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4 EIA METHODOLOGY, SCOPING AND CONSULTATION

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This chapter of the EIA Report sets out the approach taken to produce the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Proposed Development.
- 4.1.2 EIA is a process aimed to ensure that permissions for developments with potentially significant effects on the environment are granted only after the assessment of likely significant environmental effects has been undertaken. The assessment must be carried out following consultation with statutory consultees, other interested bodies, and members of the public.
- 4.1.3 With a potential overall generating capacity of less than 50 Megawatts (MW), consent for the Proposed Development is being sought from North Lanarkshire Council (the Council) under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997¹ as amended by the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006².
- 4.1.4 The requirement for EIA in Scotland for wind farm generating stations with an electrical output capacity of up to 50 MW is provided under Part 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017³ (hereafter referred to as the 'EIA Regulations').

4.2 The EIA Process

- 4.2.1 EIA is the systematic process of compiling, assessing, presenting and mitigating all the significant environmental effects of a proposed development. The assessment is designed to inform the decision-making process by way of setting out the likely environmental profile of a project. Identification of potentially significant adverse environmental effects then leads to the design and incorporation of appropriate mitigation measures into both the design of the scheme and the way in which it is constructed. The main steps in the EIA process for the Proposed Development have been:
- Site selection and feasibility;
 - Scoping;
 - Baseline studies to establish the current environmental conditions at the Site;
 - Identification of potential environmental effects;
 - Mitigation to avoid or reduce the effects through iterative design process;
 - Assessment of residual effects;
 - Preparation of an EIA Report;
 - Submission of the EIA Report;
 - Consideration of application and environmental information by the Scottish Government, North Lanarkshire Council (the Council) and other consultees;
 - Determination of application (with or without conditions); and
 - Implementation and monitoring.

¹ Scottish Government (1997) Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 [Online] Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/8/contents> (Accessed 15/06/22)

² Scottish Government (2006) Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 [Online] Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2006/17/contents> (Accessed 15/06/22)

³ Scottish Government (2017) Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 [Online] Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2017/102/contents/made> (Accessed 15/06/22)

4.2.2 The EIA Regulations require that an EIA Report should include a range of information including: a description of the development, a description of reasonable alternatives, baseline information, a description of the likely significant effects of the development, and mitigation measures amongst other factors.

4.2.3 This EIA Report has been prepared in accordance with the EIA Regulations and includes the required information.

4.3 Consultation

4.3.1 Consultation has formed an integral role throughout the EIA process, including at the following key stages:

- Pre-Scoping - obtaining initial feedback on the Proposed Development;
- Scoping identification of key issues (November 2020);
- Updated consultation with technical consultees following design changes (March 2022);
- Public exhibitions (16th August, 17th August, 29th November, and 30th November 2022);
- Meetings with Planning Case Officer – January 2022 and June 2022;
- Technical Assessments - collecting baseline information from relevant organisations and confirming survey methodologies;
- Informing site design - communication with local communities and consideration of baseline information; and
- Discussing opportunities for mitigation and enhancement.

4.3.2 Further information about pre-scoping, scoping and public consultation is outlined below with other consultation elements discussed within the individual technical chapters and detailed within the Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report which accompanies the application.

4.4 Scoping

4.4.1 A Scoping Report was submitted to the Council in November 2020, with a Scoping Opinion received in December 2020. An updated scoping exercise was undertaken in early 2022 which included contacting consultees and updating them on the design changes to the Proposed Development. The aim of the Scoping process was to identify key environmental issues at an early stage, to determine which elements of the proposal are likely to cause significant environmental effects, and to identify issues that can be 'scoped out' of the assessment. This established the work required for preparation of this EIA Report.

4.4.2 Following design changes, the submission of an Updated Scoping Report was deemed unnecessary by the Council as the 2020 Scoping Report encompassed the EIA methodology, and the key issues to be addressed. The re-scoping process was carried out in March 2022 and details of consultees and their responses are found in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Scoping Responses

Consultees Consulted throughout EIA Process	Relevant EIA Topic	Response Relating to 2020 Scoping or 2022 Updated Consultation
North Lanarkshire Council	Landscape, Traffic and Transport, Socioeconomics, Noise, Aviation, Pollution	2020 Scoping

Consultees Consulted throughout EIA Process	Relevant EIA Topic	Response Relating to 2020 Scoping or 2022 Updated Consultation
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)	[Didn't provide a response]	
NatureScot (NS)	Ecology, Ornithology, Landscape, Forestry	Both 2020 and 2022 scoping consultation.
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	Cultural Heritage and Archaeology	Both 2020 and 2022 scoping consultation.
Transport Scotland	Traffic and Transport	2020 Scoping
British Telecoms (BT)	Telecommunications	Consulted individually in 2021 and for 2022 scoping consultation.
Ministry of Defence	Aviation (Other Issues)	Both 2020 and 2022 scoping consultation.
NATS Safeguarding	Aviation (Other Issues)	Both 2020 and 2022 scoping consultation.
Edinburgh Airport Safeguarding	Aviation (Other Issues)	Both 2020 and 2022 scoping consultation.
Glasgow Prestwick Airport	Aviation	Consultation and communications undertaken by PagerPower and detailed in Chapter 17.
Arqiva	Telecommunications	Consulted individually in 2021 and for 2022 scoping consultation.
Atkins	Telecommunications	Consulted individually in 2021 and for 2022 scoping consultation.
JRC	Telecommunications	Consulted individually in 2021 and for 2022 scoping consultation.
Vodafone	Telecommunications	Consultation and communications undertaken by PagerPower and detailed in Chapter 17.
Ofcom	Telecommunications (Other Issues)	2020 Scoping (were re-consulted in 2022 but no longer provide a scoping service for wind farms).
SGN	Utilities (Other Issues)	2020 Scoping
Stirling Council (North Lanarkshire Archaeology)	Archaeology	2020 Scoping
Cadent Gas	Utilities	2020 Scoping
Coal Authority	Geology and Peat	2020 Scoping
Shell UK Ltd	[Didn't provide a response]	
Essar Oil (UK) Ltd	[Didn't provide a response]	

Consultees Consulted throughout EIA Process	Relevant EIA Topic	Response Relating to 2020 Scoping or 2022 Updated Consultation
West Lothian Council	[Didn't provide a response]	
North Lanarkshire Council Greenspace	[Didn't provide a response]	
Scottish Forestry	[Didn't provide a response]	
Scottish Water	[Didn't provide a response]	
Scottish Power Environmental Planning	Utilities	2020 Scoping
RSPB	[Didn't provide a response]	

4.5 Further Consultation

Landscape

- 4.5.1 Additional consultation was completed with the Landscape Officers of North Lanarkshire and West Lothian Councils to agree suitable viewpoint locations for the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).
- 4.5.2 The selected viewpoints were decided with reference to the scoping advice relating to landscape and visual topics, as well as using the Zone of Theoretical Visibility generated from the proposed 200 m tip height turbines. Further information on the viewpoints is provided in Chapter 6 of this EIA Report.
- 4.5.3 A meeting with the Landscape Officers from North Lanarkshire Council was also held in June 2022, in order to discuss the decision to raise the turbine tip height to 200 m and residential amenity of nearby properties.

Cultural Heritage

- 4.5.4 Historic Environment Scotland (HES) was consulted in May 2022 to confirm the scope of the assessment for the EIA. This included HES suggesting an additional visualisation for the EIA Report. Further information on this visualisation is provided in Chapter 12.
- 4.5.5 This consultation was also extended to the County Archaeologist at North Lanarkshire Council, but they did not respond to the request.

Ornithology

- 4.5.6 A consultation letter was issued to NatureScot in August 2021, in order to confirm the scope of the proposed ornithology surveys for the EIA. Baseline information was provided, and NatureScot confirmed that the proposed scope was sufficient. Further information on this consultation is provided in Chapter 11.

Noise

- 4.5.7 Further consultation with the Environmental Health Officers (EHO) at North Lanarkshire Council and West Lothian Council was undertaken in October 2021. This was completed to agree the proposed assessment methodology.
- 4.5.8 North Lanarkshire Council EHO responded in agreement with the proposed methodology, and requested further noise survey locations in the Study Area, which was confirmed again in consultation undertaken in June 2022. The West Lothian Council EHO did not provide a consultation response. Further information on the response can be found in Chapter 7.

Transport

- 4.5.9 The Applicant is in ongoing discussion to use the service station as the construction and operational access, as well as the abnormal load vehicle access.
- 4.5.10 The Applicant is continuing to liaise with BP with legal agreements currently being drafted. The Applicant is also in contact with Transport Scotland regarding the service station access however agreements are still to be confirmed.

Telecommunications and Aviation

- 4.5.11 Throughout the process of designing the Proposed Development, and completing this application, extensive consultation has been undertaken with telecommunication and aviation consultees due to concerns regarding the turbines impacting telecommunication signals and radar.
- 4.5.12 Telecommunication consultees MBNL and Vodafone objected to the proposed layout. Continued consultation is being undertaken to find a suitable mitigation option.
- 4.5.13 Aviation consultees NATS and Edinburgh Airport objected to the proposed layout. NATS has provided a mitigation solution with respect to Cumbernauld and Kincardine radar, and official agreements will be confirmed prior to construction.
- 4.5.14 Based on technical assessments completed by Pager Power, the Proposed Development was determined to not be visible to Edinburgh Airport. Nonetheless, following consultation with Edinburgh Airport they have determined that the Proposed Development is in the line of sight of the radar system, and mitigation will be required.
- 4.5.15 Should significant impacts on Edinburgh Airport radar be anticipated, appropriate mitigation will be agreed between the Applicant and Edinburgh Airport.

4.6 EIA Methodology

Technical Assessments

- 4.6.1 Each of the technical assessments follows a systematic approach with the principal steps as follows:
- Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria;
 - Scoping Responses and Consultation;
 - Description of the Baseline Conditions;
 - Assessment of Potential Effects;
 - Cumulative Effects Assessment;
 - Mitigation Measures;

- Residual Effects; and
- Summary.

Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

4.6.2 Each technical assessment sets out the methodology used to undertake the assessment of potential effects and details the criteria that are used to determine which effects are significant. The methodology seeks to ensure that the assessment is transparent. The criteria for assessing significance are set out in each individual assessment. Where a level of significance is attributed to an effect, this is based on professional judgement informed by consideration of the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of the effect. Each assessment details the threshold at which effects are generally considered to be significant.

Scoping Responses and Consultation

4.6.3 This section sets out the scoping requirements and pre-application consultation responses that form the framework and scope of the specialist assessment work for the topic.

Description of Baseline Conditions

4.6.4 In order to evaluate the potential environmental effects, information relating to the existing environmental conditions has been collected through field and desktop research. This forms the baseline conditions. The baseline also extends into the future (the future baseline), although such predictions can involve a high number of variables and be subject to large uncertainties. As a result, in some cases, the current baseline condition can be assumed to remain unchanged throughout the timeframe of the Proposed Development.

4.6.5 The baseline has been used to assess the sensitivity of receptors within the study areas. Windfarms that are operational or consented at the time of commencing the assessments are treated as being part of the existing baseline, except where specific guidance advises to the contrary. The approach to describing baseline conditions is set out in each relevant technical chapter.

4.6.6 Baseline information is used to inform the layout of the Proposed Development. From baseline information, constraints were identified which were considered as part of the design process. Further detail on the design process adopted for the Development is detailed in Chapter 2.

Assessment of Potential Effects

4.6.7 The prediction of likely effects covers the three phases of the Proposed Development: construction (including pre-construction), operation and decommissioning. In order to assess the potential effects arising from the Proposed Development, the significance of such effects will be determined. The determination of significance relates to the sensitivity of the resource or receptor being affected and the magnitude of change as a result of the impact. The assessment of effects will combine professional judgement together with consideration of the following:

- Sensitivity of the resource or receptor under construction;
- Magnitude of potential impact in relation to the degree of change which occurs as a result of the Proposed Development;
- Type of effect, i.e., adverse, beneficial, neutral, or uncertain;
- Probability of the effect occurring, i.e., certain, likely, or unlikely; and
- Whether the effect is temporary, permanent and/or reversible.

Sensitivity of Receptors

- 4.6.8 The sensitivity of the receptors, including the importance of environmental features on or near to the Site of the sensitivity of potentially affected receptors, will be assessed in line with the best practice, legislation or statutory designations and/or judgement.
- 4.6.9 Table 4.2 details a framework for determining the sensitivity of receptors. Each technical assessment will specify their own criteria that will be applied during the EIA and details will be provided in the relevant EIA Report chapter.

Table 4.2: Framework for Determining Sensitivity of Receptors

Sensitivity of Receptor	Definition
Very High	The receptor has little or no ability to absorb change without fundamentally altering its present character, is of very high environmental value or of international importance.
High	The receptor has low ability to absorb change without fundamentally altering its present character, is of high environmental value, or of national importance.
Medium	The receptor has moderate capacity to absorb change without significantly altering its present character, has some environmental value, or is of regional importance.
Low	The receptor is tolerant of change without detriment to its character, is low environmental value, or local importance.
Negligible	The receptor is tolerant to change and is of little environmental value.

Magnitude of Impact

- 4.6.10 The magnitude of potential impacts will be identified through consideration of the Proposed Development, the degree of change to baseline conditions predicted as a result of the Proposed Development, the duration and reversibility of an impact and professional judgement, best practice guidance and legislation.
- 4.6.11 General criteria for assessing the magnitude of an impact are presented in Table 4.3. Each technical assessment will apply their own appropriate criteria during the EIA, with the details provided in the relevant EIA Report chapter.

Table 4.3: Framework for Determining Magnitude of Effects

Magnitude of Effects	Definition
High	A fundamental change to the baseline condition of the asset, leading to total loss or major alteration of character.
Medium	A material, partial loss or alteration of character.
Low	A slight, detectable, alteration of the baseline condition of the asset.
Negligible	A barely distinguishable change from baseline conditions.

4.6.12 If impacts of zero magnitude (i.e., none / no change) are identified, this will be made clear in the assessment.

Significance of Effect

4.6.13 The sensitivity of the asset and magnitude of the predicted impacts will be used as a guide, in addition to professional judgement, to predict the significance of the likely effects. Table 4.4 summarises guideline criteria for assessing the significance of effects.

Table 4.4: Framework for Assessment of the Significance of Effects

Magnitude of Impact	Sensitivity of Receptor				
	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
High	Major	Major	Moderate	Moderate	Minor
Medium	Major	Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
Low	Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Negligible
Negligible	Minor	Minor	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

4.6.14 Effects predicted to be of major or moderate significance are considered to be 'significant' in the context of the EIA Regulations and are shaded in light grey in the above table.

4.6.15 Zero magnitude impacts upon a receptor will result in no effect, regardless of sensitivity.

Cumulative Effects

4.6.16 In accordance with the EIA Regulations and using advice from NatureScot^{4,5} the assessment has considered 'cumulative' effects. By definition, these are effects that result from incremental changes caused by past, present or reasonably foreseeable developments together with the Proposed Development being assessed. For the cumulative assessment, the combined effects of several developments that may on an individual basis be insignificant but cumulatively, have a significant effect, such as landscape and visual effects, have been considered.

4.6.17 The extent of any cumulative assessment is defined in each technical assessment chapter and can include both existing and proposed wind farm developments and other forms of development. The potential landscape and visual effects, for example, which relate to the intervisibility of individual wind farm development schemes will be much more wide ranging than noise effects which will be limited to receptors in the more immediate vicinity of the Proposed Development.

⁴ NatureScot (2021) Assessing the Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact of Onshore Wind Energy Developments [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/doc/guidance-assessing-cumulative-landscape-and-visual-impact-onshore-wind-energy-developments> (Accessed 14/01/2023)

⁵ NatureScot (2012) Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Renewable Energy Developments [Online] Available at: <https://tethys.pnnl.gov/sites/default/files/publications/SNH-2012-CumulativeOnshoreWind.pdf> (Accessed 14/01/2023)

Mitigation Measures and Enhancement

4.6.18 Where the EIA identifies likely significant adverse effects, mitigation measures will be proposed in order to avoid, reduce, offset or compensate those effects. These mitigation measures may be embedded in the design or additional to the inherent design of the scheme. Such embedded mitigation measures will likely include the movement or loss of turbines, access tracks and other infrastructure, and/or management and operational measures.

4.6.19 In line with the mitigation hierarchy identified in Planning Advice Note (PAN) 1/2013⁶ the strategy of avoidance, reduction, offsetting, and compensation seeks:

- First to avoid significant adverse effects;
- Then to minimise those which remain; and
- Lastly, where no other remediation measures are possible, to propose appropriate compensation.

4.6.20 In addition, enhancement measures may be incorporated into design of the Proposed Development to maximise environmental benefits.

Residual Effects

4.6.21 Taking cognisance of the suggested mitigation (and enhancement) measures, the predicted effects will be re-assessed to determine the residual effects.

4.6.22 The residual effects of the Proposed Development are those that remain, assuming successful implementation of the identified mitigation and enhancement measures.

4.6.23 Residual effects are identified in each technical assessment alongside an assessment of whether any residual effects are significant or not in terms of the EIA Regulations.

Assumptions and Limitations of the EIA

4.6.24 A number of assumptions have been made during preparation of this EIA Report, as set out below. The assumptions are:

- The principal land uses adjacent to the Site remain as they are at the time of the submission of the application, except in cases where permission has already been granted for development. In these cases, it is assumed that the approved development will take place, and these have been treated as contributing to 'cumulative' effects; and
- Information provided by third parties, including publicly available information and databases, is correct at the time of the submission.

4.6.25 The EIA has been subject to the following limitations:

- Baseline conditions are accurate at the time of the physical surveys but, due to the dynamic nature of the environment, conditions may change during the site preparation, construction, and operational phases; and
- The assessment of cumulative effects has been reliant on the availability of known information relating to existing wind farm developments as of 26th October 2022.

⁶ Scottish Government (2013). Planning Advice Note 1/2013: Environmental Impact Assessment. [Online] Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/planning-advice-note-1-2013-environmental-impact-assessment/pages/6/> (Accessed 14/01/2023)

4.6.26 Assumptions and limitations specific to certain environmental aspects are discussed in the relevant Chapters of this EIA Report.