix 12: 4th June Event Stakeholder Letter



14 May 2025

Dear [REDACTED]

EnergieKontor UK Ltd: Ballach Wind Farm Second Public Consultation

I would like to take this opportunity to update on EnergieKontor's proposals for a wind farm development approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack, within the Erchless and Farley estates, and invite you to our second public consultation event **on Thursday 5th June at the Kilmorack Community Hall between 2pm and 6:30pm.**

EnergieKontor UK Ltd

EnergieKontor UK Ltd, established in 1999, is a leading developer in the renewable energy sector and a key subsidiary of Germany-based EnergieKontor AG. EnergieKontor UK operates from offices in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Leeds, driving forward the UK's renewable energy transition with particular focus on Scotland. Combining technical expertise, innovation, and a commitment to sustainability, the company plays a vital role in delivering high-quality wind and solar projects that contribute to the UK's green energy goals.

Ballach Wind Farm

At our first event in January, we introduced our initial proposals for Ballach Wind Farm, including a layout of 36 turbines and onsite Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). We were encouraged by the level of attendance, with over 150 members of the public attending the event.

Since then, we have been actively refining our plans, incorporating valuable community feedback and insights from a range of technical studies conducted throughout the design process. In response to local feedback, we have revised our proposals including a reduction in the number of turbines. These updates reflect our commitment to balancing community concerns with the project's contribution to net-zero goals.

Our upcoming consultation event will provide an opportunity for members of the community to view the updated proposals and provide further feedback to the project team. The exhibition boards and an online feedback form will also be available at <https://energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/ballach-wind-farm/> from 5th June 2025. All feedback is welcome, and we request that this be returned no later than 3rd July 2025.

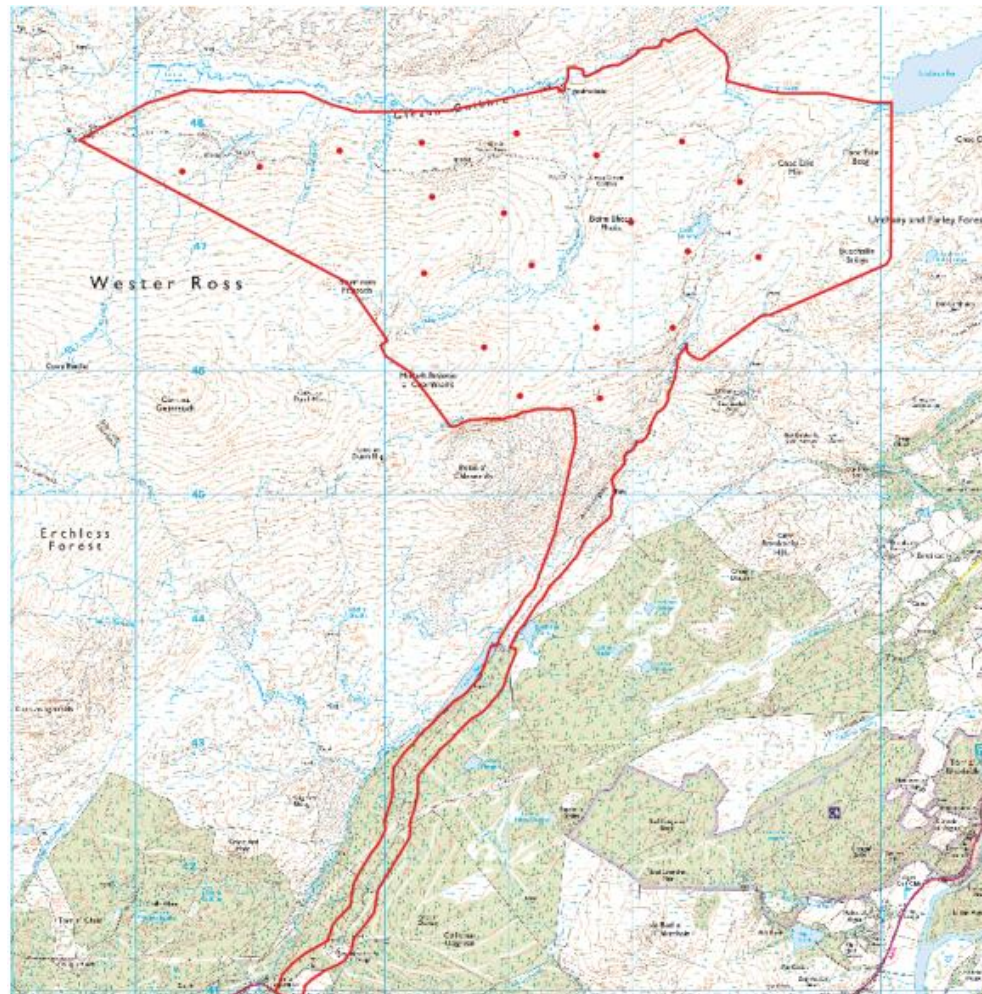
We would be delighted to meet with you to discuss our proposals in more detail and answer any questions you may have. To arrange a meeting, please contact my colleague Cahal Smith at cahal.smith@cavendishconsulting.com or on 0141 674 8680.

Yours sincerely,

Calum Morris

Project Manager, EnergieKontor UK Limited

Appendix 13: Revised Site Map



Appendix 14: 4th June Event Flyer

Ballach Wind Farm Public Consultation

EnergieKontor



5th June 2025 | Kilmorack Community Hall | 2pm to 6.30pm

Energiekontor UK Ltd is delighted to be holding a second public consultation event to provide an update on the proposals for the Ballach Wind Farm, located approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack, within the Erchless and Farley estates.

We invite members of the public to join us at the upcoming event to learn more about the updated proposals, engage with the project team, and share their feedback.

If you are unable to attend this event, the consultation materials and an online feedback form will be available from **5th June** on the project website at

<https://energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/ballach-wind-farm/>

We kindly request that all feedback is returned by **3rd July 2025**.



Ballach Wind Farm is proposed to be located approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack, within the Erchless and Farley estates.

Following our first exhibition in January, we have carefully reviewed feedback from the local community and consultees, conducted further surveys and advanced the project's design.

We have been actively refining our proposals, incorporating valuable community feedback and findings from technical studies. In direct response to local feedback, we have adjusted our plans, including a reduction in the number of turbines. These changes reflect our commitment to balancing community concerns with the project's net-zero goals.

If approved, Ballach Wind Farm will include a community benefit package, in line with the Scottish Government's guidance of £5,000 per MW. We greatly appreciate the feedback received so far on how the fund could be managed and the local initiatives it could support, and we look forward to continuing these discussions.

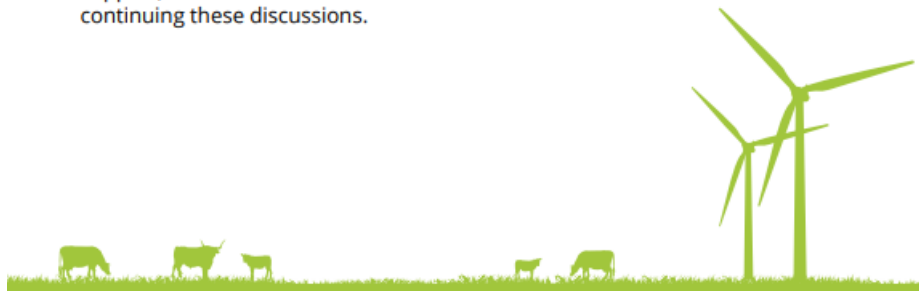
More information on the revised proposals will be available at our upcoming event on 5th June 2025. This consultation will provide an opportunity to view the latest plans, ask questions, and share further feedback with the project team. Feedback from both consultation events will help Energiekontor refine the proposals before submitting a planning application to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit (ECU).



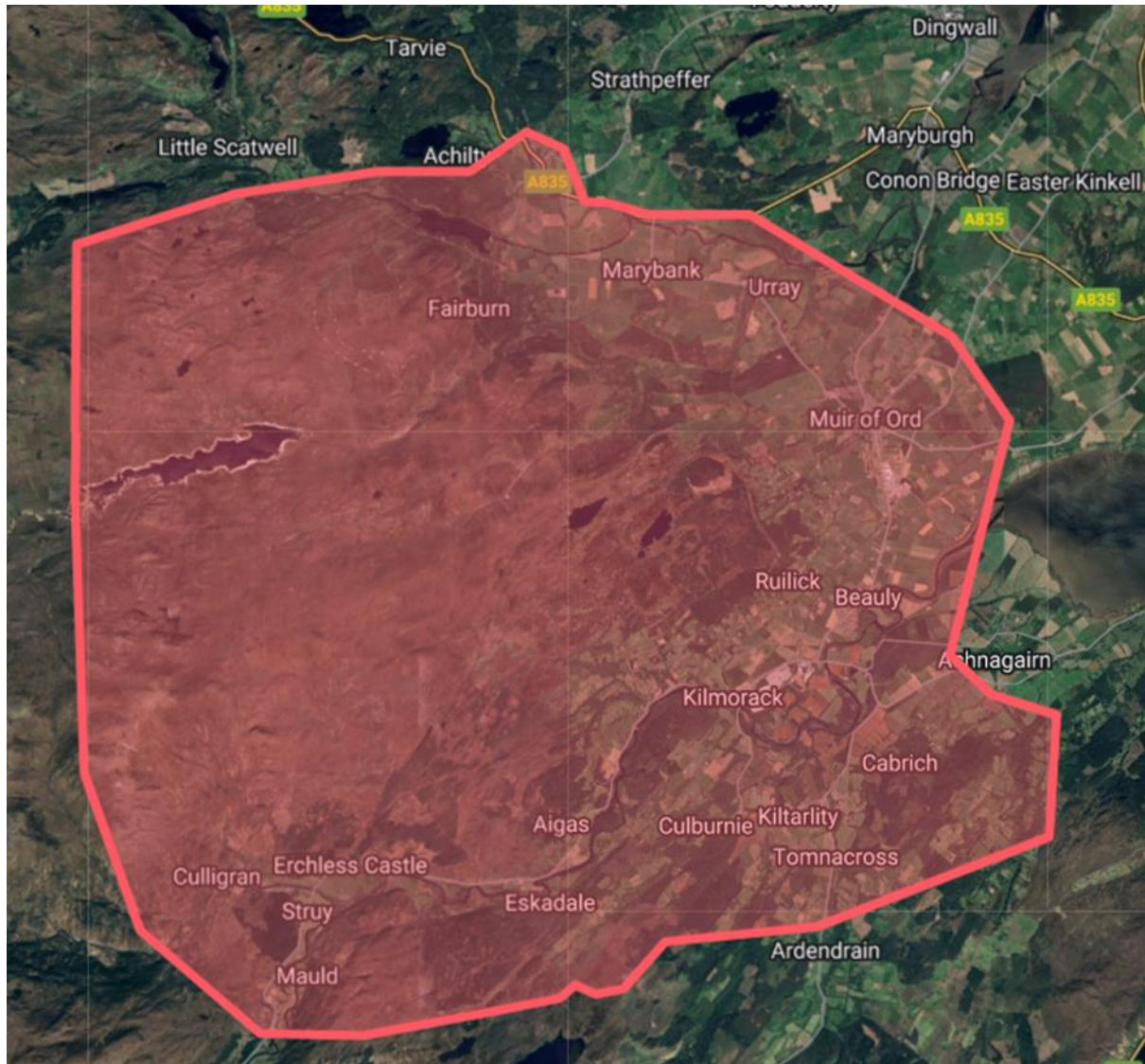
Scan our
QR code

📞 0141 674 8680

✉️ ballachwindfarm@energiekontor.com



Appendix 15: Mailout Radius – 4th June Event



Appendix 16: Public Notice – 4th June Event

Ballach Wind Farm SECOND PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENT

Energiekontor UK is exploring the opportunity of developing a wind farm located approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack within the Erchless and Farley estates. The project team invite members of the public to attend a second consultation event, where there will be an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the updated proposals:

**Kilmorack Hall, IV4 7AG
14:00 – 18:30 | 5 June 2025**

The event will offer a valuable opportunity to view the updated proposals, gain insights into the surveys conducted, and the chance to obtain further information regarding community benefits associated with the proposed development.

Energiekontor UK is committed to open discussion with members of the public and would encourage feedback and suggestions that could help shape the final design of the proposals. The updated proposals and feedback forms will be available at the event or on the project website (<https://energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/balach-wind-farm/>) from 5 June. Please note, all feedback should be returned by 3 July 2025.

For further information, please contact the project team via email at ballachwindfarm@energiekontor.com or in writing to Ballach Wind Farm, c/o Cavendish Consulting, Orega Serviced Offices, 220 Saint Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5SG.

Appendix 17: Public Notice – Press & Journal – May 22nd, 2025

42 **CLASSIFIED**

THE PRESS AND JOURNAL
Thursday, May 22, 2025

The Press and Journal Classified

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Notice Board

Public Notices

Ballich Wind Farm
SECOND PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENT
Energekontor UK is exploring the opportunity of developing a wind farm located approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack within the Enchless and Farley estates. The project team invite members of the public to attend a second consultation event, where there will be an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the updated proposals.
Kilmorack Hall, IV4 7AG
14:00 - 18:30 | 5 June 2025
The event will offer a valuable opportunity to view the updated proposals, gain insights into the surveys conducted, and the chance to obtain further information regarding community benefits associated with the proposed development.
Energekontor UK is committed to open discussion with members of the public and would encourage feedback and suggestions that could help shape the final design of the proposals. The updated proposals and feedback forms will be available at the event or on the project website (<https://energekontor.co.uk/our-projects/ballich-wind-farm/>) from 5 June 2025.
For further information, please contact the project team via email at ballichwindfarm@energekontor.com or in writing to Ballich Wind Farm, c/o Cleveland Consulting, Omega Services Offices, 220 Saint Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5SQ.

Public Notices

GOODS VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENCE
JAMES MESTON MACKINTOSH
trading as
MACKINTOSH FARMS OF BUTHLAW, GLENDAVENY, PETERHEAD, AB42 3EA

is applying to change an existing licence as follows:
To keep an extra 3 goods vehicles and 2 trailers at the operating centre at Buthlaw, Glendaveny, Peterhead, AB42 3EA.
Owners or managers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7PL stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representations must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available at: www.dft.gov.uk/making-representations or by email to: representations@ddtc.gov.uk

Personal

SINGLE, CARING & GENUINE MALE

Aged 68, in Hurley, seeking a genuine caring female. Hoping to find a nice lady who would value sharing a caring friendship/relationship. I am open minded, so I would truly value sharing a loving relationship if you are a loving lady who is looking for a similar relationship - respond with confidence on:
Tel: 07732 424143

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Tractor/goldfarm work (pick up hay bales etc) for retired man.
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Appendix 18: Public Notice – Inverness Courier – May 23rd, 2025

32 The Inverness Courier

www.inverness-courier.co.uk

Friday, May 23, 2025

public notices

www.highland.gov.uk

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS)
(SCOTLAND) ACT 1997**

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined online at <http://www.highland.gov.uk> or electronically by appointment at your nearest Council Service Point. You can find your nearest Service Point via the following link: <https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory/166> to: 2

Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations in respect of this proposal.

Reference Number	Development Address	Proposed Description
25/01/1FLA	Two 3.2 Hectare Sites On Land Approximately 4km Northwest Of Kilmarack	Erection of two temporary meteorological masts up to 80m in height
25/01/403FLA	Land 20M SE OF TA DRAINAGE ROAD, DRAINAGE ROAD INVERNESS	Erection of security fence
25/01/432PP	Loch Ness Lodge Hotel Drumadroit Inverness, IV63 4TU	Erection of Two holiday lodges, service block and paths (renewal 21/02/2025)
25/01/436FLA	Cloofhills 47 Glenurquhart Road Inverness, IV6 5PB	Use of garage as short term letting / ancillary accommodation
25/01/589FLA	Land 20M SW OF Lower Cawgill Farm Ardara, Inverness	Construction of 180m length of roadside path

Time period for comments is 14 days from the date of this notice
Planning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NK
Email: enquiries@highland.gov.uk

**Ballach Wind Farm
SECOND PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENT**

Energiekontor UK is exploring the opportunity of developing a wind farm located approximately 4km northwest of Kilmarack within the Erchless and Farley estates. The project team invite members of the public to attend a second consultation event, where there will be an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the updated proposals.

Kilmarack Hall, IV4 7AG | 14:00 – 18:30 | 5 June 2025

The event will offer a valuable opportunity to view the updated proposals, gain insights into the surveys conducted, and the chance to obtain further information regarding community benefits associated with the proposed development.

Energiekontor UK is committed to open discussion with members of the public and would encourage feedback and suggestions that could help shape the final design of the proposals. The updated proposals and feedback forms will be available at the event or on the project website (<https://energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/ballach-wind-farm/>) from 5 June. Please note, all feedback should be returned by 3 July 2025.

For further information, please contact the project team via email at ballachwindfarm@energiekontor.com or in writing to Ballach Wind Farm c/o Cavendish Consulting, Omega Serviced Offices, 220 Saint Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5SG.

The Inverness Courier

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Scottish Government
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gov.scot

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

THE A82 TRUNK ROAD (BALCHRAGGAN) (CLEARWAY) ORDER 2025

THE SCOTTISH MINISTERS hereby give notice that they propose to make the above Order under sections 1(1), 2(1) and (2) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 which will have the effect of imposing a clearway on that length of the A82 Dalnattar - Fort William - Inverness Trunk Road from a point 3.12 kilometres or thereby north-east of the extended centreline of the A83 generally in a north easterly direction to a point 970 metres or thereby in a north easterly direction of the extended centreline of the C1072 Abarachan to Forth Road, a distance of 6.97 kilometres or thereby. Full details of the proposal are contained in the Order which, together with a plan showing the length of road involved and a statement of the Scottish Ministers' reasons for proposing to make the Order, may be examined free of charge during normal business hours from 23rd May 2025 until 16th June 2025 at Scotmid Coop, Drumadroit, 1 Carris Croft, W Lewisston, Inverness, IV63 6AG and Glenurquhart Library and Learning Centre, 48 Balmacon Road, Drumadroit, Inverness, IV63 6UR and at the offices of Transport Scotland, 177 Bothwell Street Glasgow G2 7ER. A copy of the Order and this Notice will be available on the Transport Scotland website at: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/NorthWestRoadOrders>

Any person wishing to object to the proposed Order should send details of the grounds for objection in writing to the Director of Roads, c/o Lynni Barrison, Transport Scotland, 177 Bothwell Street, Glasgow, G2 7ER reference NW/A82/LB or by email to TRD-Objections@transport.gov.scot by 16th June 2025.

S R LEES
A member of the staff of the
Scottish Ministers
177 Bothwell Street,
Glasgow G2 7ER

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

S J WILLIAMSON HIRE & LOGISTICS LTD
of
6 LIMETREE AVENUE,
INVERNESS, IV3 5RH
is applying for a licence to use:
Old Station Yard,
Caledonian Road,
Inverness, IV2 5EF
as an operating centre for 4 goods vehicles and 4 trailers.
Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UL, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice.
Representations must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given, at the top of this notice.
A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

The Inverness Courier

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Appendix 19: Public Notice – Ross-shire Journal – 23rd May 2025

Friday, May 23, 2025

www.ross-shirejournal.co.uk

Ross-shire Journal 34

public notices

www.highland.gov.uk

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL (U2511 NEWHALL BRIDGE-KINBEACHIE-RESOLIS ROAD) (TEMPORARY TRAFFIC PROHIBITIONS) NOTICE 2025

The Highland Council in exercise of the powers conferred on them by Section 14(1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as amended, and of all other powers enabling them on that behalf being satisfied that traffic on the length of road referred to in the Schedule ("the Schedule") annexed to this Notice should be restricted or prohibited because works are being or are proposed to be executed on or near that length of road hereby make this Notice.

1. Citation, commencement and cessation
This Notice may be cited as "The Highland Council (U2511 Newhall Bridge-Kinbeachie-Resolis Road) (Temporary Traffic Prohibition) Notice 2025" and shall be in operation from 0800hrs Wednesday 11th June 2025 until 1700hrs Friday 19th December 2025.

2. Interpretation
The Interpretation Act 1978 shall apply for the interpretation of this Notice as it applies for the interpretation of an Act of Parliament.

3. Relationship to existing Orders
All provisions contained in any Order Enactment or others in so far as the same repeat or are inconsistent with the provisions of this Notice and the true intent or meaning hereof shall cease to have effect, during the period stated herein.

4. Reason
The reason for making this Notice is to enable a temporary traffic prohibition to be put in place in the interests of public safety during public utility and maintenance works.

5. Alternative routes
Consideration has been given to the safety and convenience of alternative routes suitable for the traffic which will be affected by this Notice and shall be signed.

6. Temporary prohibition on use of a road
Save as provided for in Article 7 of this Notice, while this Notice is in force, no person shall drive, or cause or permit any vehicle to be driven on the length of road, or a part or parts of the length of road, specified in the Schedule when a prohibition is identified as applying by means of one or more of the traffic signs of a type generally provided for under Section 64 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as amended. Access for pedestrians shall be permitted providing always that they comply with such instructions as may be issued to them by the contractor for the works.

7. Exemptions
Nothing in Article 6 of this Notice applies to:
(a) Vehicles employed to carry out the works in respect of which this Notice is made, including those employed to carry out associated traffic management.
(b) Pedestrians.
(c) Cyclists.
(d) Emergency Services' vehicles, being used in an emergency for Ambulance, Coastguard, Fire Brigade or Police purposes.
(e) Public Service Vehicles.
(f) Local Residents

Sealed with the Common Seal of the Highland Council and subscribed for them and on their behalf in terms of the Local Government etc (Scotland) Act 1984 by Iain Moncrieff Roads Operations Manager Dingwall on the 15/04/2025

Highland Council
Council Buildings
High Street
Dingwall
IV15 9QN

This is the schedule referred to in the foregoing Notice entitled "The Highland Council (U2511 Newhall Bridge-Kinbeachie-Resolis Road.) (TEMPORARY TRAFFIC PROHIBITIONS) NOTICE 2025"

Schedule
Lengths of road affected by temporary prohibition of use
U2511 Newhall Bridge-Kinbeachie-Resolis Road, commencing from its entrance to St Martin's Burial Ground and extending in a south westerly direction to its entrance to a property known as Wester Brae House for a distance of approximately 250m or thereby.

www.highland.gov.uk

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined online at <http://www.highland.gov.uk>; electronically by appointment at the SERVICE POINT, COUNCIL OFFICES, 84 HIGH STREET, DINGWALL, IV15 9QN (ONLINE ONLY); or electronically by appointment at your nearest Council Service Point. You can find your nearest Service Point via the following link https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory/14/a_to_z

Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations in respect of this proposal.

Reference Number	Development Address	Proposal Description	Alternative locations where application may be inspected and time period for comments
25/01257/FUL	Ellean Dubh Care Home, New Road, Forroosa, IV10 8AH	Erection of 2no extensions and formation of 6no parking spaces	(14 days)
25/01505/FUL	Grathais, Ullapool, IV36 2TL	Erection of replacement extension to dwelling to form Shared Multiple Occupancy Residential building, Erection of ancillary communal building and associated works	(14 days)
25/01525/FUL	Gratts of Dalrymple, 4-8 Dal Nao Roca, Tweedbank Industrial Estate, Aitha, IV17 6XT	Formation of display space, erection of external canopy and external alterations	(14 days)
25/01590/FUL	Land 215M North of Riverford, Canon Bridge	Change of house types and road layout in the area around house Plot nos. 12-18 and 28 on Planning Permission ref. no. 23/00309/FUL	(14 days)
25/01613/FUL	Tarrel Lochan, Tarrel, Portmahomack, Tain, IV20 1SL	Erection of house and detached garage	(14 days)
25/01682/S42	Evans Community Woodland Cabin, Candlen Street, Ewanston, Dingwall, IV14 9XJ	Application under Section 42 for non-compliance with Condition 1 of Planning Permission 18/00966/FUL	(14 days)

Planning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
Email: aplanning@highland.gov.uk

Ballach Wind Farm
SECOND PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENT

Energiekontor UK is exploring the opportunity of developing a wind farm located approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack within the Erchless and Farley estates. The project team invite members of the public to attend a second consultation event, where there will be an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the updated proposals:

Kilmorack Hall, IV4 7AG | 14:00 – 18:30 | 5 June 2025

The event will offer a valuable opportunity to view the updated proposals, gain insights into the surveys conducted, and the chance to obtain further information regarding community benefits associated with the proposed development.

Energiekontor UK is committed to open discussion with members of the public and would encourage feedback and suggestions that could help shape the final design of the proposals. The updated proposals and feedback forms will be available at the event or on the project website (<https://energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/balach-wind-farm/>) from 5 June. Please note, all feedback should be returned by 3 July 2025.

For further information, please contact the project team via email at ballachwindfarm@energiekontor.com or in writing to Ballach Wind Farm c/o Cavendish Consulting, Omega Serviced Offices, 220 Saint Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5SG.

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Appendix 20: Poster – 4th June Event



EnergieKontor

Ballach Wind Farm
Second Public Consultation Event

Proposed wind farm approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack

As part of the statutory pre-application consultation process for the above development, a second consultation event for the proposals will take place:

5th June 2025 | 2.00pm – 6.30pm | Kilmorack Community Hall (IV4 7AH)

The event will offer a valuable opportunity to view the updated proposals, gain insights into the surveys conducted, and the chance to obtain further information regarding community benefits associated with the proposed development.

The exhibition material will also be available to view (**from 5th June**) on the dedicated project website: <https://energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/ballach-wind-farm/>

Further information relating to the proposed development can be obtained by contacting **0141 674 8680** or by email at ballachwindfarm@energiekontor.com

Persons wishing to make comments on the proposals may do so at the event, via the website (online feedback form), email, or in writing to:

**C/O Cavendish Consulting,
220 St Vincent Street
Glasgow, G2 5SG**

Please note that all comments **should be returned no later than 3 July 2025**

Appendix 21: Feedback Form – 4th June Event

Ballach Wind Farm Feedback Form: Second Consultation



Privacy Statement:

By filling in this form, you are agreeing that Cavendish Consulting can hold and process your personal data in relation to this public consultation exercise.

- Cavendish will only share your personal data with the project team for planning evaluation purposes.
- Your identifiable, personal data will not be used for any other purposes without your consent.

Cavendish and the project team will use your data to:

- Send you updates about the project (where you provide us with your contact details).
- Develop a Pre-Application Consultation Report (or similar document) about this public consultation that will be submitted to the Energy Consents Unit. Your comments will be anonymous, and we will not identify you in this report without your permission.

Cavendish acts on behalf of EnergieKontor UK Ltd to run public consultation activities.

Your Details

Title (Miss/Mrs/Ms/Mr/Other):	Postcode:
First Name or Initial:	Age Group (please circle): Under 13 13-17 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65-74 75-84 85+
Surname:	

Approximately how far away do you live from the site?

☐ Within 2km ☐ Within 5km ☐ Within 10km ☐ Beyond 10km

Your Contact Details

We will use these details to contact you and update you on the proposals. You don't have to fill in this section if you'd rather we didn't contact you.

Address:	
	Email:
	Telephone:

***PLEASE COMPLETE ALL SECTIONS IN BLOCK CAPITALS**

Data Protection

We process all Personal Data in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (together the "GDPR") and the Data Protection Act 2018. Your Personal Data will not be transferred outside the UK or European Economic Area (the EU member states plus Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein). To see our full Privacy Notice and find out how to exercise your data subject rights, please visit cavendishconsulting.com/dp or contact us by phone on 01962 893 893, or email at dataprotection@cavendishconsulting.com.

1. Did you find today's second consultation helpful and informative in understanding the updated plans?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No Opinion

2. Please provide your comments on the updated proposals:

3. What is your view on the revised design layout for Ballach Wind Farm?

☐ I am happy about the proposed layout ☐ I am neutral towards the proposed layout
☐ I have concerns about the proposed layout ☐ I don't like onshore wind farms in general

4. Are there any aspects of the updated proposal (e.g. turbine placement, access routes, visual impact, etc.) you feel still need improvement or further consideration?

5. Have your views on the Ballach Wind Farm changed since the first consultation?

☐ Yes, more supportive ☐ Yes, more concerned
☐ No, my views have stayed the same ☐ I did not participate in the first consultation

6. EnergieKontor UK Ltd is committed to a Community Benefit Fund of £5,000 per MW. Do you have any new ideas or updates on how this fund could support your local area?

7. Do you have any further comments, or is there any local knowledge that could help inform ongoing environmental studies and assessments?

Thank you for taking the time today to complete the form

If you would like more time to consider the questions, please print off a copy of the form and return it by **3rd July** to: **C/O Cavendish Consulting, 220 St Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5SG**
Email: **ballachwindfarm@energiekontor.com**

Further information on the proposals can be obtained by contacting the project team at the address above or by telephone at **0141 674 8680**.

The feedback form along with more information regarding the proposals can be found at: **www.energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/ballach-wind-farm/**



Appendix 22: Consultation Boards – 4th June Event



>> The Proposed Development

BALLACH WIND FARM

Ballach Wind Farm is a proposed **20 turbine** scheme, situated approximately 4km northwest of Kilmorack on the Farley and Erchless Estates.

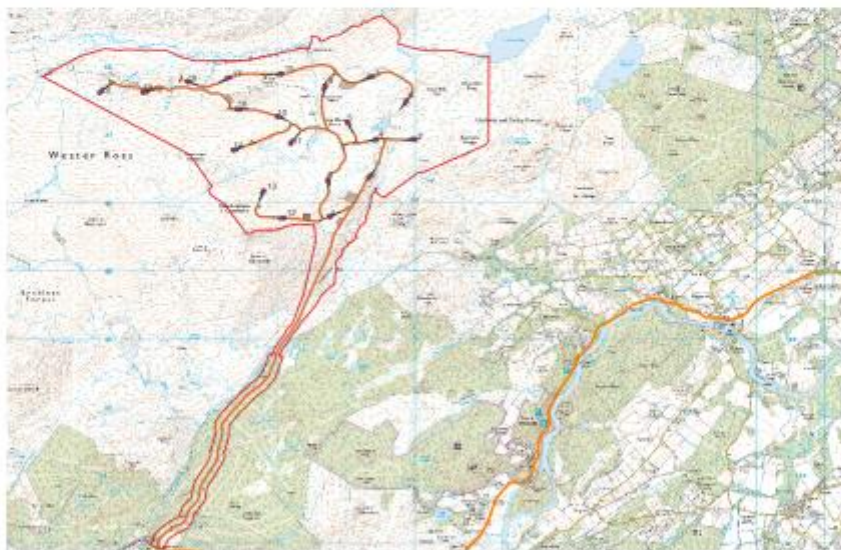
An initial public exhibition was held in January 2025 at Kilmorack Hall, exhibition material shared here was designed to introduce the proposed development to local residents. The exhibition aimed to understand key areas of concern around the proposed development and bring these concerns forward to be addressed in the projects development process. All information previously shared can be accessed at the EnergieKontor website, under the Ballach project page: <https://energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/ballach-wind-farm>

Key Feedback From Exhibition 1

Key feedback points from the initial public exhibition are listed below:

- **Site Access** - concern surrounding the disruption that construction traffic is likely to cause and impacts on mountain bikers using the estate track.
- **Site Design** - most attendees understood the need for renewable energy however were concerned by turbine numbers and felt the scale and number of turbines was too much for the site.
- **Cumulative Impact** - Concerns raised on cumulative information provided.
- **Community Benefit** - the method of dispersal was raised as a key point of interest.
- **Battery Storage** - concerns around battery fires on site, lack of emergency access and environmental impact.

These points have been assessed and developed since the last exhibition. Work has been undertaken to address these concerns with changes made to the design of the proposal. This is detailed in full in the following display boards.



Ballach Wind Farm Key Facts

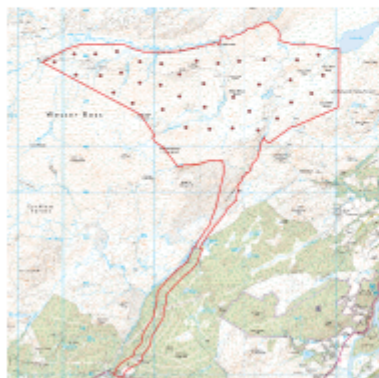
- 20 turbines
- Generation of up to 134MW
- Construction duration of around 18 months
- Mixed tip heights of:
 - 200m (turbines 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14) and
 - 230m (turbines 3, 7, 9, 10, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20)
- Onsite substation and 5MW battery storage
- Anticipated earliest construction and generation subject to grid connection date (tbc).

EnergieKontor

Design Evolution

Ballach Wind Farm - Design Evolution

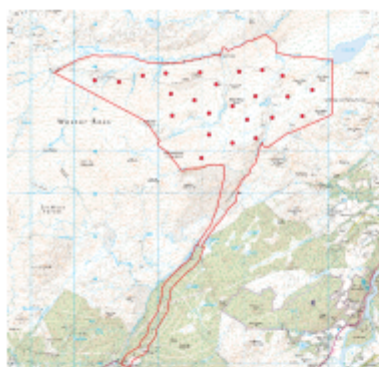
The design process took place over a number of months and the Proposed Development has been progressively revised and refined. The overall design principle has been to achieve a coherent and compact design, which minimises direct and indirect adverse effects on the local and wider landscape, while balancing commercial considerations and maximising energy production.



Ballach Wind Farm Scoping Layout - 36 Turbines

This design, shown to the left is the scoping layout, intended to present the site to statutory consultees, such as The Highland Council and NatureScot and the initial public consultation. Feedback and comment on the design was collected that would influence the future design process and inform further study and additional surveys to fully understand all constraints to development at the site.

- Following the scoping process, a review of all opinions submitted against the scoping design was conducted. This informed further site survey work, the results of which enabled the second stage of the design process to begin as outlined below.



Ballach Wind Farm Pre-Application Layout - 24 Turbines

Following on from Scoping, a revised design was then shown and discussed with The Highland Council at a pre application meeting to gain further input on design;

- Reduction to 24 turbines
- Less turbines in the western area of the site, reducing proximity to Wild Land.
- Increased distance between turbines on site and the reduction of turbine heights for a number of turbines on higher ground.
- Assessing design options from key viewpoints to minimise landscape and visual intrusion.



Ballach Wind Farm Final Design - 20 Turbines

The final design layout is displayed adjacently, this design will be submitted as part of the forthcoming Section 36 application for Ballach Wind Farm. The final design for the wind farm is designed to utilise the environment within which it sits;

- 20 Turbines— 9x 200m and 11x 230m to tip
- Topographical features of the site have been utilised to position turbines at the lower elevations reducing their overall visual height.
- As far as possible the turbines are set back from the periphery of the site reducing turbine intrusion towards the areas of residential settlement to the east of the site, where they are located on lower ground, and avoid the higher land to the west of the site.

EnergieKontor

>> Site Considerations

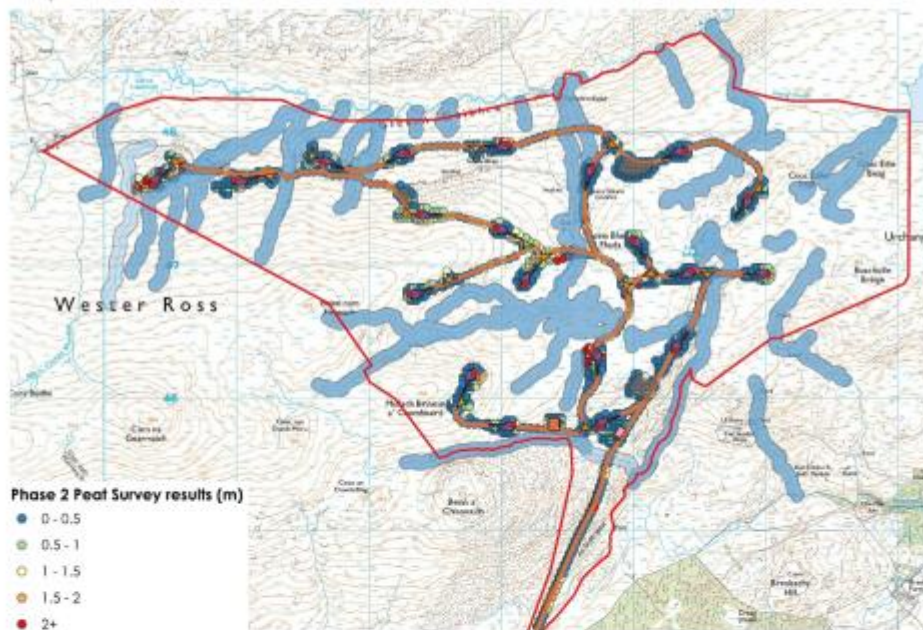
SITE CONSIDERATIONS

The design evolution of Ballach has sought to understand all environmental, historic, and topographical aspects of the area. Data was collected through initial desktop study, and subsequently through targeted surveys of the main wind farm area and along proposed site access tracks. All gathered data has been assessed and compiled into a geographical information system to inform a developable area. This enables all factors to be considered and impacts assessed continuously throughout the design evolution of the proposed wind farm.

Peat

Peat condition and depth surveys have been conducted in multiple phases as the site layout and access track design evolves. The below figure displays the results of the final phase of peat depth survey, completed once the final design was frozen. Assessments to understand the condition of the peat have also been undertaken and agreed with SEPA.

- National peat classification initially classed the peat within the wind farm area to be graded class 1, however condition surveys completed throughout the design process have concluded that the site is subject to extensive drainage and modification, resulting in significant areas of dried out peatland which is not be considered class 1.
- Excellent opportunity for large areas of the site to benefit from peatland improvement and restoration, increasing carbon capture on site. Full details of enhancement and mitigation will be provided in the forthcoming outline habitat management and enhancement plan.



Cultural Heritage

There are some statutorily designated cultural heritage assets in proximity to the proposed site, namely the hill forts to the south east of the site including Urchany and Dun Mor. These assets have been considered throughout the design process to ensure that the settings of these assets are not significantly impacted.

>> Site Access - Route to Site

PROPOSED ACCESS TO SITE

Port to Site

- Access routes have been assessed for the transportation and delivery of turbine components. The preferred option for delivery is illustrated on the map to the right in blue.
- Turbines would be delivered from either the Port of Invergordon or the Port of Nigg, southwards down the A9 to the Tore Roundabout.
- Deliveries would then head west towards Muir of Ord before passing through Beaulie and then along to site.
- Other traffic movements associated with construction (e.g. concrete and aggregate) will be dependent on the location of the nearest supplier.



Traffic Management Plan

During the construction process a robust traffic management plan is proposed and will be implemented in full during the detailed design phase, should the project be granted consent. Detailed below are some of the measures that will be taken to reduce disruption:

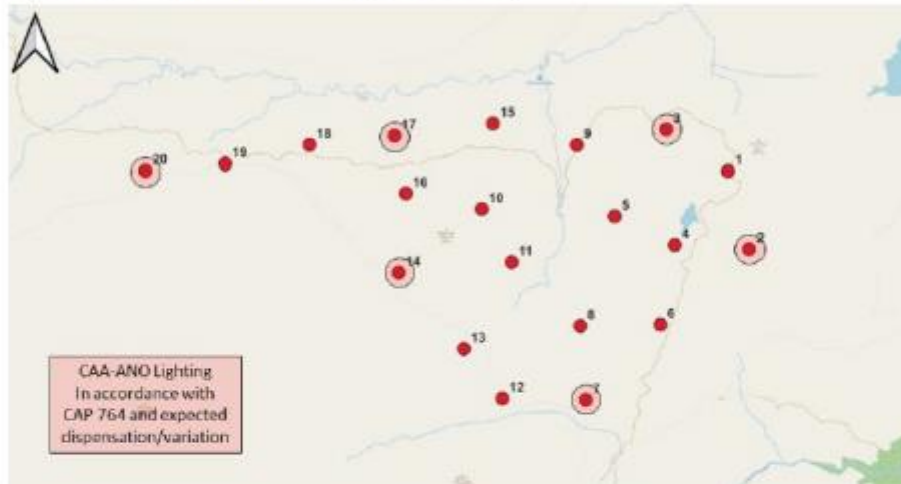
- **Deployment of banks man** - during the delivery of abnormal loads banksmen will be deployed to safeguard the surrounding area and ensure traffic can pass safely.
- **Public notice** - active and frequently updated information pages will be created to inform all residents of upcoming traffic movements.
- **Timed delivery** - construction traffic will be limited during peak road use periods.
- **Road upgrades** - road widening at key pinch points is proposed to ensure construction traffic can pass freely and quickly (carried out ahead of abnormal load delivery).
- **Signage, traffic lights and convoy systems** - as appropriately assessed traffic management infrastructure and convoy systems will be employed to ensure local traffic can pass freely.

Aviation Lighting

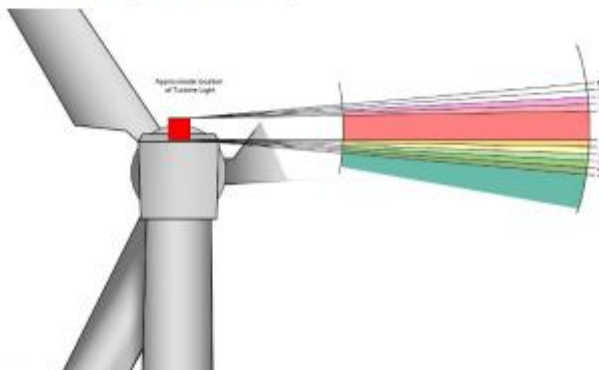
AVIATION LIGHTING PROVISION

All turbines above 150m to tip height require aviation lighting as per Aviation law. This is to warn lower flying aircraft of the presence of turbines.

- Following consultation with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), and Ministry of Defence (MOD) a lighting scheme for Ballach has been agreed that reduces the requirement for aviation lighting from 20 to **6 turbines**.
- Specifically turbines 2, 3, 7, 14, 17 and 20 will be lit, as per the below map:



- The standard lighting arrangement is for 2000 candela max lighting to be installed. In periods of <5km visibility, it is expected this lighting is on. When greater than 5km, then this can be dimmed to 10% (i.e. 200cd), making a big difference to the effects.
- Not all turbines lights will be seen from all locations due to topography.
- Indicative calculation suggest that instead of a maximum of 2000cd light received at source, when lights are in <5km visibility mode, the real candela brightness will often be less than 500cd.
- Indicative calculations also suggest, combining historic weather and atmospheric records, the aviation lights may be at their brightest around 4% of the year (on 14 days of 365). Conversely, they are predicted to be operating at 10% brightness around 96% of the year (on 351 days of 365).



Intensity of Turbine Light shown in Candelas (cd)

Vertical Angle of Lighting from Nacelle	Maximum and Minimum Luminous Intensity (Candela / cd.)	10% of Maximum and Minimum Luminous Intensity (Candela / cd.)
Above 8°	147 to 34	15 to 3
4° to 8°	247 to 134	25 to 13
2° to 4°	481 to 237	48 to 24
2° to 2°	1160 to 481	116 to 48
1° to 2°	2119 to 1170	212 to 117
0° to 1°	2206 to 1969	221 to 197
-1° to 0°	2006 to 387	204 to 39
-2° to -1°	936 to 363	100 to 36
-3° to -2°	394 to 197	39 to 20
-4° to -3°	199 to 151	20 to 15
-5° to -4°	151 to 92	15 to 9
Below -5°	94 to 39	9 to 4

Landscape & ZTV

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

A ZTV figure can be found displayed on the table adjacent to this board.

As part of our landscape and visual assessment, we follow industry standard guidance produced by The Highland Council and NatureScot to present a robust assessment of the likely significant effects which may arise as part of the proposed development.

This drawing is intended to demonstrate the theoretical visual impact Ballach will have on the surrounding area, highlighting all locations within a 45km radius of the proposed development that it would be theoretically possible to view the turbines.

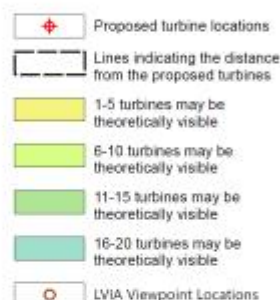
It is important to note that there are limitations to a ZTV as the theoretical view analysis does not account for forestry and the built environment.

Understanding a ZTV Drawing

As stated in the adjacent key the four colours displayed within the 45km zone represent the number of turbines that are theoretically visible.

The brown circles represent all the proposed viewpoints that are to be included in the EIA, a selection of wireline visualisations modelled from these view points can be found displayed alongside the ZTV.

During the initial site selection process, the site of Ballach was noted for its well screened position from the local landform. The site has since been designed and developed with this as a constant consideration - designed to respect populated areas to east and wild land to the west. With this in mind, the following locations have been selected as viewpoint locations within the LVIA:



- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Core Path RC30.01 to Orrin Dam | 2. Torgormack / Drumindorsair | 3. Fairburn Estate |
| 4. Beinn a' Bha'ach Àrd | 5. Struy (A831) | 6. Beaully |
| 7. Muir of Ord (A832) | 8. Contin (A835) | 9. Kiltarlity |
| 10. Jamestown | 11. Balvaire / Newmore | 12. A835 / B9169 |
| 13. A832 west of Tore | 14. Great Glen Way near Ladycairn | 15. Heights of Brae |
| 16. Sgùrr a' Chaire Ghlaibh | 17. Meall a' Mhadalbh | 18. Knockbain / Torgorm |
| 19. A9 Cromarty Firth | 20. Ben Wyvis | 21. A9 Kessock Bridge |
| 22. A96, Alturle Junction | 23. Cnoc Fyriish | 24. B817, Alness |
| 25. Chanonry Point | 26. Invergordon | 27. A862 Clacnaharry |

The surrounding cumulative developments within the landscape study area are also displayed on the map displayed here, however, it is important to note that not all sites displayed here will progress to a full application or receive consent.

The proposed development has been designed to in keep with the environment. The site is designed with varying tip heights of 200m and 230m, this has been utilised alongside turbine positioning in a sloping landscape (moving turbines to lower elevations to reduce the overall visual height!) to align, as far as reasonably possible, the turbine tip heights of Ballach with surrounding developments of Fairburn, the proposed Fairburn Extension and help screen views of the development from wider views.



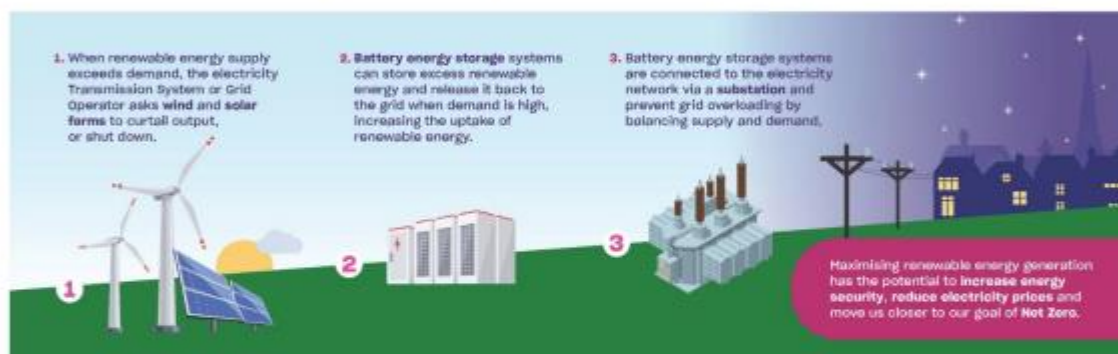
Battery Storage

Battery Storage

The Proposed Development includes provision for the installation of up to 5MW of onsite Battery Storage at Ballach Wind Farm. The onsite battery storage would be located adjacent to the site access track, with the batteries located in a single containerised unit, within the area of land initially used for the site construction compound.

Why BESS?

Battery storage enhances the reliability and efficiency of wind farms. By storing energy when the wind is strong and releasing it when the wind is calm, battery storage ensures a consistent and predictable power supply. This also reduces the need to curtail wind power during periods of high generation, improving the overall efficiency of the wind farm.



Source: <http://www.energigroup.com/renewable/battery-storage-development/fildstown-battery-storage>

Health, Safety and Mitigation

The installation of BESS systems both in the UK and around the globe is increasing to help store renewable energy.

To ensure compliance with health and safety measures, a comprehensive risk management strategy will be adopted in agreement with the Fire and Rescue Service via the National Fire Chiefs Council, as well as Highland Council planning department.

Matters addressed will include the following based on current best practice guidance as issued by the National Fire Chiefs Council (November 2022):

- **Detection and monitoring**—An effective and appropriate method of early detection of a fault within the batteries would be in place, with immediate disconnection of the affected battery/batteries. This could be achieved automatically through the provision of an effective Battery Management System.
- **Suppression systems** - Suitable fixed suppression systems would be installed in the unit in order to help prevent fire and propagation between modules.
- **Deflagration Prevention and Venting** BESS containers would be fitted with deflagration venting and explosion protection appropriate to the hazard to allow the fire to extinguish within the container.
- **Site access** - Roads capable of accommodating fire service vehicles in all weather conditions.
- **Water Supplies**—proposals for water supplies on site would be developed following liaison with the local fire and rescue service taking into account the likely flow rates required.
- **Signage**—Signage should be installed in a suitable and visible location on the outside of BESS units identifying the presence of a BESS system.
- **Emergency Plans** - develop emergency plans and share these with the Fire and Rescue Service.
- **Environmental Protection Measures**—This would include systems for containing and managing water runoff.

EnergieKontor

>> Next Steps

BALLACH WIND FARM

Following the final phase of pre-application public consultation and the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), the Section 36 application for Ballach Wind Farm will be submitted to the Scottish Government.

A timeline of this forthcoming process and additional information is available below.

- **2nd round public exhibitions - June 2025**
- **Finalisation of a Section 36 application and EIA - July 2025**
- **Section 36 application submission to the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) - August 2025**
 - At this point all planning application and EIA documents will be publicly available through the ECU website and Energiekontor website.
 - The ECU will formally issue the application for consultation to statutory and non statutory consultees.
 - The public consultation process will commence.
- **The Highland Council Committee to discuss the application - unknown (approximately Q1 / Q2 2026)**
- **Earliest possible decision is expected from the ECU - approximately Q3 2026 - Q2 2027**
- **Earliest possible construction commencement - subject to grid date to be confirmed**

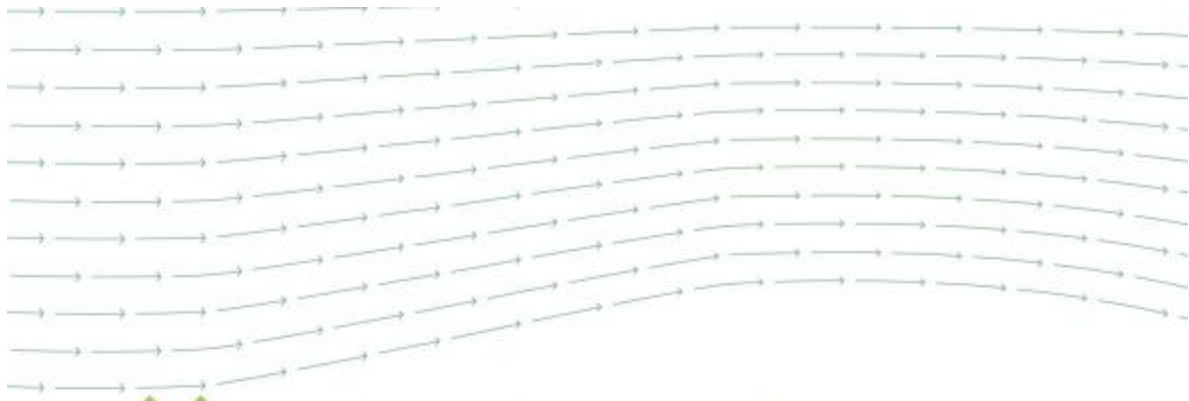
To access today's exhibition material online, please scan the below QR code, or visit:

<https://energiekontor.co.uk/our-projects/ballach-wind-farm/>



Scan our
QR code





Thank you for taking part in the Ballach Wind Farm Exhibition

If you have any questions or would like further information on the project,
please get in touch via email (ballachwindfarm@energiekontor.com)



Appendix 23: Visualisations - June 4th Event

