

Agenda Item	6.7
Report No	PLN/009/26

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: North Planning Applications Committee

Date: 21 January 2026

Report Title: 23/04194/FUL Balmeanach Wind Farm Limited
Land 2400M NE Of An Cleireach 8 Balmeanach, Struan

Report By: Area Planning Manager - North

Purpose/Executive Summary

Description: Balmeanach Wind Farm - Erection and Operation of a Wind Farm for a period of 40 years, comprising of 9 Wind Turbines (as amended) with a maximum blade tip height 149.9m, access tracks, borrow pits, substation, control building, and ancillary infrastructure

Ward: 10 – Eilean a Cheo

Development category: Major Development

Reason referred to Committee: Major Development

All relevant matters have been taken into account when appraising this application. It is considered that the proposal accords with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan and is acceptable in terms of all other applicable material considerations

Recommendation

Members are asked to agree the recommendation to **Grant** the application as set out in section 11 of the report.

1. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

1.1 The application is submitted for Planning Permission under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) for a 9 turbine wind farm to be operated for a 40 year period. The turbines are proposed with a maximum blade tip height of 149.9m, with the development having a total capacity of 45MW.

1.2 Key elements of the development include:

- 9 wind turbines with a maximum blade tip height of 149.9m and maximum rotor diameter of 138m;
- turbine foundations with crane, blade, tower, and nacelle storage hardstandings;
- a permanent lattice met mast up to 83.5m height with foundation and hardstanding area;
- up to 8.4km of new onsite access track, typically of 5m widths, although wider on bends, and including turning heads and drainage;
- underground cabling and electrical infrastructure along access tracks to connect the turbines with the onsite electrical substation;
- a 35m x 30m (indicative) onsite substation with 33kV switchgear, control and metering building. The compound is proposed to be sited in proposed borrow pit no. 3;
- 4 borrow pits search areas (covering 48,900m²);
- a 100m x 50m permanent construction compound and a 100m x 80m temporary construction compound; and
- removal of up to 74.28ha of conifer forest for habitat management and biodiversity enhancement (forest to bog reinstatement).

1.3 Site access will be from the A850 to the north of the site via the current Ben Aketil Wind Farm access however, in the event that Ben Sca Wind Farm is not build out, 1.4km of additional track is also proposed along with a permanent construction compound near the site entrance. The applicant has also proposed two options for internal track configurations, Option A and Option B, with the former creating direct links from the track between the construction compound and turbines T2 to T3 and T2 to T3 (the preferred option), and the latter creating a longer link connecting the construction compound to T4. The anticipated abnormal indivisible load (AIL) turbine component delivery route is from the Port of Kyle of Lochalsh via the U5012 Kyle Prospect Road from the harbour to the A87 to Borve, then along the A850 to the site entrance. There is no battery energy storage system component proposed with the wind farm.

1.4 A micrositing allowance of 50m has been proposed with a variation for positions to be overseen by an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) and controlled by condition. Micrositing would be used to avoid any areas of deeper peat, higher elevations of

ground, watercourse buffers, Ground Water Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTE) and cultural heritage assets. The final design of the turbine (colour and finish), ancillary electrical equipment, landscaping and fencing etc. are also expected to be agreed with the Planning Authority, by condition.

- 1.5 Grid connection is expected to be via the new Edinbane Substation to the southeast, which was approved for expansion by the Council in February 2024 and forms part of the approved Skye Reinforcement Project.
- 1.6 As permission is sought to operate the wind farm for 40 years, a further application would be necessary to determine any future re-powering proposal. As currently proposed, all components and above ground infrastructure would be removed. Any such track or infrastructure foundation retention would need to be agreed via a decommissioning method statement and would require a planning application, which would be determined in line with the extant development plan of that time.
- 1.7 The applicant anticipates that the wind farm construction period will last approximately 18 months with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to be implemented throughout the construction period. The CEMP would need to be approved by the Planning Authority, in consultation with relevant statutory bodies before the start of development.
- 1.8 The Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) was submitted to the Council in September 2022 prior to the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Pre-Application Consultation) (Scotland) Regulations 2021 coming in to force 01 October 2022. Therefore, the pre-application consultation process was subject to the provisions of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2013. In line with the older legislation, the applicant held online public consultation events in October 2022 and in person consultations events on 22 November at Dunvegan Community Hall (4pm-8pm), 23 November 2023 at Edinbane Community Hall (2pm-6pm), and Struan Primary School 13 December 2022 (3pm – 7pm). These events were advertised in the West Highland Free Press on 14 October 2022 and 11 November 2022 as well as by poster and leaflet, which were distributed locally. A website was also provided by the applicant to allow members of the public to submit comments. A Pre-application Consultation Report is submitted with the application that sets out how the applicant has responded to the concerns of respondents.
- 1.9 The applicant made use of the Council's Pre-Application Advice Service for Major Developments in March 2021. The Council's advice explained that the layout and scale of the proposal should not undo the mitigation secured for operational and consented schemes, and that environmental impacts on historic and natural resources (amongst others) would require to be adequately addressed within the submission.
- 1.10 During the application's determination, the following amendments have been made:

- Turbine T1 and its associated infrastructure and access track have been removed;
- track realignments to reduce length, spurs, and turning heads;
- reorientation of Turbines T4 and T5 crane hardstandings;
- relocation of the substation to within Borrow Pit 3;
- an additional 1.4km of new track and a permanent construction compound in the event that Ben Sca Wind Farm is not built out; and,
- a revised outline Habitat Management Plan (OHMP).

1.11 The application is supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) with corresponding figures and appendices, which has been updated through a Supplementary Environmental Information Report (SEIR). Both reports contain chapters on the following topics: site description and design evolution; development description; policy context; landscape and visual impact; ecology; ornithology; hydrology, hydrogeology and soils; cultural heritage and archaeology; site access, traffic and transport; noise; socioeconomics and land use; and, other considerations. Additionally, SEIR assesses the cumulative impacts with the Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm. The EIAR also includes a Schedule of [environmental] Commitments, also updated through the SEIR. The application was also accompanied by a Planning Statement, a Design and Access Statement, and the PAC.

1.12 Volume 5 of the SEIR is a combined assessment of Balmeanach and Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farms, which considers the full in combination effects of the proposed Balmeanach and Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farms, should both be consented. This appendix is submitted with both the Balmeanach and Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm SEI applications.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The 476ha site is predominantly moorland, located on the Balmeanach and Caroy Common Grazings within the Bracadale and Coishletter Estates 3km to the south of Edinbane, 8km to the east of Dunvegan, and 7km to the north of Struan in northwest Skye. The site is relatively remote with the closest residences being crofters' cottages located over 3km from the southwestern site boundary along the partially adopted Upper Feorlig Road. Access to the site would be via the existing Ben Aketil Wind Farm access track from the A850 through commercial forestry.

2.2 It lies within an upland landscape that is characterised by a series of smooth moorland slopes, including Ben Sca and Ben Aketil, with small watercourses, and large tracks of commercial forestry to its north, east, and south. The site topography slopes to the southeast from 283m AOD at the summit of Ben Sca down to the lower slopes at approximately 160m AOD with turbines sited between the 160m AOD and 240m AOD contours. The existing Ben Aketil Wind Farm is to the west, and Edinbane Wind Farm lies to the east.

2.3 There are several Core Paths in the local area as well as informal walking routes to the summit of Ben Aketil. Local tourist and recreational attractions include star gazing at the Waternish Peninsula, the Uig to Lochmaddy Ferry, the Skye Trail, The Storr, Macleod's Tables, the Cuillins and Glen Brittle Forest at Moineach.

Environmental Designations and Habitats

2.4 The site does not form part of any statutory or non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation. Designated sites for ecology within 10km are listed in the table below. There are no non-statutory sites for nature conservation within 5km of the site.

Designation	Distance to Site Boundary	Qualifying Interests
Statutory Sites (within 10km)		
An Cleireach	Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) 1km south (at its closest point)	Geological (tertiary igneous intrusion)
Inner Hebrides and the Minches	Special Area of Conservation (SAC) 2.8km west (at its closest point)	Harbour porpoise
Ascrib, Isay and Dunvegan	SAC 8.2km west north west (at its closest point)	Harbour seal

2.5 There is one block of ancient woodland listed on the Ancient Woodland Inventory located approximately 3.7km north east of the site, within the settlement of Edinbane.

2.6 There are no sites designated for bird interests within 10km of the site boundary. The closest site is the Cuillins Special Protection Area (SPA) at approximately 14km to the south/southeast. The Cuillins SPA is designated for supporting a breeding population of the golden eagle with the area surrounding the site used by wider countryside populations of golden and white-tailed eagles. Site investigations identified other protected species including pipistrelles (bats) and otters.

2.7 The site is located within three main surface water catchment areas; the River Ose which discharges into Loch Bracadale; and the Red Burn and Abhainn Coishleader which both discharge into Loch Greshornish. Part of the western extent of the site is located within the Caroy River surface water catchment which discharges into Loch Caroy. The nearest Drinking Water Protected Area (DWPA) is located to the east of Loch Caroy near Balmeanach, which is not hydraulically connected to site. There are no Private Water Supplies (PWS) that would be impacted by the proposal.

2.8 Class 1 peatland, which is defined as nationally important carbon rich soils, deep peat, and priority peatland habitat of high conservation value, covers the majority of the site with small areas of Class 5 peatlands in the southeast, which is of lower conservation value. Peat thickness varies from zero to 2.7m across the site with an average depth of 0.3m.

2.9 There are areas within the site that have been assessed as having potential for high and moderate ground water dependent terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE) however further investigation has shown these to be sustained by rainfall and surface water runoff rather than groundwater. The Loch Caroy Shellfish Protection Area and Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC are located downstream of the site.

2.10 An Cleireach Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and An Cleireach Geological Conservation Review (GCR) site are both located to the south of the site and are designated for the sequence of tertiary igneous rocks at this location.

Landscape Designations, Wild Land, and Landscape Character

2.11 The proposed development is not located within any national or regional landscape designations or Wild Land Areas (WLAs). Landscape designations and WLAs within 40km of the site are listed in the table below. WLAs are not a landscape designation but are considered of national importance in NPF4.

Designated Landscape	Distance and direction from the Proposed Development
National Scenic Area	
Trotternish	18km northeast
The Cuillin Hills	22km southeast
Special Landscape Area (SLA)	
North West Skye	3.5km west
Greshornish	5km north
Trotternish and Tianavaig	12km northeast
Raasay and Rona	22km east
Wild Land Areas (WLA)	
WLA 22 Duirinish	Within 20km west

WLA 23 Cuillin	Within 20km south
WLA 25 Applecross	Within 40km east

2.12 The turbines will be wholly located within Landscape Character Type (LCT) 359 Upland Sloping Moorland, with the boundary also encompassing the closely associated LCT360 Stepped Moorland in the southwest. There are also areas of LCT358 Low Smooth Moorland, LCT357 Farmed and Settled Lowlands - Skye and Lochalsh, LCT361 Stepped Hills, and LCT366 Landslide Edge and Undulating Ridge within 20km of the site.

Built Heritage

2.13 There are no nationally or regionally important designated cultural heritage assets within the site or within 1km of the site boundary. There are 34 heritage assets of national importance within 10km which comprise 30 scheduled monuments, one Inventoried Garden and Designed Landscape, and three Category A Listed Buildings including Dunvegan Castle and its associated Dunvegan Castle Garden and Design Landscape (GDL), which is 8km to the west.

2.14 The table below sets out the scheduled monuments that have been assessed as agreed with Historic Environment Scotland (HES).

Site Name	Scheduled Number and location
Dun Feorlig, broch 230m NNE of Feorlig Farm	SM3494
Dun Arkaig, Broch	SM13662
Abhainn Bhaile Mheadhonaich, broch and standing stone 145m SE of An Cairidh	SM13664
Dun Flashader, broch, Skye	SM911
Dun Osdale, broch 850m N of Osdale	SM3492
Dun Neill, dun 420m SW of Ardmore	SM3885
Barpannan, two chambered cairns, Vatten Duirinish	SM893
Ullinish Lodge, chambered cairn, Bracadale	SM903
Ullinish, fort, Bracadale	SM930

2.15 There are no prehistoric cultural heritage assets within the site. There are three prehistoric cultural heritage assets within 1km of the site, a peat-covered hut circle

(SLR47), a hut circle (SLR11) and an ovular stone setting (SLR43). There is one post-medieval heritage asset within the site boundary, the ruin of a single twin-celled styled shieling (SLR19). There is one post-medieval heritage asset within the site boundary (a shieling ruin) and there are a further 22 post-medieval cultural heritage assets within 1km of the site. There are nine undated cultural heritage assets within the site and 14 within 1km of the site; these assets are not however designated.

Cumulative Development

2.16 Appendix 1 of this report provides details of operational, consented/under construction, and in planning wind farm projects that the applicant took into consideration in their cumulative assessment January 2023 and updated through the SEIR (completed April 2025), which has been reviewed and updated by Planning Officers. Since the application was submitted however: the decision for the Repowered and Extended Ben Aketil Wind Farm is yet to be issued following a Public Local Inquiry in June 2025; an application for Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm has been submitted (by the same developer and proposed to share some infrastructure); revisions have been made to the proposed Glen Ullinish II Wind Farm; and Additional Environmental Information has also been submitted to the Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farm. All of these applications are, therefore, yet to be determined. The Council has also been informed that neither Waternish Wind Farm nor Edinbane Repowering and Extension Wind Farms are proceeding to application stage in the near future.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

3.1	19 October 2022	22/03875/SCOP - Balmeanach Wind Farm - Erection and Operation of a Wind Farm, comprising of up to 10 wind turbines with a maximum blade tip height 149.9m, access tracks, borrow pits, substation, control building, battery energy storage system, and ancillary infrastructure	Scoping Response Issued
3.2	19 October 2022	22/04095/PAN - Balmeanach Wind Farm - The proposed development would consist of up to 10 wind turbines with tip heights up to 149.9m and an overall estimated capacity of 45MW.	Reported to Committee

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4.1 Advertised: EIA Development, Unknown Neighbour, and Bad Neighbour
Date EIA Advertised:

- West Highland Press 06 October 2023
- Edinburgh Gazette 29 September 2023

Date SEI Advertised:

- West Highland Pres 27 June 2025
- Edinburgh Gazette 27 June 2025

Representation deadlines: 05 November 2023 and 27 July 2025

Representations Received: 188 objections,

7 in support,
1 general comment

4.2 Material considerations raised in objections are summarised as follows:

- concerns regarding the location of proposal, including that it will create a single cluster with existing and approved wind farms;
- landscape impacts including the effects on landscape character, impacts on designated landscapes and Loch Bracadale;
- visual impacts including the extent of visibility, and impacts on sensitive receptors including residents, impacts on dark skies;
- socio economic impacts including on tourism and the accommodation sector, as well as not resulting in a significant increase in jobs;
- community and residential amenity, health/mental health, and wellbeing impacts;
- road, traffic, and traffic impacts in particular during construction and transport of AIL including impacts on the integrity of roads and delays;
- cumulative impacts including whether the EIA should assess combined effects with Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm (potential for salami slicing);
- concern regarding ecology impacts including ornithology;
- loss of peatland habitat and commercial forestry;
- concern regarding baseline data used for the EIA assessments; and,
- loss of agricultural land.

4.3 Material considerations raised in support are summarised as follows:

- provides significant quantity of green renewable energy;
- location appropriate in an area where turbines already operational;
- visible lights not proposed which will help minimise impacts;
- NPF4 recognises the global climate emergency and need for significant increase in renewable electricity production to help meet net zero targets;
- will bring socioeconomic benefits to Skye through expenditure during construction and operation; and,
- will improve recreational access to the area.

4.4 Non-Material considerations raised:

- potential profits from the development;
- impacts on house prices;
- the current electricity generating capacity of existing wind farms on Skye;
- consumer energy prices;
- potential for community shared ownership through the lifetime of the project and preference for community-led wind farm schemes (this application under consideration is developer led and must be determined regardless of ownership);
- dissatisfaction with the public consultation process; and,
- community benefits.

4.5 All letters of representation received by the Council are available for inspection via the Council's eplanning portal which can be accessed through the internet www.wam.highland.gov.uk/wam.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 **Struan Community Council (Host)** neither objects nor supports the application. It highlights concerns regarding traffic impacts during the construction of the wind farm, including cumulative effects if other wind farms are approved and constructed at the same time on Skye. It therefore requests that the construction activities for all approved Skye wind farm schemes are coordinated through a consolidated construction traffic management plan.

5.2 **Skeabost and District Community Council (Host)** objects to the application on the grounds of landscape and visual effects, residential amenity impacts including from noise and visual effects, effects on cultural heritage assets including the inventoried Dunvegan Castle and Gardens and Designed Landscape, effects from construction traffic and A1L transport, impacts on peatland habitat including on blanket bog, as well as impacts on protected species and ornithological interests and particularly white-tailed eagle. The response expresses concerns regarding the lack of significant employment generation, the incremental and piecemeal nature of wind farm developments on Skye, along with concerns that the application is infrastructurally linked with Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm, and that the applications should be considered together, as well as the public consultation process.

5.3 **Dunvegan Community Council** does not object to the application subject to the scheme providing satisfactory community benefits (which are not material to the assessment of the application).

5.4 **Minginish Community Council** was consulted but did not respond.

5.5 **Portree and Braes Community Council** was consulted but did not respond.

5.6 **Access Officer** does not object to the application subject to the prior approval of a finalised access management plan to ensure that public access is maintained before, during, and following the construction phase of development. The response advises on improvements to public access across the site.

5.7 **Archaeology (Historic Environment Team)** does not object to the application subject to a condition to secure the stated mitigation through an archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) and a programme of archaeological works.

5.8 **Contaminated Land Officer** does not object to the application and advises that there is no evidence to suggest a potentially contaminative former land use within the development area.

5.9 **Development Plans Team** does not object to the application. It sets out the policies relevant to consideration of the application and notes that developer contributions may also be required.

5.10 **Ecology Team** has withdrawn its objection on the grounds of the proposal providing insufficient biodiversity and peatland enhancement subject to a condition to secure that the finalised Habitat Management Plan includes a minimum of 10% enhancement in the event that Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm does not go ahead. The objection and condition are because the proposed enhancement for Balmeanach Wind Farm was contained in the outline Habitat Management Plan for the Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm on the adjacent site, with the latter wind farm being infrastructurally linked and submitted for planning permission by the same applicant.

5.11 **Environmental Heath** does not object to the application subject to conditions to limit noise levels at any noise sensitive property to 28dB LA90 as well as for its approval prior to construction activities commencing, of details on how best practicable measures will be implemented to reduce the impact of construction noise at noise sensitive locations, and to ensure that the construction activities proceed in accordance with the dust suppression mitigation measures stated in the outline CEMP.

5.12 **Flood Risk Management Team** does not object to the application and has no specific comments to make.

5.13 **Forestry Officer** does not object to the application, including the proposed 74.28ha (as amended) of forestry to bog peatland restoration to mitigate loss of peat subject to a condition securing a detailed Habitat Management Plan to include timescales for implementation, supervision and a mechanism for future monitoring. It also requires no tree felling is undertaken until a meaningful start has been made on the construction of the wind farm.

5.14 **Landscape Officer** does not object to the application on the grounds of landscape or visual effects, which are considered in detail in the report.

5.15 **Transport Planning Team** does not object to the application subject to conditions to secure a finalised Construction Transport Management Plan (CTMP) along with mitigation measures along the A850 to ensure that construction traffic and AIL delivery can be accommodated safely along the route. Road, traffic and transport impacts are considered in more detail in the body of the report.

5.16 **Access Panel Skye and Lochalsh** was consulted but did not respond.

5.17 **Civil Aviation Authority** was consulted but did not respond.

5.18 **Historic Environment Scotland** does not object to the application. It has considered the likely impacts against four scheduled monuments, namely: Barpannan, two chambered cairns (SM893), Abhainn Bhaile Mheadhonaich, broch and standing stone (SM13664), Dun Feorlig, Broch (SM3494), and Dun Arkaig, Broch (SM13662). Its response states that whilst the impacts would be significant and are underestimated in the EIAR, the level of impact would not be sufficient to warrant its objection.

5.19 **Highlands and Islands Airports Limited** does not object to the application as the application would not infringe the safeguarding criteria and operation of Benbecula Airport.

5.20 **Ministry of Defence - Defence Infrastructure Organisation** does not object to the application subject to conditions to secure the submission of an aviation safety lighting scheme prior to commencement of construction and the submission of aviation charting and safety management measures and information to the MOD 14 days prior to commencement of works.

5.21 **National Air Traffic Services En Route Plc** has removed its objection to the application following an agreement being reached between it and the developer for the design and implementation of an identified and defined mitigation solution in relation to Tiree RADAR.

5.22 **NatureScot** does not object to the application and has considered the proposal's effects in relation to landscape and visual matters, protected species and ornithology interests including golden and white-tailed eagles (wider countryside populations), and effects on priority peatland habitats. These matters are considered in detail in the main body of the report.

5.23 **Scottish Environment Protection Agency** has withdrawn its objection to the application following the submission of additional peat probing information to demonstrate that the proposed layout peat disturbance. SEPA does no object subject to conditions to secure its approval prior to development commencing of a finalised Peat Management Plan, the implementation of site access track Option A (see Paragraph 1.3) to further minimise peat disturbance, and to ensure that construction

works are undertaken in accordance with the prescribed Schedule of Conditions and the CEMP.

5.24 **Scottish Forestry** does not object and is content that the proposed felling for forestry to bog peatland restoration is in accordance with the national Control of Woodland Removal Policy including that there will be no additional new infrastructure on felled areas that would require compensatory planting.

5.25 **Scottish Water** does not object and advises that there are no drinking water protected areas that would be affected by the development.

5.26 **Transport Scotland** does not object to the application subject to conditions to secure its approval of the following prior to the commencement of development and/or delivery of AIL components:

- the proposed route for any abnormal loads on the trunk road network and any accommodation measures including removal of street furniture, junction widening, traffic management must also be approved;
- a recognised quality assured traffic management consultant to design and undertake any additional signing or temporary traffic control measures deemed necessary due to the size or length of loads being delivered; and,
- a CTMP to include any measures to control direct access onto a trunk road.

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY AND OTHER MATERIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Appendix 3 of this report provides details of the documents which comprise the adopted Development Plan, including details of pertinent planning policies as well as adopted supplementary guidance and other material policy considerations that are relevant to the assessment of the application.

7. PLANNING APPRAISAL

7.1 Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Planning Considerations

7.2 The key considerations in this case are:

- a) Compliance with the Development Plan and Other Planning Policy;
- b) Energy and Economic Benefits;
- c) Construction Impacts;
- d) Siting, Layout, and Design;

- e) Landscape and Visual Effects;
- f) Natural Heritage (including ornithology);
- g) Built and Cultural Heritage;
- h) Roads, Transport and Access;
- i) Water, Flood Risk, Drainage and Peat;
- j) Noise and Shadow Flicker;
- k) Telecommunications;
- l) Aviation and Radar;
- m) Decommissioning and Aftercare;
- n) Planning Compliance and Monitoring; and
- o) Other Material Considerations.

Compliance with the Development Plan and Other Government Policy

7.3 Appendix 4 of this report provides an assessment of compliance with the Development Plan and other material policy considerations. In summary, the Development Plan comprises National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), the adopted Highland-wide Local Development Plan 2012 (HwLDP), the West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan 2019 (WestPlan) and all statutorily adopted supplementary guidance, including the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance 2016 (OWESG).

7.4 The principle of wind farm development with a generating capacity of 50MW and above is established in national policy. However, as a proposal for a generating station with a capacity below this threshold, the principle is not established although, as set out in this report, the development plan provides strong support. For example, NPF4 considers that Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure will assist in the delivery of the Spatial Strategy and Spatial Priorities for the north of Scotland, and that Highland can continue to make a strong contribution toward meeting Scotland's ambition for net zero. Alongside these ambitions, the strategy for Highland aims to protect environmental assets as well as to stimulate investment in natural and engineered solutions to address climate change. This aim is not new and will clearly require a balancing exercise to be undertaken, which is reflected throughout NPF4.

7.5 The above is also reflected within other material policy considerations, with Government policy giving significant weight to the importance of achieving net zero through the deployment of onshore wind at pace. Government legislation and policy maintains the commitment to attaining net zero by 2045, with the Onshore Wind Policy Statement requirement for 20GW of onshore wind to be deployed by 2030, and the Climate Change Committee Report to UK Parliament (July 2024) explaining that onshore wind installations will need to double by 2030. The UK Government Clean

Power Action Plan has also recently set a more ambitious target of 27-29 GW of onshore wind by 2030. When determining renewable energy proposals, the ability to meet these targets therefore demands substantial weight when undertaking the planning balance exercise.

7.6 At the regional level, HwLDP also offers support for renewable development proposals where they are located, sited and designed such as they will not be significantly detrimental overall, individually or cumulatively with other developments. To inform this assessment, the OWESG provides a methodology for a judgement to be made on the likely impact of a development on assessed “thresholds” in order to assist the application of HwLDP policy. Appendix 7 provides an assessment against Landscape and Visual Assessment Criteria contained within Section 4 of the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance.

Energy and Economic Benefit

7.7 THC continues to respond positively to the Government’s renewable energy agenda. Installed onshore wind energy developments in Highland account for more generating capacity than any other single local authority in Scotland, with a substantial number of onshore wind farm applications pending consideration at present.

7.8 Notwithstanding any impacts that this proposal may have upon the landscape resource, amenity and heritage of the area, the development could be seen to be compatible with Scottish Government policy and guidance and increase its overall contribution to the Government, UK and European energy targets, with the development having the potential to generate up to an average of approximately 150,000 MWh (of electricity annually, which equates to the power consumed by approximately 46,500 average UK households (SEIR Chapter 14, Paragraph 14.15).

7.9 Wind turbines provide an important mechanism for the reduction of carbon dioxide (CO₂), and other greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions into the atmosphere by reducing the consumption of fossil fuel generated mains electricity. However, during their manufacture, construction and decommissioning, wind farms can result in the emissions of GHGs, particularly where natural carbon stores such as peat are present and potentially impacted by the development. The savings and release of carbon emissions are often termed “carbon balance”. The EIAR assesses the GHG emissions and uses carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e) where equivalence means having the same warming effect as CO₂ over 100 years. Taking account of the expected total CO₂ loss from the carbon calculator result, the proposed development, as amended, would be expected to result in a saving of approximately 142,153 tonnes of carbon dioxide (tCO₂) per annum over coal-fired generated electricity, 31,138 tonnes of CO₂ per year over grid-mix of electricity, and 63,781 tonnes of CO₂ per year over a fossil fuel mix of electricity. These figures equate to savings of a total of over 5.7 million tonnes, 1.2 million tonnes, or 2.6m tonnes for coal, grid-mix, and fossil fuel mix of

electricity respectively over the 40 year operational lifetime of the proposed development.

- 7.10 The assessment of the carbon losses and gains during construction and operation estimated an overall loss of 144,290 tonnes of CO₂e as amended through the SEIR, mainly due to on-site losses including provision of backup power to the grid and embodied emissions from the manufacture of the turbines. The anticipated carbon payback period for the development would be approximately 2 years based on a fossil-fuel mix of electricity generation. This is the period of time a wind farm needs to be in operation before it has, by displacing generation from fossil-fuelled power stations, avoided as much carbon dioxide as was released in its lifecycle. If the grid-mix of electricity generation is applied to the development the payback period would increase from 2 years to 4.6 years.
- 7.11 The proposed development anticipates a construction period of approximately 18 months and an operational period of 40 years. Such projects can offer investment / opportunities to the local, Highland, and Scottish economy, including businesses ranging across the construction, haulage, electrical and service sectors.
- 7.12 The SEIR does not alter the predicted socioeconomic effects stated within the EIAR, which anticipated no significant adverse socioeconomic effects from the proposal and that the direct beneficial socioeconomic effects are not likely to be significant, although they would be beneficial to the local, regional and national economy, contributing to economic recovery and sustainable economic growth.
- 7.13 For example, the applicant estimates that the total spend on the construction and development of the wind farm equates to £65.3m, with the reported employment generation during construction amounting to a total of 26 person-years of employment in northern Skye (the EIAR study area), amounting to employing an average of 17 persons per annum during construction. The equivalent predicted total for Scotland is 75 person-years (averaging 50 persons p.a.), and for the UK it is 170 person-years (averaging 113 persons p.a.). Given the estimated 128,000 jobs located in northern Skye (2021 figure), the temporary addition of 17 jobs (per annum) during construction would increase the number by 0.02%, while 3 to 4 permanent jobs during the operational phase of development are predicted. Overall, the beneficial effects are negligible and not significant.
- 7.14 In relation to NPF3 Policy 11 Energy part c) which requires proposals to maximise socioeconomic benefit, in EIA terms the overall effect on the Highland economy is reported to be negligible beneficial and not significant during construction and operation. The socioeconomic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities with this proposal would, in any case, be beneficial and consistent with NPF4 Policy 11-part c), with this being reflective of recent appeal

decisions where Reporters have clarified that there are considerable supply chain benefits associated with onshore wind farms.

7.15 Since the application was submitted, the Council has published the Social Value Charter for Renewables Investment (June 2024), which has been brought to the applicant's attention. The Council's newly established Community Wealth Building Team has been notified of the proposal who will liaise with the applicant directly to maximise community wealth building opportunities as established under NPF4 Policy 25, as well as the community benefits as per the applicant's stated commitment within the submission as updated in the SEIR (see Volume 2 Chapter 14, Paragraph 14.14a). However, as Members are aware that while the above figures provide context, community benefits are not material to this assessment.

Construction Impacts

7.16 The applicant anticipates that the wind farm construction period will be 18 months. There are likely to be some adverse impacts caused by construction traffic and disruption, particularly when abnormal loads are being delivered to site. A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) can be secured by condition to manage the impacts upon the local road network throughout the construction period. EIAR Chapter 12: Site Access, Traffic and Transport (as revised through the SEIR) outlines the mitigation measures that would be included with the finalised CTMP, which should be secured by condition prior to construction works commencing on site. The CTMP should be reviewed throughout the works and informed by feedback from ongoing engagement with the community through a Community Liaison Group to ensure that the community council and other stakeholders are kept up to date and consulted before and during the construction period.

7.17 Pre-construction road and structure upgrades for Council maintained roads would also be required, in particular to the carriageway, verges, and structures along the A850, which must be agreed with the Council prior to commencement of development. A completed management plan for the delivery of turbine components and any other Abnormal Indivisible Load (AIL) will also be required. These matters are considered in more detail in the Roads, Transport and Access section below.

7.18 A finalised Construction and Environment Management Plan (CEMP) would be in place during the construction phase; an outline CEMP has been provided (EIAR Volume 4, Technical Appendix 3.1). The CEMP would control potentially polluting activities and prevent adverse impacts on river catchments, water supply catchments, and the environment during construction. The principal contractor would implement measures outlined within the CEMP, including the Schedule of Commitments included with the EIAR (EIAR Volume 2 Chapter 16) with additional commitments included in the SEIR (SEIR Volume 2 Chapter 16). The CEMP will also be amended to incorporate

information obtained during detailed ground investigations which will be undertaken post consent and prior to construction activities.

- 7.19 Within and alongside the CEMP, construction activities must comply with finalised and agreed plans and strategies for pollution prevention; construction methods; peat and soil management; site waste management; construction dust management; water quality management and fish monitoring; species protection; breeding bird protection; biodiversity and habitat management; historic environment protection; and, site restoration and aftercare. Compliance with the CEMP and other plans and strategies will be overseen by a suitably qualified and experienced Environmental Clerk of Works (EnvCoW) and any other qualified Clerks of Work or consultants as may be required, which should be secured by condition.
- 7.20 It is also noted that no new watercourse crossings are proposed as part of the development while the layout of the proposal is designed to maintain 50m development free buffers from water bodies. Any activities impacting water bodies would be regulated by SEPA under the Controlled Activities Regulations (CAR) noting that since 01 November 2025, water management is now regulated under the Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations 2018 (EASR).
- 7.21 SEPA has not objected to the proposal subject to standard conditions including to secure a finalised peat management plan that should demonstrate how micrositing and the use of floating track have minimised peat excavation, to secure the management of all peat disturbed by construction activities, and to ensure that the mitigation measures included in the Outline CEMP and the Schedule of Commitments contained within and updated in the SEIR are implemented.
- 7.22 The applicant has proposed working hours of 0700 to 1900 Monday to Friday and 0700 to 1600 on Saturdays. The EIAR states that it will be necessary to carry out some activities outside these hours, for example abnormal load deliveries, concrete deliveries during foundation pours as these need to be continuous, and lifting of turbine components, which require flexibility due to logistical factors outwith the applicant's control such as scheduling controls imposed by Police Scotland and weather constraints for example.
- 7.23 Developers must comply with reasonable operational practices with regard to construction noise so as not to cause nuisance. Section 60 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 sets restrictions in terms of hours of operation, plant and equipment used and noise levels etc. and is enforceable via Environmental Health and not the Planning service. Environmental Health has no objection however, and consider that construction noise is unlikely to be a significant issue subject to the developer complying with, and implementing, a condition to provide details of how the contractors would employ the best practicable means to reduce the impact of noise from construction activities.

7.24 Should the development be granted consent, a Community Liaison Group (CLG) will be conditioned to ensure that the Community Council, residents, and other stakeholders are kept up to date and consulted before and during the construction period.

Siting, Layout, and Design

7.25 EIAR Volume 2 Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution describes the proposal's evolution through six design and layout iterations including for 12 turbines at the pre-Scoping stage, through 10 turbines at the Scoping stage, and the EIAR Application layout for 10 turbines of up to 149.9m to blade tip height. Chapter 2 (Site Design) of the SEIR describes the design changes to the proposal which has resulted in a revised layout of 9 turbines up to 149.9m to blade tip following further discussions with THC's Planning Officers, NatureScot, and SEPA.

7.26 The stated reasons for the site's selection (Volume 2: EIA Main Report, Chapter 2, Paragraph 2.13) include that the site benefits from exceptional wind resource, its proximity to the main road networks, ability to use existing tracks and infrastructure on site from existing and consented wind farms and close proximity to existing and soon to be upgraded grid infrastructure. There are also no environmental or landscape designations within the application site with the nearest residential property being located 2.1km from the nearest turbine T8. As the turbines are under 150m to blade tip height, they would not be required to be lit with visible aviation lighting.

7.27 The design of the wind farm has followed a constraints led approach in order that mitigation on environmental effects is embedded within the design:
"The design optimisation process was iterative, involving review of multiple turbine layouts and related wirelines from key landscape and visual receptor locations in the study area, and adjustment to turbine locations to minimise potentially adverse landscape and visual impacts insofar as possible, whilst also taking into consideration the energy generation, particularly seeking to maintain wake loss expectations, other environmental, technical and economic considerations. Several different turbine tip heights were explored during the design process ranging from 135m to 149.9m with rotor diameters from 115m to 138m."

7.28 For example, the local landform of the receiving landscape and surrounding undulating moorland would help to limit views of the proposal. There would be a relationship with the existing Ben Aketil and Edinbane wind farms (and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm) whereby this proposal would be located between them and would be seen in the same part of the view, rather than increasing the overall extent occupied by wind farms.

7.29 Design principles offered by Planning Officers recommended removal of turbines close to Beinn a'Chlèirich, to the west of An Cleireach SSSI, due to their prominence from the south, and the containment of the proposal to lower slopes and lower ground

or attempt to create a more compact layout and fit in with the character of the area, removing the 'step over' of the landform to the south east (Beinn a'Chlèirich). The Applicant has sought to apply these principles during the design process which removes turbines close to Beinn a'Chlèirich and creates a layout that is more compact and cohesive sitting between two existing wind farms as noted above.

7.30 Planning Officers provided additional feedback to the EIAR Application layout in relation to improving the turbine layout from a landscape and visual perspective which included relocation of T3, T5 and T8 further down the hill to the east to increase the screening of turbine towers afforded by landform. NatureScot, RSPB and SEPA all advised to remove T1.

7.31 Through the SEIR, the Applicant has responded to some of the consultee comments and the revised layout has resulted in the removal of T1 and its associated infrastructure. T1 was one of the more elevated turbines, positioned within the northern part of the site and to the east of the summit of Ben Sca. Its removal from the layout has reduced the horizontal extent of the wind farm from certain locations, contributing to a more compact array. It also removed one of the turbines that is closer to the settlement of Edinbane.

7.32 The Applicant has been unable to move or relocate Ts 3, 5 and 8 and has provided a rationale on this in Volume 2: SEIR, Chapter 2, Paragraph 2.17. This design rationale restricts the turbine height to under 150m to blade tip, ensuring no turbines are located on the ridgeline which relates to the 240m AOD contour within the site, with the ridgeline of Ben Sca and Ben Aketil being between approximately 260m AOD and 280m AOD. Whilst Ts 3, 5 and 8 appear to more prominent in Viewpoints 12, 14 and 17, these viewpoints are located between 11-17km away and any movements to these turbines would not be notable to the overall turbine composition at these distances. The Applicant has however proposed a micrositing allowance of up to 50m which may allow for a slight improvement to Ts 3, 5 and 8.

7.33 The SEI amendments have also reoriented hardstandings for T4 and T5, and have reduced the overall internal track length including the removal of some spurs and turning heads, amongst other refinements, to reduce impacts on peat. It is anticipated that the majority of internal tracks will be cut and fill however the applicant retains the option of using floating tracks on areas of deeper peat where necessary and practical to do so (where the gradient of slopes is less than 5%, for example), which will be known once the intrusive ground investigation is concluded at the detailed construction design phase.

7.34 The EIAR and SEIR set out that the size and scale of the overall proposal has also been carefully considered to ensure it is appropriate for its location by fitting into the receiving landscape without overwhelming it. The Applicant has also sought to maintain favourable buffer distances from sensitive environmental and human receptors, re-use existing site entrance infrastructure, relocation of the proposed

substation from the Ben Sca ridgeline, inclusion of a proposed link track in case the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm doesn't get built and addition of the permanent construction compound to the south of the A850.

7.35 It is also important that siting, layout, and design principles consider the cumulative effects arising from a proposal's relationships with other wind energy developments in its wider context, taking into account the baseline and, potential, future baseline conditions.

7.36 In this instance, as noted previously, the proposal site sits between two existing wind farms and one consented wind farm – the existing Ben Aketil at 100.5m to blade tip and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm with its maximum blade tip height of 135-149.9m to the north-west, and the existing Edinbane Wind Farm at 100m to blade tip to the east. These wind farms create a rounded consolidated cluster in this part of the landscape. The consented Ben Sca (7 x 135m tip height turbines) and Ben Sca Extension (2 x 149.9m tip height turbines) Wind Farms are north of the proposal site, and the consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm at 149.9m to blade tip is also located 7km to the south of the proposal.

7.37 Other proposals are currently at application, scoping or appeal stage of the planning process and their potential to affect the future baseline has been acknowledged within the EIAR with the key proposals including Ben Aketil Repowering and Extension (9 turbines) 1km to the west with proposed tip heights of 200m (awaiting Scottish Ministers determination), the 7 x 149.9m tip height turbines of the proposed Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm seeks to consolidate the aforementioned Ben Sca and Ben Sca Extension schemes and is 1.3km to the northwest. Glen Ullinish II Wind Farm (33 x 200 turbines, as amended) and Beinn Mheadhonach Redesign (5 x 149.9m turbines) is 9km southeast. The scoping Edinbane Repowering and Extension has been withdrawn and notified by the ECU.

7.38 Given the increasing presence of turbines in the landscape, key matters to the assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects include: the degree to which nearby developments follow similar 'development patterns' in terms of siting, layout, and design; similarities and differences between receiving landscapes and Landscape Character Types; the degree to which the size and scale differences between the wind farms and individual components, especially turbines, are experienced by receptors and what effects these have on the enjoyment of the view qualities, amongst others. Additionally, relative tip and hub heights, turbine proportions including rotor diameters, and direction of rotor spin, can determine the degree to which wind farms sit harmoniously or discordantly together in the landscape.

7.39 Of particular importance is consideration of how developments relate to each other in design and relationship to their surroundings is their frequency when moving through the landscape and their visual separation to allow experience of the character of the landscape in between. Care and attention are therefore required regarding design,

siting and location to avoid detrimental effects. Indeed, NatureScot's Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape Guidance notes that it can be particularly challenging to accommodate multiple wind farms in an area and so advances wind farm design objectives of limiting visual confusion and reinforcing the appropriateness of each development for its location.

7.40 A study (2019) on Tall Wind Turbines (part of the South Lanarkshire Council LDP 2) acknowledged that as turbine size increases, taller turbines will be located close to existing turbines that are considerably smaller; either as an extension wind farm or within a more crowded landscape. Erection of large turbines close to smaller turbines can make a development appear uncoordinated or unbalanced, as well as influencing the perception of distances or perspectives. The extent to which discordant effects occur depends on the degree of size difference; the appearance of the turbines; the proximity and position of the turbines to one another; the nature of the landscape context or view and the position of the turbines relative to the viewer.

7.41 The size difference between the proposed turbines and other operational turbines in the area is the most obvious consideration. Exaggerated size differences between turbines are easily perceived by visual receptors, such as instances where turbines are twice the height of their neighbour for example. However, such occurrences are currently not common. On the other hand however, at wind farm clusters where the size difference is less apparent, other perceptual factors such as distance, screening, and landscape scale can moderate the apparent differences between turbine scales.

7.42 As with all wind farm developments, there remains potential for significant residual landscape and visual effects that require further consideration even though mitigation is embedded into the design. Any assessment must pay particular attention to the specific Landscape Character Type (LCT) of the receiving landscape, any landscape designations in the wider area, and several visual receptors. The implications of the proposal on the perceptual experience of the landscape and the visual experience of the receptor are considered in the respective Landscape and Visual Effect sections below.

7.43 These assessments set out that the Applicant has generally responded positively to the constraints of the site and its wider context through careful consideration of the proposal's siting, layout, and design, and that the site is considered suitable for the development of the wind farm as proposed in landscape and visual terms. The proposal is sited well back from the coast within a simple and expansive moorland landscape. It has a relatively small footprint with a limited horizontal and vertical Field of View from the majority of views, and sits between existing and consented wind farms, thereby keeping in line with the rounded consolidated cluster of wind farm development in this landscape. The Applicant has also broadly taken into account concerns raised by THC and other consultees in the revised layout of the SEI.

Landscape and Visual Effects

Landscape Character Effects

7.44 There are several aspects to consider in determining whether this development represents an acceptable degree of effect on landscape character, including:

- effects on the Landscape Character Type (LCT) as a unit, (Landscape Character Area (LCA)) as a whole, and on neighbouring LCTs;
- effects on the local landscape composition closer to the proposal; and
- direct and indirect effects on landscape designations.

7.45 The proposal's specific effects on landscape character will result from the imposition of 9 x 149.9m blade tip large-scale rotating human development into the landscape, with the turbines and, to a lesser degree, the associated tracks and other infrastructure, contrasting with the existing colour and texture of the 'host' Upland Sloping Moorland LCT (and adjacent Stepped Moorland LCT) of the Interior Skye Hills Character Area and its interaction with the colour and texture of the wider landscapes that the proposal is experienced within. The proposal's lower lying infrastructure components will have greater influence where they are more visible; i.e., mostly from within the 'host' and adjacent LCTs close to the boundary of the 'host' LCT.

7.46 Whilst being a locally prominent presence, the size and scale of the proposal will decrease relative to the landscape as one moves away from it and crosses different landscape features, and therefore its influence on landscape character will decrease relative to distance and intervening landscape. In this instance, the proposal is predominantly located on undulating, upland moorland slopes on the southeast side of Ben Sca and Ben Aketil, and therefore its influence on landscape character will vary across a wide geographic extent given the undulating nature of the moorland landscape. Where the proposal is highly screened or not visible, it will have negligible to zero influence on landscape character. It is also worth noting that the proposal sits between two operational wind farms which are located within the same 'host' LCT - Edinbane to the east and Ben Aketil to the west.

7.47 The site sits within an upland LCT of the Upland Sloping Moorland (LCT 359). Southwestern parts of the site, although land where no development is proposed, extend into the Stepped Moorland (LCT 360) and Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Skye and Lochalsh (LCT 357). All these LCTs form part of the Interior Skye Hills Character Area. The 'host' landscape is generally characterised by expansive undulating moorland (mainly heather) with some coniferous forest plantations, little settlement with occasional wind turbines (Ben Aketil and Edinbane in the north) located in this landscape. There is a horizontal emphasis to the landscape, with hills gently sloping. Distance and scale are typically hard to judge across the moorland, except where there are elements of definite size such as roads, powerlines or wind turbines. There is a prevailing sense of remoteness and perceived sanctuary within

the interior hills. Some views are possible out to the coast and sea from the highest ground, although this is not the case from most parts, adding to the sense of remoteness and sanctuary.

7.48 The Applicant's assessment assigns a Medium Value given there are no designated landscapes within the Character Area itself, however, it is noted that this area borders the North West Skye, Trotternish and Greshornish SLAs. The Applicant concludes the Character Area has a Medium Susceptibility to Change by virtue of the lack of scale indicators, the simple, horizontal form as well as the presence of some existing wind turbines. Taken together, the conclusion is that the landscape character area has a Medium Sensitivity to wind farm development.

7.49 The Assessment judges that the proposal will have the greatest, Medium, Magnitude of Change on the Character Areas at the application site and within approximately 5km, reducing beyond this distance. Where the proposal would be visible (see Viewpoints 5 and 8), it would generally be seen adjacent to one or both of the existing Ben Aketil and Edinbane wind farms and the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. As a result, the proposal would principally appear as part of an existing group of wind farms, increasing the density of wind turbines seen within the locality, however its position between the existing and consented wind farms would avoid wind farms collectively extending further across this character area.

7.50 The proposal would relate to the human-influenced character of the existing forest plantation to the north, although it would contrast to its visible edge, texture and colour. In addition to the forest plantation, the proposed turbines, access tracks and crane pads would collectively contrast to the prevailing simplicity of the interior hills, although the use of existing and consented elements (e.g. tracks and borrow pits) and continuation of the linear layout of the turbines would help to limit the magnitude of change. As such, the conclusion is that the Level of Effect is Moderate and Not Significant due to the change relative to the baseline wind farm development in this character area. The revised layout (9 turbines) would generate a reduced adverse change in landscape effects overall on the landscape character of LCT 359 Upland Sloping Moorland, compared with the application layout. However, this change would not be sufficient to reduce the overall level of landscape effects noted above which would remain Moderate and Not Significant. These conclusions for the host Character Area including the three LCTs are not disputed.

7.51 In relation to a wider context, moderate, not significant, adverse effects were identified in relation to the Greshornish and coastal edge of Loch Snizort landscape character area and Bracadale landscape character area. The predicted effects on other landscape character areas assessed were less than moderate and not significant. These conclusions for the adjacent Character Areas are not disputed with the exception of the Bracadale Character Area which is noted below.

7.52 The Council’s Landscape Officer’s assessment is that the proposal would result in significant adverse effects on the landscape character and perceptual qualities of Loch Bracadale. This is because despite the relationship of the proposal to the larger-scale, simpler moorland landscape in which it is located, and the existing wind farms which would have a lesser effect on this area. The larger-scale of the proposal would detract from the key characteristics of the Loch Bracadale area, in particular the varied composition of the low-lying, small scale coast and the wide views experienced over the seascape from different parts of Loch Bracadale. Whilst these effects are assessed as Moderate and significant by Council Officers, such effects are relatively limited and localised given the smaller horizontal and vertical Field of View of the proposal and its location set back from the smaller-scale coastal landscape of Loch Bracadale.

7.53 The proposal would collectively increase the density of wind farm development within the landscape; however, the change specifically associated with the proposal would be localised and predominately retained to the northern part of the character area where the existing wind farms are an established part of the baseline. The proposal would also be seen in relation to a large scale, open landscape. Importantly, the proposal would avoid wind farms collectively extending further across this character area, limiting the degree of change.

7.54 The above appraisal is consistent with NatureScot’s assessment, which states that it considers the proposal to result in significant adverse effects on the character of parts of the Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Skye and Lochalsh and Stepped Moorland LCTs and on the wider seascape character of Loch Bracadale. NatureScot considers Loch Bracadale to be a distinctive landscape which contributes to the diverse coastal scenery of Skye. However, it concurs that these significant effects would be limited in extent and has not objected on landscape character or composition grounds.

Designated Landscapes

7.55 The Applicant has included assessments of the effects of the proposal on the Trotternish and Cuillin Hills National Scenic Areas (NSAs), and North West Skye, Greshornish and Trotternish and Tianavaig Special Landscape Areas (SLAs). It is to be noted that the Applicant’s assessment on the NSAs and SLAs are brief and do not go through the assessment of the special qualities in detail as one would have expected.

7.56 The Applicant’s assessment has identified that there would be minor to negligible landscape and visual effects on the two NSAs within the study area (the Cuillin Hills and Trotternish) and that views of the proposal would not compromise their key characteristics. The Trotternish NSA is located 18km northeast of the site. The Applicant’s assessment states there would be limited visibility from the NSA. It predicts there would be a minor adverse effect which is not significant. It states it would not be seen in the main direction of views along Trotternish Ridge and when seen it would

appear as one element in the distance within a mixed composition of diverse landscape elements.

7.57 The Cuillin Hills NSA is located 22km to the southeast of the site. The Applicant's assessment states there would be limited visibility of the proposal from the NSA. A minor adverse but not significant effect is predicted from Bruach na Frithe (VP20). The assessment states the proposal would be seen in conditions of good visibility but would not seem prominent due to intervening distance as well as human elements which are extensive and closer. It would also be seen in the context of the existing Edinbane and Ben Aketil windfarms and the approved Ben Sca and Ben Sca Extension Wind Farms. The overall effect would be minor to negligible adverse and not significant. These conclusions are not disputed.

7.58 Again, the above is consistent with NatureScot's response, who advised that the proposal will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Trotternish NSA or The Cuillin Hills NSA, nor the objectives of these designations.

7.59 In relation to the three SLAs, the Applicant's assessment acknowledges that there would be some adverse effects experienced within parts of the two closer SLAs (North West Skye (minor to moderate and not significant) and Greshornish (major/moderate and significant), including significant visual effects at particular viewpoints (VPS 1 (A863 at the junction with the road to Feorlig), 3 (A863 Road), 4 (Roag), 6 (B884 nr Lonmore), 11 (MacLeod's Table North/Healabhal Mhor), 12 (Fiskavig), and 14 (Totaig) for North West Skye SLA, and 7 (Minor Road to Greshornish) for Greshornish SLA). However, given its location and the presence of existing operational wind farms, views of the proposal would not overall fundamentally conflict with the key characteristics of either designation. It is further concluded in the Applicant's assessment that there would be moderate/minor landscape effects on the third more distant SLA (Trotternish and Tianavaig) and that distant visibility of the proposal would not compromise its key characteristics. These conclusions are not disputed with the exception of the North West Skye SLA which is noted further below.

7.60 The Greshornish SLA is located 5km to the north and is noted for its 'Contrasting Geology, Enclosure and Exposure', and 'Historic Landscape' Special Qualities (SQs). The proposal would be visible from much of the SLA. From the south facing slopes it would be seen as an addition to the existing wind farms and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. The development would be clearly visible from VP7 (Minor Road to Greshornish) albeit in the context of the existing wind farms creating a simple linear view following the hill skyline. The Applicant's assessment states that the proposal is unlikely to conflict with the views out to the imposing ridges of the sea and adjacent peninsulas which is key to the designation while it could conflict with the sense of solitude. It concludes that there would be some adverse effects at VP7 (Minor Road to Greshornish) although it should be seen within the context of the in the context of the existing Edinbane and Ben Aketil windfarms and the approved Ben Sca and Ben

Sca Extension Wind Farms. It predicts a major/moderate significant adverse effect overall, however the effect on the 'Contrasting Geology, Enclosure and Exposure' SQ is considered within acceptable limits.

7.61 The Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA is located 12km to the northeast and is designated for its 'Dynamic Landslip Character', 'Ridgeline Spine and Coastal Fringe', and 'Historic landscape' SQs. The Applicant's assessment states there would be a low level of visibility of the proposal from the SLA relative to the extent of the designation specifically from the western extent and west facing slopes. No significant views are predicted from the western extent of the SLA including from The Storr, Ben Tianavaig and Beinn Edra (VPs 15 (The Storr), 16 (Ben Tianavaig), and 19 (Beinn Edra)) of the main direction of views along Trotternish Ridge. The Applicant's assessment states that, when visible, the proposal would be experienced within a mixed composition of landscape features. It states the turbines would intensify wind energy development in the vicinity of the site; however, it would be within the context of the existing and consented wind farms. The proposal would increase the number and density of vertical structures at this location but given the panoramic views, relatively small number of turbines and the wind farm context there would be a limited impact. The applicant's assessment states overall that the development would form one feature in a complex composition of landscape elements and the turbines would be clearly connected with the existing and consented and result in a moderate/minor and not significant effect. As such, the most likely SQ impacted by the development, 'Ridgeline Spine and Coastal Fringe', is not significantly undermined by the development.

7.62 The North West Skye SLA is located 4.7km to the west and is designated for its 'Dynamic Coastline', 'Distinctive Terrain', and 'Crofting Landscapes' SQs. The Applicant's Assessment states the proposal would be screened from most of the SLA with three key areas affected including the east facing slopes with Macleod's Tables VP11 (Macleod's Table North / Healabhal Mhor) predicted to be a moderate/minor adverse effect and a major/moderate adverse effect on the landscape in the vicinity of VP4 (Roag). Whilst a potentially significant effect has been identified in this location is on the eastern edge of the SLA and is not fully representative of the views for this SLA. The EIAR states that while the proposal has the potential to conflict with the simple moorland backcloth to the view of the northeast facing slopes in Minginish, it would appear in the context of the existing Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms.

7.63 Overall, the Applicant's Assessment predicts a minor to moderate adverse effect which is not significant. The Council's Landscape Officer's appraisal however is that the proposal would partially alter the varied coastal panorama when seen from the eastern edges of the SLA. It would contrast to a degree with the 'variety, intimacy and intricacy of the coastal seascape' forming part of the Dynamic Coastline SQ, which is evident in VPs 4 (Roag) and 11 (Macleod's Table North / Healabhal Mhor), and similar views would also be gained from Idrigill Point (no VP). Therefore, these effects on this SQ would be Moderate and Significant. However, given the setback of the proposal from

the coast and its relationship to the expansive moorland in which it is located combined with the limited horizontal and vertical extent, the proposal would not compromise the overall objectives of the SLA.

Visual Effects

7.64 Technical Appendix 7.3 of Volume 4 of the EIAR includes a visual assessment from each of the 20 viewpoints, including an assessment of what the Applicant considers the significance of the visual effect would be for receptors at each viewpoint. The SEIR does not include a full detailed viewpoint assessment, rather it just summarises the visual effects at the viewpoints in paragraphs 7.26-7.33 of the SEIR LVIA Chapter 7 (Volume 2).

7.65 Unsurprisingly, there is some difference between the Applicant's assessment and the appraisal undertaken by Council's Landscape Officer, which is to be expected when such assessments are dependent on the application of professional judgement. Differences in judgement on the specific viewpoints are set out in Appendix 6 and in the main text below. There is disagreement with the Applicant on the significance of visual effects at VPs 3 (A863 Road) and 12 (Fiskavig), which this appraisal consider to be significant. The EIAR is also considered to have under-assessed the magnitude of change at VPs 11 (Macleod's Table North / Healabhal Mhor), 16 (Ben Tianavig), and 17 (Uig (Idrigil) which would result in a higher level of effect at these locations. However, the visual effects at these three viewpoints would not be significant.

7.66 Each viewpoint is considered by the Applicant to be either used by receptors of High Sensitivity to wind energy development; i.e., residents, and recreational receptors including cyclists and walkers, or receptors of Medium (or High-Medium for 2 viewpoints) Sensitivity to wind energy development, i.e., road users and ferry users. People commuting to work or at their place of work are judged to be of a lower Sensitivity to change however the Council considers passengers in vehicles and cyclists to have a higher Susceptibility to wind farm development.

7.67 The Applicant's assessment of the significance of the visual effect of the proposal concludes that major/moderate and significant adverse effects would occur at 4 viewpoints: VPs 2 (Edinbane Top Road), 4 (Roag) for residents, 6 (B884 near Lonmore), and 7 (Minor Road to Greshornish), all of which lie within 7.5km of the proposal. Moderate adverse and not significant effects have been identified at eight VPs: 1 (A863 at the junction with the road to Feorlig), 3 (A863 Road), 4 (Roag) for road users, 5 (A850), 9 (Kingsburgh), 10 (A850/7 (West of Borve)) for residents, 12 (Fiskavig), and 14 (Totaig) for residents. These effects have been assessed as not significant due to the relative prominence of the baseline wind farms. Moderate/minor to negligible and not significant effects were assessed at all the other eight LVIA representative viewpoints.

7.68 Paragraph 7.228 of the LVIA (EIAR Volume 2 Chapter 7) concludes that:

“Overall, the visual effects of the Proposed Development would be limited by the context, particularly in relation to operational and consented wind farms. The local landform of the surrounding undulating moorland would help to restrict views of the Proposed Development. There would also be a relationship with the operational Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms meaning the Proposed Development would be located within the space between them and would be seen in the same part of the view, rather than increasing the overall [horizontal visual] extent occupied by wind farms.”

7.69 The Applicant's reported range of significant visual effects are accepted by Planning Officers, with the exception of two additional significant visual effects being identified for receptors at VP3 (A863 Road) and VP12 (Fiskavig). As set out in Appendix 6, the Applicant's conclusion of not significant effects on both viewpoints is based on the relative prominence of the existing and consented wind farms, and the Applicant further states that the proposal would reinforce this established pattern of wind farm development, but it would not introduce elements that are not part of the baseline view.

7.70 In relation to VP3 (A863 Road), whilst appreciating that this is a transient view, the turbines would appear prominent on the skyline, with landform only partially screening some of the lower towers and bases. In comparison with existing and consented wind farms, the proposal would create some visual clutter resulting in a slightly discordant effect. Therefore, the visual effect would be Moderate and Significant. In relation to VP12 (Fiskavig), the turbines would be noticeable on the skyline directly above Fiskavig Bay and would appear to detract in views out from the Bay. The proposal would appear higher than the existing and consented wind farms given the topography but also due to the scale of the development. Therefore, the visual effect would be Moderate and Significant. As a result, additional significant visual effects are assessed by Officer's for residents in Fiskavig Bay, users of the A863 on the approach to Gearymore and by maritime receptors on Loch Bracadale.

7.71 The Officer's appraisal also considers that the Applicant has under-assessed the magnitude of change in VPs (Macleod's Table North / Healabhal Mhor), 16 (Ben Tianavig), and 17 (Uig (Idrigil)), which would result in a higher level of effect at these locations. However, the visual effect at these three VPs would not be significant.

7.72 Overall, the strength of the proposal's design principles is apparent in the majority of viewpoints with the composition showing a relatively even spread across the array from several locations. The further removal of T1 in the revised layout results in a reduction in turbine visibility overall however, this reduction is of limited extent and is more apparent from distant parts of the study area where visual effects are not significant. T1 would have been one of the more elevated turbines, positioned within the northern part of the site and to the east of the summit of Ben Sca. Its removal has reduced the horizontal extent of the proposal from certain locations, contributing to a more compact array.

7.73 The proposal has been designed sympathetically and is sited well back from the coast within a simple and expansive moorland landscape. It has a relatively small footprint with a limited horizontal and vertical Field of View from the majority of views, and sits between existing and consented wind farms, thereby keeping in line with the rounded consolidated cluster of wind farm development in this landscape. The result is a proposal that does not give rise to significant visual effects in the majority of views (14 out of 20 viewpoints), and an acceptable scheme, even for residential, recreational, and road user receptors at those select viewpoints where the level of visual effect is judged to be significant.

Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects

7.74 With regard to cumulative effects, the Applicant has assessed two cumulative scenarios as noted in Appendix 5, which reviews the LVIA methodology. Scenario 1 would generally be the more certain scenario as it assessed cumulative effects against operational wind farms and those approved. Operational wind farms are included as part of the baseline. Scenario 2 would generally be the more uncertain scenario as it assesses cumulative effects against application wind farms, given that application and scoping wind farms have not yet been determined. However, the Officer's appraisal has been mindful of the adjacent and nearby applications given that they are redesigns of approved schemes, are of similar scale to the proposal, and are pertinent to the rounded consolidated cluster of wind farm development in this landscape.

7.75 In relation to Scenario 1, The Applicant's Assessment identifies no significant cumulative effects on any of the LCTs within the 7 Character Areas as a result of the addition of the proposal. The cumulative assessment identified that, the addition of the consented cumulative developments further south of the proposal, would extend wind development across the study area. The proposal would comprise the addition of more turbines, which would continue the intensification and consolidation of wind farm development in the northern part of the Isle of Skye. Overall, the contribution of the proposal to cumulative effects under Scenario 1 would be limited by its association with the adjacent operational Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms and consented Ben Sca and Ben Sca Extension Wind Farms.

7.76 In relation to designated landscapes, the Applicant assesses no significant effects on any of the SLAs, although it is acknowledged that significant visual effects are identified at certain VPs within landscape designations. These conclusions are not disputed; however, Officers consider significant cumulative effects on the LCTs within the Bracadale area and the one SQ of the North West Skye SLA where the addition of the proposal would contrast with the 'variety, intimacy and intricacy of the coastal seascape'. The proposal would also contribute to significant 'combined' cumulative effects on the 'host' LCT with operational and consented wind farms which hasn't been included in the Applicant's cumulative assessment.

7.77 Council Officers generally concur with the Applicant's cumulative visual impact assessment under Scenario 1, that additional significant effects as a result of the proposal are predicted in relation to visual receptors at VP2 (Edinbane), VP4 (Roag), VP6 (Lonmore) and VP7 (Greshornish), within 7.5km to the northeast, north, west and southwest of the site. However, Officers also consider significant visual effects for residents at VP12 (Fiskavig Bay), VP3 users of the A863 on the approach to Gearymore and maritime receptors on Loch Bracadale, extending out to approximately 12km to the south and southwest.

7.78 In relation to Scenario 2, the Applicant states that the relative increase in the scale of proposed wind farm development surrounding the site would mean that the proposal's contribution to cumulative effects (additional cumulative effects) would be reduced. Therefore, the proposal's contribution to cumulative effects are not predicted to be significant. These conclusions are not disputed although Officers consider that there would be significant total cumulative effects as a result of the combined Scenario 2 schemes on several landscape and visual receptors. However, the individual contributions to these total combined cumulative effects are best appraised on a case by case for each wind farm so as not to prejudice the determination of each of those applications.

Combined effects of the proposal and proposed Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm

7.79 Volume 5 of the SEIR presents the Applicant's combined assessment of the proposal with the proposed Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm, as requested by Council Officers due to the applications being submitted by the same applicant, their proximity and infrastructural links. The request was made so that Officers can assess the totality of the environmental effects of both schemes, which would also ensure the applications are compliant with the EIA Regulations.

7.80 The addition of both the proposal and Ben Sca Redesign would collectively extend the landscape and visual effects of the existing wind farms on the local landscape, noting that earlier designs for Ben Sca and Ben Sca Extension Wind Farms have been consented. However, this change would be localised and both schemes would generally be seen as part of a cluster within a large scale, open landscape.

7.81 The addition of the proposal to a scenario if the proposed Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm was approved would result in no greater significant effects than assessed for the proposed wind farm alone.

Residential Visual Amenity Assessment

7.82 The EIAR has assessed the proposal's likely effect on the Residential Visual Amenity (Technical Appendix 7.4, Volume 4) of 8 property clusters within a study area of 4km; namely, Glen Vic Askill, Balmeanach, Alt Ruairidh, Balmeanach, Caroy, Upper Feorlig (junction with A863), Upper Feorlig, Blackhill and Edinbane Top Road. It is to be noted

that there are no residential properties within 2km of the proposal, and the above 8 properties are located between 2-4km of the proposal.

7.83 The SEI has not included a revised Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) however it is acknowledged in the SEIR that the removal of T1 in the revised layout would not alter the conclusions of the RVAA presented in the EIAR. The RVAA has assessed significant visual effects (Major/Moderate) at 4 of the 8 properties; namely, Balmeanach, Alt Ruairidh, Upper Feorlig (junction with A863), and Blackhill. Moderate visual effects are assessed at Edinbane Top Road whilst a Moderate/ Minor or Minor and not significant effect is assessed at the remaining three properties.

7.84 The Applicant concludes that as no major adverse visual effects are assessed at any properties, the residential visual amenity threshold would not be reached. From the majority of properties, the proposal would not be more prominent than the adjacent existing and consented wind farms, and whilst the proposal would comprise the addition of large structures into the landscape, these would be comparable with the existing and consented wind farms and would almost always be seen in simultaneous views, typically between them. The positioning of the proposal between the existing and consented wind farms means that, in most instances, it would not contribute to encircling properties. Following review of the supporting information, the Applicant's conclusions are agreed and Officers do not consider that the visual amenity of these properties would be so adversely affected to the extent that it would impact residential amenity overall.

Hours of Darkness

7.85 Finally, the turbines are below the threshold height of 150m of requiring visible aviation lighting and therefore an assessment of the proposal's effects in the hours of darkness is not required.

Natural Heritage (including Ornithology)

7.86 The EIAR has assessed the impact on terrestrial non-avian ecology and freshwater ecology (Volume 2, Chapter 8), and terrestrial ornithology (Volume 2 Chapter 9) and are updated through the SEIR. These chapters are supported by several technical appendices including surveys on habitats and vegetation, protected species, fish habitat, and birds. An outline Habitat Management Plan is also included (OHMP) (EIAR Volume 2, Technical Appendix 8.5, and SEIR Volume 2, Technical Appendix 8.5).

7.87 The assessments identified potential for lichen, heath, moss carder bee, broom moth, European eel, Atlantic salmon, brown/sea trout, newts, toads, frogs, lizards, pipistrelle bats and natterers bat. No plant species listed on Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 were recorded and it was considered unlikely that any Schedule 8 plant species are present within the study area.

Designated Sites

7.88 The site does not form part of any statutory or non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation with the only sites within 10km of the application site designated either for their geological interest or marine features. Based on the qualifying features of the nearest statutory designated sites, the distance from the site, lack of structural or functional connectivity between the proposed development and these sites, as well as the nature of the development, effects on designated sites have been scoped out of the EIAR with the agreement of NatureScot.

Protected Species

7.89 Protected species surveys, undertaken for Ben Sca Wind Farm, identified the presence of a small number of invertebrates including the protected large heath butterfly, poor suitable habitat for amphibians, but good suitable habitat for reptiles. No otter resting sites were located within the site boundary, and no evidence of pine marten or badger were recorded although the site supports low levels of common pipistrelle were noted across the site and similar levels had been recorded on the nearby windfarms (Ben Aketil and Ben Sca Wind Farms). Additionally, the site was assessed as having low suitability for fish habitats. Assessments of effects on invertebrates, amphibians, red squirrel, water vole and wildcat, badger, roosting bats, hedgehogs and brown hares were scoped out of the EIAR because there was no potential for significant effects on regional or national populations.

7.90 The Council's Ecologist is content with the proposed embedded mitigation, which includes pre-construction for otter, badger and pine marten would be undertaken. NatureScot and the Council's pre-approval of site specific species protection plans (SPPs) for otter, reptiles, bats, and fish should also be secured by condition with the SPPs also requiring to be implemented during the wind farm construction, post construction reinstatement, and biodiversity enhancement works. The proposal is designed with embedded mitigation for freshwater habitats such as 50m development free buffer strips from watercourses, while environmentally sensitive construction practices will be employed during the construction and decommissioning phases of development, with the developer undertaking ongoing monitoring of sensitive receptors during the wind farm's operational phase.

Ornithology

7.91 NatureScot does not object to the application but did express concerns regarding high collision risk and mortality rates for golden and white-tailed eagle including issues with the lack of viewshed coverage over the locations of Ts 1 and 2 during survey work. As such, NatureScot advised that either both turbines are removed from the scheme or an additional year of vantage point survey work would be required. However, NatureScot agreed that survey data from work undertaken for the Ben Sca Redesign and Edinbane Repowering and Extension Wind Farms would be sufficient to form an

accurate estimate of the likely collision risk of both eagle species. Additionally, NatureScot requested that the cumulative assessment of golden eagle foraging habitat loss be updated to reflect the most up to date development footprints of all proposed wind farms. The SEIR also updates the predicted cumulative risk including with the additional mitigation of removing T1, evidencing that the collision risk modelling for T2 was in line with all other proposed turbines thereby justifying its retention.

7.92 Following the submission of additional information, NatureScot advises that the predicted collision risk for white-tailed eagles is high compared to most other wind energy proposals, which would add significantly to a growing national cumulative collision risk. This is likely to result in significant impacts on the growth rate of the national population of this re-introduced protected species, which will slow the rate of range expansion and hinder progress towards restoring its former range across Scotland. Although NatureScot advises that the removal of T1 has lowered the collision risk by 0.873 birds per annum, with the residual collision risk predicted to be 0.944 white-tailed eagle fatalities per annum; equating to 37 fatalities over the 40-year lifetime of the wind farm. RSPB have objected to the application and this remains one of the higher collision rates that NatureScot has seen on Scottish wind farms. Moreover, NatureScot advises that the wind farm would also contribute to a significantly growing cumulative collision risk for white-tailed eagle at the national level. Predicted collision impacts on golden plover and hen harrier are assessed as negligible.

7.93 Consequently, NatureScot recommends that a package of monitoring, research and mitigation be agreed as part of any consent. These measures include standard monitoring for collision detection and bird carcass searches, as well as collating accurate information on where and when collisions occur, and contributing to a nationwide satellite tagging project as part of a collaborative white-tailed eagle research project. Standard mitigation includes proposals to carry out regular searches and removal of carrion and fallen stock within the wind farm area while additional measures such as automated or observer led shut down of turbines on demand, scheduled curtailment during periods of increased collision risk, as well as blade painting (potentially single blades painted black) and patterning to increase visibility to the species are also recommended. These measures can be secured by condition. In summary, the amendments made to the application substantially reduces the collision risk for white tail golden eagle, however, the risk remains and the further mitigation outlined seeks to reduce this risk as far as possible. The EIAR SEI concludes that cumulatively, collision risk for this species would remain at a low level at the regional level and not significant, which explains why NatureScot as the technical advisor on this matter, do not object in this instance.

7.94 In addition, there remains concern regarding the loss of foraging habitat for golden eagle, in particular for dispersing juvenile individuals, which has again led RSPB to

maintain its objection to the proposal. However, the SEIR advises that the proposal would result in less than 1% habitat loss available to dispersing eagles and notes that the habitat loss would overlap with areas of existing habitat loss from the operational Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms. In addition to habitat enhancement (discussed below) providing additional and new areas for foraging eagles, the SEIR concludes a negligible and not significant effect overall on golden eagle foraging habitat. This conclusion has not been disputed by NatureScot, who has not commented further on this impact from the proposal in its updated response to the SEIR.

Habitat Loss and Biodiversity Enhancement

7.95 The habitat survey found the site to support mainly blanket bog and wet heath with priority peatland habitats identified across the site largely in good condition following a fire but with diminished species composition. As such, the EIAR advises that it has not been possible to avoid blanket bog and peatland habitats but that the design has sought to avoid flush habitats, watercourses, areas of deepest peat and sensitive bog pool habitat as far as possible. NatureScot has advised that the removal of T1, its associated spur road and turning head, and further track and infrastructure refinements to the layout would reduce the loss of blanket bog and that there would be further opportunities to reduce impacts if Ben Sca Redesign is approved (although there would be a greater loss of habitat). Additionally, NatureScot advises that any proposed outdoor access footpaths should be assessed for impacts on priority peatland with the connecting path to Edinbane Wind Farm likely to impact blanket bog and bog pool habitats, which should be avoided.

7.96 The proposed development would result in a potential maximum direct and indirect permanent habitat loss (depending on whether track Option A or B is used) of 30.62ha of Annex 1 blanket bog, up to 2.72ha of dry heathland, 4.15ha of wet heathland, and small areas of acid grassland and conifer plantation habitats as per track Option B. The EIAR advises that the design of the wind farm has avoided flush habitats, watercourses, areas of deepest peat and sensitive bog pool habitat as far as possible.

7.97 The initial 77.75ha proposed for forest to bog restoration fell well short of the 1:10 offsetting ratio of priority peatland habitat recommended by NatureScot for compensation, and provided no additional enhancement as required by NPF4 Policy 3 for Biodiversity. The SEIR includes an updated Outline Habitat Management Plan (OHMBP), which provides for 74.28ha of forest to bog restoration, 195.85ha micro-erosion stabilisation and gully blocking, 18.52ha drain blocking and 4.82ha of stabilizing and revegetating bare peat, totalling 293ha of peatland restoration.

7.98 NatureScot advises that the larger area of peatland restoration is sufficient to offset the peatland habitat losses in accordance with its guidance but does not meet the additional 10% enhancement target unless considered in combination with the Ben Sca Wind Farm restoration area, with the Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm OHMP including more than adequate enhancement for both wind farms. As such, a clause is

suggested in the condition to secure a finalised HMP to ensure that it includes a minimum additional 10% peatland restoration component as an enhancement measure.

7.99 Moreover, NatureScot advises that the OHMP does not provide detail on the current state of the proposed peatland restoration areas but is satisfied that there is scope to amend or expand the peatland restoration areas within the ownership boundary should that be necessary once the opportunities for restoration (erosional features) have been mapped and appropriate buffers applied. This detail should be included in the finalised HMP.

7.100 NatureScot has welcomed the proposal to locate the Balmeanach Wind Farm and Ben Sca Wind Farm habitat restoration areas adjacent to each other and within the same land ownership as restoring continuous areas of blanket bog is likely to produce additional benefits due to increased hydrological connectivity. NatureScot therefore recommends that in the event that only one of the developments is built out, that both sets of restoration areas should be reviewed to identify areas where the greatest benefits of habitat restoration would accrue.

Forestry

7.101 There is no ancient woodland within the site boundary (as classified by the Ancient Woodland Inventory) and only one area within a 5km radius of the site approximately 3.7km northeast within the settlement of Edinbane with no connectivity to the proposal or construction works. Therefore impacts on ancient woodland have been scoped out of the EIAR.

7.102 Woodland within the Coishletter Forest complex have been identified for conversion from forest to bog as part of the HMP, which includes 74.28ha (as amended in the SEIR) on the upper margins of the forest and close to peatland habitat. The EIAR states that this proposal offers an opportunity to compensate for the restoration planned for Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm. Scottish Forestry has not objected to the application and is content that the Control of Woodland Policy has been applied. The Council's Forestry Officer also does not object but requests conditions to ensure no development will commence until a detailed habitat management plan has been submitted and approved by the Planning Authority in consultation with NatureScot. The plan should include timescales for implementation, supervision, and a mechanism for future monitoring.

Built and Cultural Heritage

7.103 EIAR and SEIR Chapter 11 considers the historic environment and archaeological value of the site and assesses the potential for both direct and setting effects on heritage assets and archaeological features. The chapter is supported by a walkover survey, wireframes, and visualisations.

7.104 No direct or indirect effects on designated features are predicted. Historic Environment Scotland (HES) has assessed the proposal for impacts on the settings of four Scheduled Monument; namely: Barpannan, two chambered cairns, Vatten Duirinish (SM 893); Abhainn Bhaile Mheadhonaich, broch and standing stone 145m SE of An Cairidh (SM 13664); Dun Feorlig, broch 230m NNE of Feorlig Farm (SM 3494); and, Dun Arkaig, broch (SM13662). HES considers that the scheme would result in significantly adverse impacts on an appreciation of the monuments and their settings, particularly of Dun Arkaig Broch.

7.105 For the neolithic Barpannan, two chambered cairns, Vatten Duirinish (SM 893), which is conspicuous in its local setting. HES advises that the conspicuous positioning of the turbines, which sit between existing and consented turbines, would not alter the visual relationship between the cairns and the river valley and loch below.

7.106 For the iron age Abhainn Bhaile Mheadhonaich, broch and standing stone 145m SE of An Cairidh (SM 13664), the Balmeanach turbines would sit amongst existing and consented turbines. HES advises that the turbines would result in an adverse impact on an appreciation of the monument in its setting as well as an appreciation and interpretation of the original strategic function of the broch, however an interpretation of the strategic positioning of the monument would remain intact. A similar impact is anticipated for Dun Feorlig, broch 230m NNE of Feorlig Farm (SM 3494).

7.107 For the locally prominent Dun Arkaig, broch (SM13662), Balmeanach would substantially extend the influence of turbines in outward views when compared with existing and consented wind farm developments. The scheme would contribute to an encircling of the broch with the consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm. This encircling would have a significant impact on the integrity of outward views and therefore on an appreciation of the monument and its relationship with its wider open setting. HES notes, however, that these open views are already compromised by the presence of Edinbane Wind Farm. Additionally, the turbines of Balmeanach Wind Farm would be highly visible in inward views towards the broch from the approach to the broch up the valley from the coast but they would be peripheral to views of the broch.

7.108 HES advises that the extent of alteration to the baseline settings of the above monuments, singularly and cumulatively, would not be sufficient to merit its objection however advises that reducing the height of turbines and moving them further north would mitigate effects on the setting of Dun Arkaig, broch, this is discussed further in Paragraph 7.112 below.

7.109 The proposal will be also visible above the Category A Listed Dunvegan Castle and its associated Dunvegan Castle Garden and Design Landscape (GDL) from the opposite shores of Loch Dunvegan on the Duirinish Peninsular. From here, the turbines will be noticeably larger than the existing Ben Aketil Wind Farm with T5 being most prominent being sited on higher ground. However, the proposal is not considered

to impact the settings of these important features in a significant manner, which aligns with HES's findings. Although Highland Council did object to the Repowering and Extended Ben Aketil Wind Farm, finding that its proposed 200m and / or 180m to blade tip turbines would have a significant impact on the setting of the castle, this proposed development is less intrusive in views towards the castle.

7.110 The above consideration is due to the proposed turbines being set back further in the landscape to the south east and being of a smaller scale at up to 149.9m as opposed to 200m. The difference in effect between both schemes is evident from submission for the Repowering and Extended Ben Aketil Wind Farm's EIA Additional Information Viewpoint 10: B884 Colbost, Duirinish – Monochrome Analysis, as well as this proposal's EIAR SEI VP14 (Totaig) where the proposal has been found not to give rise to any significant visual effect, with the wind farm clearly occupying a different space in the landscape set back from the castle and over the intervening ridgeline.

7.112 It is also advised here that officers did discuss the possibility of repositioning Ts 3, 5, and 8 to lower ground with the applicant, which would also reduce the prominence of the scheme in views from the west and northwest including west of Loch Dunvegan. However, the Applicant was able to demonstrate that this mitigation could conflict with other constraints such as peat and ornithology for example, as well as technical engineering requirements such as turbine spacings. It is also noted that the overall visual effect of the proposal from these views has generally been appraised as being within acceptable limits. Similarly, the proposed turbine heights are at the lower range of what is commercially available without the need for bespoke turbines. In this instance, it is advised that while there will be a change to the settings of important monuments on Skye, which requires to be carefully managed, the effect of the scheme on the designated historic environment is considered to be within acceptable limits.

7.113 In terms of non-designated historical features, construction works have potential to impact five assets including a possible mound, clearance cairn, and three marker cairns due to the location of these assets within the site boundary and their proximity to the proposed development. Mitigation is proposed that includes fencing off the assets and a targeted watching brief for the four assets closest to ground works, as requested by the Council's Archaeologist. The agreed mitigation programme would be documented in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), which should be conditioned. The Archaeologist has also requested that if there is a need for post excavation analysis then a Post-Excavation Research Design (PERD) will be required to be submitted for its prior approval before proceeding, which should also be secured by condition.

7.114 Subject to the above mitigation being implemented, which also requires cultural heritage matters being included with the finalised CEMP to ensure that contractors are adequately informed, the Council's Archaeologist does not object to the proposal on built and cultural heritage grounds.

Roads, Transport and Access

7.115 EIAR Chapter 12, as supplemented by Chapter 12 of the SEIR, assesses the impact of the development on roads, traffic, transport and access including movement of AILs. The chapter includes an assessment of impacts on road users and adjacent communities. An assessment of the impacts of the proposal on roads, traffic, and transport during the operational phase of the development has been scoped out of the EIAR as operational traffic would not impact baseline traffic flows.

7.116 Up to four onsite borrow pits are proposed to provide aggregate for new and upgraded tracks and subbases however higher quality aggregate is assumed to be sourced offsite, while the worst case scenario assumes that all aggregates for use in the construction of the wind farm will be sourced offsite. The amended design is predicted to use 5% less aggregate while the EIAR advises that concrete batching would be undertaken onsite.

7.117 All construction traffic will travel the length of the A850 from its junction with the A87(T) and access the site from the existing site access for Ben Aketil Wind Farm. Two quarries have been identified for offsite aggregate, both are located to the south of the proposed development, and would be accessed via the A850 and via the A87(T). The Transport Assessment projects that construction of the amended proposal would result in 133 HGV movements during the peak construction months (months 8 and 9) compared to the baseline of 10 HGV movements per day, and 64 additional peak car and van movements.

7.118 Transport Planning advises that it considers the projected increase in HGV traffic on the Council maintained A850 to be significant and extraordinary, and that it will have a detrimental effect on the structural integrity of the road. As such, Transport Planning requests a condition for its prior approval of proposals for appropriate road mitigation measures, which must be implemented prior to construction works commencing on site. The mitigation measures should be informed by an assessment of the condition and integrity of the road carriageway, verges, and structures of the A850 to ensure that construction traffic does not substantially deteriorate road infrastructure, which should be secured by condition.

7.119 In terms of the transport of turbine components and any other abnormal indivisible loads (AIL), the anticipated port of entry is Kyle of Lochalsh with the delivery route following the U5012 Kyle Prospect Road from the harbour before turning left onto the A87(T) to Borve where components will turn onto the A850 to the site entrance. The SEIR predicts 72 AIL delivery movements over the construction period (down from 80) with up to three two way movements of AIL vehicles per day during the peak months.

7.120 EIAR Volume 4b Technical Appendix 12.1: Abnormal Indivisible Load Route Survey includes a swept path analysis of the route. The analysis shows that the majority of mitigation required to facilitate the AIL delivery will be relatively minor such as the

trimming of vegetation and temporary removal of street furniture, although load bearing road surfacing will be required at some bends and some regrading of roadside rock faces will be required on the A87 at Kinloch Ainort, which may require separate planning permission. The developer will likely also require the permission of third party landowners and utility providers for some of the accommodation works.

- 7.121 A condition is suggested to secure an AIL Route Assessment Report, which should have the support of Police Scotland and provide details of a risk assessment for transport of AIL components during the hours of darkness as well as daylight. Transport Scotland is satisfied the A87(T) can accommodate AIL delivery and has not objected subject to conditions to secure its approval prior to the commencement of development of the finalised AIL route, accommodation measures, traffic management measures, its approval of a Quality Assured traffic management consultant to undertake additional signage and traffic control measures, and a finalised construction traffic management plan (CTMP) as also required by the Council's Transport Planning Team.
- 7.122 In the event that the construction of other consented developments using the same public road network takes place at the same time, then the cumulative construction traffic would be required to be controlled monitored with phased HGV movements and AIL delivery across the developments. A monitoring and phasing plan would require to be agreed with the local roads departments and Police Scotland, while the cooperation of potentially several different developers would be required.
- 7.123 The applicant will be required to finalise a legal Section 96 Agreement under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 (as amended) to adequately compensate the public purse in the event of additional damage to Council maintained roads that can be attributable to the associated construction traffic.
- 7.124 A condition for the upgrading of the junction between the site access and the A850 is also required. The design of the access must be as per the Council guidance document 'Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments' and include suitable drainage measures, and details of the geometry and construction, and the provision and maintenance of appropriate visibility splays.

Wider Access

- 7.125 In terms of public access, a preliminary access management plan (PAMP) has been provided (EIAR Volume 4b Technical Appendix 14.2) that sets out how public access to and through the site would be maintained favourably during the construction, operation, and decommissioning phases of the development. The PAMP also includes opportunities for public access improvements such as linking the wind farm access tracks to the wider public path network, which includes tracks of Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms, Core Paths, and less formal recreation tracks with the

suggestion of a loop being created by specifically linking to Edinbane Wind Farm tracks.

7.126 The Council's Access Officer has welcomed the PAMP and advises of its commitment to working with the developer and community stakeholders to finalise an Outdoor Access Management Plan, which should be secured by condition and approved prior to development commencing on site.

Water, Flood Risk, Drainage and Peat

7.127 The results of the applicant's hydrological, flood risk, drainage, and peat (in relation to peat excavation, reuse, and landslide hazard risk) assessments are outlined in Chapter 10 of the EIAR, and updated through the SEIR.

7.128 As mentioned in Section 2 of this report, the site is located within the surface water catchment areas of the Caroy River to the southwest, which discharges into Loch Caroy, the Red Burn to the north and Abhainn Coishleader to the northeast, both of which discharge into Loch Greshornish, and the River Ose to the south of the turbines, which discharges into Loch Bracadale. There are no lochs or ponds within the application site.

7.129 Scottish Water has confirmed that the site does not lie within a Drinking Water Protected Area (DWPA) with the nearest being east of Loch Caroy near Balmeanach, but is not hydraulically connected. There are no Private Water Supplies (PWS) that would be impacted by the proposed development.

7.130 There are areas within the site with potential high and moderate Ground Water Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTE) however investigations have demonstrated that these are not sustained by groundwater but are sustained by incidental rainfall and surface water runoff.

7.131 The site is not within a mapped floodplain and there is no river or fluvial flooding recorded within the application boundary, with flood risk from fluvial sources having been scoped out of the assessment along with an assessment of pluvial groundwater flooding. The Council's Flood Risk Management Team and SEPA have not raised any concerns regarding flooding.

7.132 All infrastructure has been designed to maintain a minimum 50m development free buffer zone around watercourses and water bodies noting that no new watercourse crossings are proposed. The updated development has not resulted in any change in the location of infrastructure outside previously assessed catchments, and there are no new encroachments on these buffers.

7.133 As mentioned, a CEMP would be implemented by the contractor during the construction phase to control potentially polluting activities and prevent adverse impacts on river catchments, properties, and the environment from construction

activities. Specifically, the CEMP would include site specific drainage and pollution prevention plans as also required by the CAR Licence or the licence that may be required through the EASR.

7.134 As detailed in the outline peat management plan (OPMP) (EIAR Volume 4 Technical Appendix 10.2), peat depth varies from 0m to 2.7m across the site, with over 77% of the site being peaty soils between 0.01m to 0.49m thick. Following design amendments as requested by SEPA, the SEIR updates the peat volumes to be excavated to 80,527m³, which is reflective of the worst-case scenario where track Option B is installed and is a reduction from 91,033m³ as stated in the EIAR. In addition, if a project specific linking access track is required (i.e., if Balmeanach Wind Farm cannot be accessed via Ben Sca and Ben Sca Extension Wind Farms or Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm) and a permanent compound is required at the site entrance, then the total volume of peat excavation jumps to 92,698m³, which the SEIR reports is well within the potential maximum reuse volume of 105,016 m³ (for reinstatement of temporary hardstandings, borrow pits, track verges, and habitat restoration, for example).

7.135 SEPA has requested that the implementation of Track Option A is secured by condition to reduce peat excavation and disturbance, along with conditions for its preapproval of a finalised PMP. Furthermore, it requires a condition to ensure that construction works are undertaken in accordance with the mitigation measures contained within the outline CEMP and the Schedule of Commitments, as updated through the SEIR.

7.136 A Peat Landslide Hazard and Risk Assessment (PLHRA) (EIAR Volume 4 Technical Appendix 10.2) has been submitted with the application which states that there is a negligible to low risk of peat instability over most of the site although some areas of medium and high risk have been identified. A hazard impact assessment was conducted for these areas which concluded that, subject to micro-siting and the employment of appropriate mitigation measures including the use of gravity pad turbine foundations and several drainage measures along tracks, all these areas can be considered as having a not significant risk for landslides. These measures can be secured by condition.

Noise and Shadow Flicker

7.137 EIAR Chapter 13 outlines the applicant's assessment of potential construction and operational noise on the nearest residential receptors, which is updated through the SEIR following the removal of T1. The EIAR assessment identified that the maximum predicted levels from this development alone would be 28dB LA90 at any receptor, meaning turbine noise immission levels would not exceed the ESTU-R-97 criterion and the effect would be not significant. Indeed, the Council's Environmental Health Officer advises that at this level, the noise would have no impact on a cumulative limit of 38dB LA90, with noise impacts at sensitive receptors being even less for the revised design. The EHO is satisfied that distances between sensitive properties and the

substation mean that a noise assessment of this feature has not been required. The upper noise limit of 28dB LA90 should be conditioned as part of any permission.

7.138 With regards shadow flicker, the EIAR at Chapter 15 notes that the nearest residential receptor, 9 Balmeanach, is located approximately 2.1km from the nearest turbine, T8. This distance is over 11 times the turbine rotor diameter which would be a little over 1.15km and as such there would be no significant shadow flicker effects on sensitive residential receptors.

Telecommunications

7.139 A number of telecommunication links were identified in the southern part of the site operated by Arqiva, BT, MBNL, JRC and Vodafone. The applicant has consulted with all operators potentially affected by the proposal and made adjustments to the scheme layout in response to this consultation. All operators have confirmed to the applicant that the layout is acceptable to them. However, BT has advised the developer that the location of T8 should not be microsited any closer to its link, which can be conditioned through the micrositing condition. Another condition is suggested to secure a scheme of mitigation should any issues arise re telecommunications.

Aviation and Radar

7.140 There are no unresolved objections or concerns from aviation interests given that NATS removed its objection following an agreement for the design and implementation of an identified and defined mitigation solution in relation to Tiree RADAR. The MOD has requested a condition to secure the submission of an aviation safety lighting scheme detailing how the development would be lit throughout its operational life to maintain civil and military aviation safety, and a further condition to secure aviation charting and safety management information to be provided to the MOD 14 days prior to commencement of works.

Decommissioning and Aftercare

7.141 The applicant has sought permission to operate the windfarm for 40 years. At the end of its operational life, usual decommissioning and restoration requirements should therefore be secured. If the decision is made to decommission the wind farm, all components, access track and associated infrastructure requires to be removed from the site. The Planning Authority also requires that any foundations remain on site; the exposed concrete plinths would also be removed to a depth of 1m below the surface, graded with soil and replanted. Cables also require to be cut away below ground level and sealed. It would be expected that any new tracks or areas used for constructing the wind farm would be reinstated to the pre-development condition, unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority.

7.142 The requirement to decommission a wind farm at the end of its life is relatively standard and straight forward, with any request for re-powering to be considered through the submission of a future application. Nevertheless, it is important to ensure that any approval of this project secures, by condition, a requirement to deliver a draft Decommissioning and Restoration Plan (DDRP) for approval prior to the commencement of any development and ensure an appropriate financial bond is put in place to secure these works.

7.143 The finalised DRP would be expected to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with SEPA no later than 12 months prior to the final decommissioning of the site. The detailed DRP would then be implemented within 18 months of the final decommissioning of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.

Planning Compliance and Monitoring

7.144 As with any wind farm, the Planning Authority would ensure that the planning permission includes a clear description of development that specifies the precise number of turbines to be developed, the maximum blade tip height, and includes details of all associated ancillary infrastructure. THC considers that this detail should be included in the description so that it conveys the scope and substance of the development and so that such matters are not left to planning conditions, which could lead to scope for further redesign or re-powering without requiring a full fresh consent, which could also require substantial additional Council resource that would not be reflected in the fee.

7.145 Given the complexity of major developments, and to assist in discharge of conditions, the Planning Authority seeks to secure by condition that the developer employs a Planning Monitoring Officer (PMO). The role of the PMO, amongst other things, would include the monitoring of, and enforcement of compliance with, all conditions, agreements and obligations related to this permission (or any superseding or related permissions) and shall include the provision of a bi-monthly compliance report to the Planning Authority.

8. Matters to be Secured by Legal Agreement / Upfront Payment

8.1 A decommissioning and restoration financial guarantee and a Section 96 Roads Agreement can be secured by condition. The Habitat Management Plan Area is within the developer's control. No legal agreement is required should consent be granted.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The Scottish Government gives considerable commitment to renewable energy and encourages planning authorities to support the development of wind farms where they can be situated in appropriate locations to operate successfully. The project has the

potential to contribute up to 45MW of renewable energy capacity towards Scottish Government targets and play a role in the route to a net zero Scotland. In addition, the development has potential to bring economic benefits to the area and to create new jobs.

9.2 However, as with all applications, the benefits of the proposal must be weighed against potential drawbacks and then considered in the round, taking account of the relevant policies of the Development Plan. As noted in this report, the design is considered to have been successful in bringing general collective landscape effects on the local landscape composition, as received in locations in and around northwest, north, and east Skye to within acceptable limits, while the proposal will not be significantly detrimental to the integrity of nearby landscape designations including the North West Sky and the Greshornish Special Landscape Areas. Similarly, visual impacts are considered to be within acceptable limits including when experienced in combination and sequentially with other wind energy development in the wider landscape.

9.3 There are no statutory consultee objections to the application while the report has set out that the impacts and effects of the proposal as they relate to construction, built and cultural heritage, roads, traffic, transport, and access, the water environment and peat, amenity as it relates to noise and shadow flicker, telecommunications, aviation and radar, as well as decommissioning and aftercare, would be within acceptable limits subject to the developer's compliance with conditions requested by consultees. The proposal will also be overseen by an appointed Environmental Clerk of Works, with any permission requiring regular compliance monitoring and ongoing engagement by means of a Community Liaison Group.

9.4 Due consideration has been given to the policies set out in the Development Plan, principally NPF4 Policy 11 and Highland-wide Local Development Plan Policy 67 with its eleven tests, which are expanded upon with the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance as well as other policies in the plan related to natural, built, and cultural heritage, protected species and biodiversity. In specific relation to ornithology, the amendments made to the proposal have also sought to reduce the proposals impacts on eagles, while a condition to secure a Bird Protection and Monitoring Plan is suggested that includes the requirements of NatureScot and the RSPB. Impacts on the regional population of white-tailed eagle, while of concern, remain low and are not assessed as significant or cause for NatureScot to have objected to the proposal. Through the finalisation of the proposed Habitat Management Plan, the proposals are also capable of delivering biodiversity enhancement which can be secured by condition. Given the above analysis, the application is considered to accord with these policies and therefore with the Development Plan.

9.5 Under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017, the Council is required to reach a reasoned

conclusion on the environmental impacts of the proposed development, provided in detail in Section 11 of this report. Officers are satisfied that environmental effects of this development can be addressed by way of mitigation. The Council has incorporated the requirement for a schedule of commitments within the conditions of this permission. Monitoring of operational compliance has also been secured through condition.

9.6 All relevant matters have been taken into account when appraising this application. It is considered that the proposal accords with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan and is acceptable in terms of all other applicable material considerations.

10. IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Resource: not applicable

10.2 Legal: not applicable.

10.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural): not applicable.

10.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever: If permitted the development would produce renewable energy.

10.5 Risk: not applicable.

10.6 Gaelic: not applicable.

11. RECOMMENDATION

Action required before decision issued: Yes – finalise the wording of the recommended conditions.

Subject to the above, it is recommended to **GRANT** the application subject to:

- A. Members grant delegated authority to the Area Planning Manager – North to agree the finished condition wording, with any substantive amendments to be subject to prior consultation with the Chair of the North Planning Applications Committee; and,
- B. The following conditions and reasons:

1. Commencement of Development

- (1) The Commencement of development shall be no later than 5 years from the date on which this consent is granted, or in substitution, such other period as the Scottish Ministers may hereafter direct in writing.

(2) Written confirmation of the intended date of Commencement of development shall be provided to the Planning Authority and the Scottish Ministers no later than one calendar month before that date.

Reason: To comply with section 58 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

2. Duration of Development

This planning permission shall expire and cease to have effect after a period of 40 years from the date when electricity is first exported from the approved wind turbines to the electricity grid network (the "First Export Date"). Upon the expiration of a period of 40 years from the First Export Date, the wind turbines shall be decommissioned and removed from the site, with decommissioning and restoration works undertaken in accordance with the terms of Condition 27 of this permission. Written confirmation of the First Export Date shall be submitted in writing to the Planning Authority within one month of the First Export Date.

Reason: This time limited consent period enables a review of the condition of the wind turbines and wind farm components, which have a limited operational lifetime, both in terms of technical and environmental considerations, and, allows for a reassessment of the environmental impacts of the development and the success, or otherwise, of noise impact, species protection, habitat management and mitigation measures. The 40 year cessation date allows for a 2 year period to complete decommissioning and site restoration work.

3. Implementation in Accordance with Approved Plans

(1) Except as otherwise required by the terms of this planning permission, the Development shall be undertaken in accordance with the application, including the:

- (a) approved drawings listed within the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), Volume 3a – Figures, dated July 2023 as amended by the Supplementary Environmental Information Report (SEIR) Volume 3 Figures, dated April 2025; and,
- (b) EIAR dated July 2023 as amended by the Supplementary Environmental Information Report (SEIR), dated April 2025.

(2) Unless otherwise approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with SEPA and NatureScot, the internal track configuration shall laid out in accordance with track Option A as shown on the approved Site Layout Plans, SEI Figures 3.1a, b, 3a, and 3b, dated April 2025.

Reason: To ensure that the Development is carried out in accordance with the approved details and to minimise environmental effects including excavation of peat and disturbance of peatland habitats.

4. Site Enabling Works

No Site Enabling Works shall commence until a detailed scheme of all Site Enabling Works (including off-site and on-site works) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The scheme shall include a timetable for all enabling works and shall be submitted a minimum of 1 month in advance of the proposed date of commencement of any Site Enabling Works.

Reason: To ensure the final details of the Site Enabling Works have regard for the rural setting of the Development Site and the potential impact of such works on the infrastructure of the area.

5. Design and Operation of Wind Turbines

(1) No development, with the exception of the Site Enabling Works, shall commence until full details of the proposed wind turbines hereby permitted, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. These details shall include:

- (a) the make, model, design, direction of rotation (all wind turbine blades shall rotate in the same direction), power rating, sound power level, and dimensions of the turbines to be installed, which shall have internal transformers;
- (b) the external colour and/or finish of the wind turbines to be used (including towers, nacelles and blades), which shall be non-reflective, pale grey semi-matte unless otherwise turbine blades are required to be painted for bird protection purposes as required under condition 12 of this permission ;
- (c) no text, sign or logo shall be displayed on any external surface of the wind turbines, save those required for operational Health and Safety reasons or by law under other legislation; and
- (d) the application of a turbine blade pitch control system which pitching the blades out of the wind (“feathering”) to reduce rotation speeds below 2rpm while idling to reduce bat collision risk.

(2) Thereafter, the wind turbines shall be installed and operate in accordance with these approved details and, with reference to part (b) above, the wind turbines shall be maintained in the approved colour and monitored to ensure no significant rust, staining or dis-colouration occurs until such time as the wind farm is decommissioned.

Reason: To ensure the Planning Authority is aware of the wind turbine details and to protect the visual amenity of the area.

6. Signage

No anemometer, power performance mast, switching station, transformer building, or enclosure, ancillary building or above ground fixed plant shall display any name, logo,

sign or advertisement (other than health and safety signage) unless and until otherwise approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area.

7. Design of Substation, Ancillary Buildings and other Ancillary Development

- (1) No development, with the exception of the Site Enabling Works, shall commence, unless and until final details of the external appearance, dimensions, and surface materials of the substation building, associated compounds, construction compound boundary fencing, external lighting and parking areas have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt the details of the sub-station shall not exceed the parameters assessed in the EIAR as amended by the SEIR unless otherwise approved in writing by the Planning Authority.
- (2) The substation building, associated compounds, fencing, external lighting and parking areas shall be constructed in accordance with the details approved under paragraph (1).

Reason: To safeguard the visual amenity of the area.

8. Micrositing

- (1) All wind turbines, buildings, masts, areas of hardstanding and tracks shall be constructed in the location shown on Environmental Impact Assessment Report Site Layout Plans, SEI Figures 3.1a, b, 3a, and 3b, dated April 2025; wind turbines, buildings, masts, areas of hardstanding and tracks may be adjusted by micrositing within the site.
However, unless otherwise approved in advance in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with NatureScot, SEPA and the EnvCoW, micrositing is subject to the following restrictions:
 - (a) the wind turbines and other infrastructure hereby permitted may be microsited within 50 metres save that no wind turbine or other infrastructure may be microsited to:
 - i. less than 50 metres from any watercourse feature;
 - ii. areas hosting ground water dependent terrestrial ecosystems; and,
 - iii. areas of peat deeper than currently shown for the relevant infrastructure on the approved Peat Depth Plans SEIR Figures 10.1.6a-b and 10.1.7a-b, dated April 2025;
 - (b) No wind turbine foundation shall be positioned higher, when measured in metres Above Ordinance Datum (AOD), than 5m above the position shown on the approved Site Layout Plans, SEI Figures 3.1a, b, 3a, and 3b, dated April 2025;

- (c) Turbine 8 shall not be microsited any closer to the British Telecom Telecommunications link than the position shown on approved Site Layout Plans, SEI Figures 3.1a, b, 3a, and 3b, dated April 2025
- (d) All micrositing permissible under this condition must be approved in advance in writing by the Environmental Clerk of Works (EnvCoW) as required under Condition 10.

(2) A plan showing the final position of all wind turbines buildings, masts, areas of hardstanding, tracks and associated infrastructure forming part of the Development shall be submitted to the Planning Authority within six weeks of the completion of the development works. The plan shall specify areas where micrositing has taken place and, for each instance, be accompanied by copies of the EnvCoW or Planning Authority's approval, as applicable.

Reason: To enable necessary minor adjustments to the position of the wind turbines and other infrastructure to allow for site-specific conditions while maintaining control of environmental impacts and taking account of local ground conditions.

9. Borrow Pit Scheme of Works and Blasting

- (1) No development or Site Enabling Works shall commence unless and until a scheme for the working and restoration of each borrow pit relative to each phase of works has been prepared and submitted in advance of each phase to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority (in consultation with SEPA). The scheme shall include:
 - (a) a detailed working method statement based on site survey information and ground investigations;
 - (b) details of the handling of any overburden (including peat, soil and rock); drainage measures, including measures to prevent surrounding areas of peatland, water dependent sensitive habitats and Ground Water Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTE) from drying out;
 - (c) a programme of implementation of the works described in the scheme; and
 - (d) details of the reinstatement, restoration and aftercare of the borrow pit(s) to be undertaken at the end of the construction period, including topographic surveys of pre-construction profiles and details of topographical surveys to be undertaken of the restored borrow pit profiles.
- (2) The approved scheme shall be implemented in full.
- (3) Blasting shall only take place on the site between the hours of 10.00 to 16.00 on Monday to Friday inclusive and 10.00 to 12.00 on Saturdays, with no blasting taking place on a Sunday or on a Public Holiday, unless otherwise approved in advance in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that excavation of materials from the borrow pit(s) is carried out in a manner that minimises the impact on road safety, amenity and the environment, and to secure the restoration of borrow pit(s) at the end of the construction period. To ensure that blasting activity is carried out within defined timescales to control impact on amenity.

10. Environmental Clerk of Works

- (1) No development or Site Enabling Works shall commence unless and until the terms of appointment of an independent Environmental Clerk of Works (EnvCoW) by the Company have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The terms of appointment shall:
 - (a) Impose a duty to monitor compliance with the environmental commitments provided in the EIA Report as well as the following (the EnvCoW works):
 - (i) any micrositing under Condition 8;
 - (ii) the Pre-Construction Ecological Survey under Condition 11;
 - (iii) the Bird Protection and Monitoring Plan under Condition 12;
 - (iv) the Construction Environmental Management Plan under Condition 13;
 - (v) the Peat Management Plan under Condition 14;
 - (vi) the Habitat Management Plan approved under Condition 15;
 - (vii) the Deer Management Plan under Condition 16; and
 - (viii) the Water Quality and Fish Monitoring Plan under Condition 17;
 - (b) Require the EnvCoW to report to the nominated construction project manager, the developer, and the Planning Authority any incidences of non-compliance with the EnvCoW works at the earliest practical opportunity and no later than 2 working days following the incidence of non-compliance; and,
 - (c) Require the EnvCoW to submit a monthly report to the construction project manager, developer and Planning Authority summarising works undertaken on site; and,
- (2) The EnvCoW shall be appointed on the terms approved under part (1) throughout the period from Commencement of Development to completion of construction works and post-construction site reinstatement works.
- (3) Prior to the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases of the Development or the expiration of the operational period of the consent (whichever is the earlier), details of the terms of appointment of a suitably qualified, experienced, and independent EnvCoW by the Company throughout the

decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases of the Development shall be submitted to the Planning Authority for written approval.

(4) The EnvCoW shall be appointed on the terms approved under part (3) throughout the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases of the Development.

Reason: To secure effective and transparent monitoring of and compliance with the environmental mitigation and management measures associated with the Development during the construction, decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases.

11. Pre-Construction Ecological Survey

- (1) No development or Site Enabling Works shall commence until a pre-construction ecological survey undertaken no more than 3 months prior to works commencing on site and a report of the survey has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The survey shall cover both the application site and an appropriate buffer from the boundary of application site with the report including mitigation measures where any impact, or potential impact, on protected species or their habitat has been identified.
- (2) Development and work shall progress in accordance with any mitigation measures contained within the approved report of survey and the timescales contain therein.

Reason: In the interest of protecting ecology, protected species and habitats.

12. Bird Protection and Monitoring Plan

No development or Site Enabling Works shall commence until a Bird Protection and Monitoring Plan BPMP has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with NatureScot. The BPMP shall include, but not be limited to, the following provisions:

- (a) a breeding bird protection plan which shall include details of proposed pre-construction survey work, records of breeding or foraging birds within disturbance distance of the site; and appropriate mitigation to avoid the risk of disturbance and/or displacement occurring which shall include but not be limited to suspension of all works within 1km of an eagle eyrie during the breeding season;
- (b) a nesting bird survey which shall be undertaken no more than 24 hours prior to the commencement of development if this coincides within the main bird breeding season (March- August inclusive) and throughout the breeding bird season if new areas are being developed or there has been a break in construction;

(c) continued post-construction survey and monitoring activities and implementation of mitigation measures for golden and white-tailed eagle to include, but not limited to, the following:

- i. flight activity surveys which shall be undertaken in combination with collision (bird carcass searches) and nest monitoring and recording. All findings shall thereafter be shared with NatureScot and the RSPB;
- ii. an Eagle Research Programme to include input from the Highland Raptor Study Group and provision to contribute to a nationwide satellite white-tailed eagle tagging product;
- iii. stock and deer exclusion or regular carrion removal within the wind farm area and details of mechanisms to independently audit the success of the measure;
- iv. automated or observer led shut down on demand and scheduled curtailment at times of year with known increased collision risk as informed by flight activity data, proximity to breeding sites, and taking account of published research; and,
- v. proposals for blade painting/patterning which shall be supported by a landscape and visual assessment. For the avoidance of doubt, no turbine blades shall be painted or patterned without the prior written approval of the Planning Authority in consultation with NatureScot.

Reason: Construction works have the potential to disturb nesting birds or damage their nest sites, with all wild bird nests are protected from damage, destruction, interference and obstruction under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

13. Construction Environmental Management Plan

- (1) No development or site enabling works shall commence until a works specific Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) related to the phase or phases of works or development to be undertaken has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority, in consultation with Transport Scotland for condition Part (2)(p). The CEMP shall outline site specific details of all on-site construction works, post- construction reinstatement, drainage and mitigation, together with details of their timetabling.
- (2) The CEMP for each phase of works or development shall include (but is not limited to):
 - (a) an updated Schedule of Commitments highlighting amendments made to the EIAR Schedule of Commitments set out in Chapter 16 of the SEIR dated April 2025 and the conditions of this consent;
 - (b) details and timetable for phasing of construction works;

- (c) risk assessment of potentially damaging construction-type activities on the environment;
- (d) a Finalised Peat Landslide Hazard Risk Assessment, incorporating the recommendations set out EIAR Technical Appendix 10.1 and Table 10-2: Stability Hazard Ranking Assessment of SEIR Volume 2 Chapter 10;
- (e) a Site Waste Management Plan (dealing with all aspects of waste produced during the construction period other than peat), including details of contingency planning in the event of accidental release of materials which could cause harm to the environment;
- (f) a Pollution Prevention Plan, including a surface water and groundwater management and treatment plan with mitigation measures demonstrating how all surface water run-off and waste water arising during and after development is to be managed and prevented from polluting any watercourses or sources;
- (g) site specific details for management and operation of any concrete batching plant, including disposal of pH rich waste water and substances;
- (h) a water quality and fish monitoring regime, including, but not limited to, any affected private water supplies;
- (i) details of all pollution prevention and mitigation measures to protect habitats and ecological resources on site, which shall include measures to maintain hydrological connectivity of Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems;
- (j) Species and Habitat Protection Plans, (including bat, water vole, otter, pine marten, amphibians, reptiles and breeding birds);
- (k) details of proposed temporary site compound, storage of materials, including fuel and other chemicals, machinery, and designated car parking;
- (l) details of on-site storage and off-site disposal of all imported or excavated material, including maximum stockpile heights and locations;
- (m) details of all internal access tracks, turning areas, including accesses from the public road and hardstanding areas;
- (n) details of the construction of the access into the site and the creation and maintenance of associated visibility splays;
- (o) cleaning of site entrance, site tracks and the adjacent public road and the sheeting of all HGVs taking spoil or construction materials to/from the site to prevent spillage or deposit of any materials on the public road;
- (p) details of archaeological supervision to oversee the protection/fencing off of all known heritage assets, including all areas to be used by construction vehicles;

- (q) details of the management of noise and vibration during construction including how the best practicable means measures will be implemented to reduce the impact of construction noise at noise sensitive locations;
- (r) a dust management plan;
- (s) details of temporary site illumination;
- (t) Construction Method Statements for:
 - i. crane pads;
 - ii. Turbine foundations;
 - iii. Working cable trenches; and
 - iv. Erection of the wind turbines and meteorological masts;
- (u) the method of construction of the crane pads, wind turbine foundations, working cable trenches, and the method of construction and erection of the wind turbines and any meteorological masts.
- (v) details for the provision of the submission of a quarterly report summarising work undertaken at the site and compliance with the conditions imposed under the planning permission during the period of construction and post construction reinstatement; and
- (w) details of post-construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas not required during the operation of the Development, including construction access tracks, borrow pits, construction compound, storage areas, laydown areas, access tracks, passing places and other construction areas, all of which are to be provided no later than 6 months prior to the date of first commissioning, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority. Wherever possible, reinstatement is to be achieved by the careful use of turfs removed prior to construction works. Details should include all seed mixes to be used for the reinstatement of vegetation.

Reason: To ensure that all construction operations are carried out in a manner that minimises their impact on road safety, amenity and the environment, and that the mitigation measures contained in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (July 2023) which accompanied the application, or as otherwise agreed, are fully implemented.

14. Peat Management Plan

- (1) No development or Site Enabling Works shall commence until a works specific finalised Peat Management Plan (PMP), related to the phase or phases of works or development to be undertaken, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation SEPA. The PMP shall:

- (a) take account of site and ground investigations to minimise the loss of peatlands and reduce carbon loss;
- (b) include details of vegetated turf stripping and storage;
- (c) include actions (including micrositing) to minimise excavated peat volumes and reuse peat in an appropriate manner, with the inclusion of a specific section outlining measures such as micrositing, limiting the footprint, and use of floating track to reduce disturbance from the formation of track; and,
- (d) follow SEPA's good practice for handling, storing and reinstating peat materials.

(2) The PMP shall thereafter be implemented as approved.

Reason: To ensure that a plan is in place to deal with the storage and reuse of peat within the application site, including peat stability and slide risk.

15. Habitat Management Plan

- (1) No development, with the exception of the Site Enabling Works but not tree felling, shall commence unless and until a finalised Habitat Management Plan (HMP) has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with NatureScot. The finalised HMP shall provide measurable benefits for biodiversity and shall contain enhanced peatland restoration building upon the outline HMP contained within the SEIR Volume 4 Technical Appendix 8.5, Outline Habitat Management Plan, dated 30 April 2025 and associated SEI Figure 8.5.1.
- (2) For the avoidance of doubt, in the event that Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm is not consented or constructed for whatever reason, the finalised HMP shall be amended to deliver a minimum 10% enhancement taking account of SEIR Volume 5, Technical Appendix A: Combined Outline Habitat Management Plan – Balmeanach Wind Farm and Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm, dated 31 April 2025, and associated SEI FIGUREs V5.29a-b, dated April 2025.
- (3) The HMP shall set out the habitat management of the site including all mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures during the period of construction, operation, decommissioning, restoration and aftercare, and shall detail the long term management regimes of the compensation and enhancement measures required of the site.
- (4) No tree felling shall take place in relation to implementing the HMP until a meaningful start has been made on the construction of the wind farm.
- (5) The HMP shall include provision for regular monitoring and review to be undertaken against the HMP objectives and measures for securing amendments or additions to the HMP in the event that the HMP objectives are not being met.
- (6) Unless and until otherwise agreed in advance in writing with the Planning Authority, the approved HMP (as amended from time to time with the written approval of the Planning Authority) shall be implemented in full.

(7) GIS Shapefiles shall be provided to the Planning Authority showing the up to date areas of compensation and enhancement prior to the commencement of construction works on site.

Reason: In the interests of protecting ecological features and to ensure that the development secures positive effects for biodiversity, and in the interest of ornithology to safeguard the regional eagle population.

16. Deer Management Plan

No development, with the exception the Site Enabling Works, shall commence until a Deer Management Plan (DMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with NatureScot. The DMP will set out proposed long term management of deer using the Development site and shall provide for the monitoring of deer numbers on site from the period from Commencement of development until the date on which site infrastructure has been removed and final site restoration completed. The approved DMP shall thereafter be implemented in full.

Reason: To protect ecological interests and in the interest of habitat enhancement.

17. Water Quality and Fish Monitoring Plan

- (1) There shall be no commencement of development and site enabling works until an integrated Water Quality and Fish Monitoring Plan (WQFMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with local District Fishery Board.
- (2) The WQFMP must take account of Marine Scotland Science's guidance and shall include:
 - (a) provision that water quality sampling should be carried out for 12 months (or as agreed with the Planning Authority) prior to commencement of development, during construction and for 12 months after construction is complete;
 - (b) key hydrochemical parameters (including turbidity and flow data), the identification of sampling locations (including control sites), frequency of sampling, sampling methodology, data analysis and reporting;
 - (c) fully quantitative electrofishing surveys at sites potentially impacted and at control sites for 12 months (or as agreed with the Planning Authority) prior to the Commencement of development, during construction and for 12 months after construction is completed to detect any changes in fish populations; and
 - (d) appropriate site specific mitigation measures.
- (3) Thereafter, the WQFMP shall be implemented in full within the timescales set out in the WQFMP.

Reason: To ensure no deterioration of water quality and to protect fish populations within and downstream of the development area.

18. **Outdoor Access Plan**

(1) No development or site enabling works shall commence until a finalised and detailed Outdoor Access Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The purpose of the plan shall be to maintain public access routes to site tracks and paths during construction, and to maintain and improve outdoor access provision in the long-term. The Outdoor Access Plan shall include details showing:

- (1) all existing access points, paths, core paths, tracks, rights of way and other routes whether on land or inland water), and any areas currently outwith or excluded from statutory access rights under Part One of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, within and adjacent to the application site;
- (2) any areas proposed for exclusion from statutory access rights, for reasons of privacy, disturbance or effect on curtilage related to buildings or structures;
- (3) All proposed paths, tracks and other routes for use by walkers, riders, cyclists, all-abilities users, etc. and any other relevant outdoor access enhancement (including construction specifications and methodologies, signage, information leaflets, proposals for on-going maintenance etc.). For the avoidance of doubt, any proposed new path shall include evidence that it has been so designed to minimise disturbance of peat and impacts on peatland habitats including blanket bog and avoid sensitive bog pools;
- (4) Any diversion of paths, tracks or other routes, temporary or permanent, proposed as part of the development (including details of mitigation measures, diversion works, duration and signage)

(2) The approved Outdoor Access Plan, and any associated works, shall be implemented in full prior to the Commencement of development or as otherwise may be agreed within the approved plan.

Reason: In the interests of securing public access rights.

19. **Archaeology**

No development or works in connection with the development, including site clearance, shall commence unless and until an archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning Authority and a programme of archaeological works has been carried out in accordance with the approved WSI. The WSI shall include details of how the recording and recovery of archaeological resources found within the application site shall be undertaken, and how any updates, if required, to the written scheme of investigation will be provided throughout the implementation of the programme of archaeological works. Should the archaeological works reveal the need for post excavation analysis the development hereby approved shall not be occupied or brought into use unless a Post-Excavation Research Design (PERD) for the analysis,

publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority. The PERD shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to protect the archaeological and historic interest of the site.

20. Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP)

(1) No development or site enabling works shall commence until a works specific CTMP related to the phase or phases of works or development to be undertaken has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with the Trunk and Local Roads Authorities, the Police and affected Community Councils. The final CTMP shall be submitted no later than three months prior to commencement of the relevant phase. The approved CTMP shall be carried out as approved in accordance with the timetable specified within the approved CTMP. The CTMP shall include (but not be limited to) the provision of:

- (a) the routeing of all traffic associated with the Development on public roads including identification of any local quarries and suppliers that will be used in the construction of the development;
- (b) details of the volume of materials to be imported and removed from the site;
- (c) details of the number and type of vehicle movements that will be generated;
- (d) a construction traffic risk assessment during daylight hours and hours of darkness with reference to the peak tourist season;
- (e) an identification of any sensitive receptors such as schools that are susceptible to construction traffic or abnormal loads;
- (f) an assessment of any structures along the public road which are susceptible to damage due to extra-ordinary construction traffic or abnormal loads;
- (g) identify measures to control the use of any direct access onto the trunk road.
- (h) measures to ensure that the specified routes are adhered to, including monitoring procedures of HGV movements, the establishment of 'acceptable' levels of HGV activity and proposals to manage the level of HGV movements along Council maintained roads;
- (i) details of all proposed traffic management and mitigation measures including but not limited to temporary speed limits, suitable temporary signage, road markings, and speed activated signs to be put in place, removal of street furniture, and junction widening, which shall be undertaken by a recognised traffic management consultant as approved by the Council and Transport Scotland;
- (j) Detailed information on vehicle numbers, signing and lining arrangements, arrangements for emergency vehicle access, measures to minimise traffic

impacts on existing road users, measures to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists and a nominated road safety person must be provided. In addition, the plan should propose specific measures to further reduce the potential impact of construction and abnormal load traffic during peak tourist season;

- (k) consideration of any concurrent construction traffic from other developments where there is significant (greater than 10%) trip generation;
- (l) details of a contingency plan prepared by the abnormal load haulier. The plan shall be adopted only after consultation and agreement with the Police and the respective roads authorities which shall include measures to deal with any haulage incidents that may result in public roads becoming temporarily closed or restricted;
- (m) During the operational stage of the Development, advance written notification and approval of the Planning Authority in consultation with Transport Scotland, THC Roads Authority and affected community councils is required for any significant HGV or Abnormal Load movement required during this period;
- (n) a procedure for the regular monitoring of road conditions and the implementation of any remedial works required during the construction period;
- (o) measures to ensure that all affected public roads are kept free of mud and debris arising from the development;
- (p) provision for the submission of a Section 96 Roads Wear and Tear agreement (which may require to be entered in to with additional developers should development that also generates significant traffic on the identified road network) including of a roads condition survey pre-and post-construction accompanied by an appropriate agreement between the Council and the Company to ensure the delivery of any post-construction public road restoration that may be required;
- (q) An up to date review of road accidents; and,
- (r) identification of a nominated person to whom any road safety issues can be referred;

(2) The approved CTMP shall be implemented in full, unless otherwise approved in advance in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of road safety.

21. Public Road Improvement and Mitigation Measures

(1) There shall be no Commencement of Development until a Road and Structures Mitigation Schedule of Works and Transport Report has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Council. The schedule and report shall include:

- a. an engineering assessment of the condition of all routes on Council maintained roads to be used by construction traffic to identify any upgrades required to carriageways, including the site access, verges, and structures to ensure the roads are to a standard to accommodate all construction traffic, which shall detail:
 - i. the assessed structural strength of carriageways including construction depth and road formation where this is likely to be significant in respect of proposed impact including non-destructive testing and sampling as required;
 - ii. the assessed capacity of existing bridges and other structures along the construction access routes;
 - iii. Road surface condition and profile;
 - iv. Details on road widths and the vertical and horizontal alignment of carriageway running surfaces;
- b. detailed layout drawings and full details of any upgrades and junction upgrades required to the construction access junction with the A850;
- c. full details of all temporary and permanent upgrading and mitigation works required and a programme for the delivery of the proposals for the public road improvements including reinstatement.

- (2) All bridge and structure assessment work shall be carried out under the Technical Approval Process as set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges CB300, with the following submitted to the Council as Technical Approval Authority (TAA):
 - a. an Approval in Principle (AIP) for each assessment detailing the scope of the assessment and proposed delivery vehicles including axle weights and spacings; and,
 - b. all assessment and check certificates, reports, and check calculations;
- (3) Thereafter, all works as set out in Part (1) shall be completed in full to the satisfaction of the Council in compliance with the Council's 'Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments', with the prior written consent of the Highland Council as Roads Authority, and made available for use in accordance with the agreed delivery programme prior to works commencing on site.

Reason: To ensure that an adequate level of access is timeously provided for the development in the interests of road safety, amenity, and to ensure that the works involved comply with applicable standards to maintain the integrity of the Council adopted public road network.

22. Abnormal Loads Assessment

- (1) There shall be no abnormal load deliveries to the site until an Abnormal Load Route Assessment Report, including proposed trial runs, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with Transport Scotland. The Abnormal Load Route Assessment Report shall provide:

- (a) Details of a communications strategy to inform the relevant communities of the programme of abnormal load deliveries;
- (b) Details of any accommodation measures required for the local road network including the removal of street furniture, junction widening and traffic management;
- (c) Any additional signing or temporary traffic control measures deemed necessary on the trunk road network due to the size or length of any loads being transported must be undertaken by a recognised QA traffic management consultant, to be approved by Transport Scotland.
- (d) Details of the route for abnormal loads on the local and trunk road networks and any recommendations for delivery of abnormal loads;
- (e) An assessment of the capacity of any bridge crossings on the route to cater for abnormal loads, and details of proposed upgrades and mitigation measures required for any bridge crossings; and
- (f) A plan for access by vehicles carrying abnormal loads, including but not limited to the number and timing of deliveries and the length, width and axle configuration of all such traffic associated with the Development.
- (g) Confirmation of the method of discharge and vehicle loading of AIL components within Kyle Harbour including information on component storage and an assessment of the impact on users of the harbour and road users in the vicinity of the harbour, which shall be kept to a minimum.

(2) Prior to the first delivery of an abnormal load, a programme for abnormal load deliveries shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with Transport Scotland.

(3) Prior to any movement of abnormal loads (including trial runs) the Company must complete any mitigation works set out in the scheme approved under part (1) of this condition, and maintain such measures during the period of abnormal load deliveries.

(4) The trial-run shall be undertaken in accordance with the details approved under part (1) prior to the movement of any abnormal loads.

(5) The details in the approved report shall thereafter be implemented in full prior the first delivery of an abnormal load.

Reason: In the interest of road safety and to ensure that abnormal loads access the site in a safe manner.

23. Aviation Safety - Lighting

(1) No development, with the exception of Site Enabling Works, shall commence until a scheme for aviation lighting for the Development has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). The aviation-lighting

scheme shall define how the development will be lit throughout its life to maintain civil and military aviation safety requirements, and shall include:

- a. Details of any construction equipment and temporal structures with a total height of 50 metres or greater (above ground level) that will be deployed during the construction of wind turbine generators and details of any aviation warning lighting that they will be fitted with; and
- b. The locations and heights of all wind turbine generators in the development, identifying those that will be fitted with aviation warning lighting and the position of the lights on the wind turbines generators; the types(s) of lights that will be fitted; and the performance specification(s) of the lighting types(s) to be used.

(2) Thereafter, the aviation-lighting scheme shall be implemented as approved and maintained as such for the lifetime of the development unless otherwise an updated scheme is approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with the MOD, NATS, and the CAA.

Reason: In the interests of aviation safety, landscape and visual amenity, ensuring that visible aviation lighting is switched off or replaced to reflect industry technological advances.

24. Aviation Safety

- (1) Prior to the installation of any turbine, the Company shall provide the Planning Authority, Ministry of Defence, and Defence Geographic Centre with the following information in writing, and provide evidence to the Planning Authority that this has been done:
 - (a) the dates of the expected stages of construction of the Development;
 - (b) the height above ground level of the tallest structure forming part of the Development;
 - (c) the maximum height of any construction equipment; and
 - (d) the position of the wind turbines and masts in latitude and longitude.
- (2) The Company shall, as soon as is practicable and in any event with 7 days prior to the event, provide to the Planning Authority and the Ministry of Defence written notice of any proposed changes to the information provided under part (1).
- (3) Within 1 month of the erection of the final turbine, the Company shall provide written confirmation to the Planning Authority, the Ministry of Defence and NATS of the actual date on which construction was completed and the confirmed latitude and longitude of all turbines (in degrees, minutes and seconds) and the height above ground level of each turbine (in metres to blade tip).

Reason: In the interests of aviation safety.

25. Telecommunication

Within 12 months of the first export date, any claim by any individual person regarding television or telecommunications interference at their house, business premises or other building, shall be investigated by a qualified engineer appointed by the developer and the results shall be submitted to the Planning Authority. Should any impairment of services be attributable to the development, the developer shall remedy such impairment within 3 months.

Reason: To mitigate the potential effect of telecommunications interference on the development.

26. Noise

(1) The rating level of noise immissions from the combined effects of the wind turbines forming part of the Development (including the application of any tonal penalty) when determined in accordance with the attached Guidance Notes¹ for this condition, shall not exceed the values for the relevant integer wind speed set out in, or derived from, Tables 1 and 2 at those properties identified or any dwelling which is lawfully existing or has planning permission at the date of this consent.

Table 1 – Between 07:00 and 23:00 – Noise Limits expressed in dB LA90

Location (including coordinates)	Standardised wind speed at 10 meter height (m/s) within the site averaged over 10-minute periods											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
9 Balmeanach E133132 N843734	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
Allt Ruairidh E132485 N843549	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
Upper Edinbane E135080 N850681	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28

¹ If cross-referring to Guidance Notes, the Guidance Notes below this Model Conditions must be included and should be inserted directly after the noise condition as they form part of the noise condition.

Table 2 – Between 23:00 and 07:00 – Noise Limits expressed in dB LA90

Location (including coordinates)	Standardised wind speed at 10 meter height (m/s) within the site averaged over 10-minute periods											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
9 Balmeanach E133132 N843734	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
Allt Ruairidh E132485 N843549	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
Upper Edinbane E135080 N850681	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28

- (2) The turbines shall be designed to permit individually controlled operation or shut down at specified wind speeds and directions in order to facilitate compliance with noise criteria.
- (3) The Company shall continuously log power production, wind speed and wind direction at each wind turbine all (in accordance with Guidance Notes). These data shall be retained for a period of not less than 24 months. The Company shall provide this information to the Planning Authority, in the format set out in the Guidance Notes, within 14 days of receipt in writing of a request to do so.
- (4) Prior to the Date of First Commissioning, the Company shall have submitted to, and received written approval of the Planning Authority of, a list of proposed independent consultants who will undertake compliance measurements in accordance with this condition. Amendments to the list of approved consultants shall be made only with the prior written approval of the Planning Authority.
- (5) Within 21 days from receipt of a written request from the Planning Authority, following a complaint to it from an occupant of a dwelling alleging noise disturbance at that dwelling, the Company shall employ a consultant approved by the Planning Authority in terms of part (4) above to assess the level of noise immissions from the wind farm at the complainant's property (or a suitable alternative location agreed in writing by the Planning Authority). The written request from the Planning Authority shall set out at least the date, time and location to which the complaint

relates and any identified atmospheric conditions, including wind direction, and include a statement as to whether, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, the noise giving rise to the complaint contains or is likely to contain a tonal component.

- (6) The assessment of the rating level of noise immissions in terms of part (5) above shall be undertaken in accordance with the Guidance Notes and an assessment protocol that shall previously have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The protocol shall include the proposed measurement location(s) where measurements for compliance checking purposes shall be undertaken, whether noise giving rise to the complaint contains or is likely to contain a tonal component, and also the range of meteorological and operational conditions (which shall include the range of wind speeds, wind directions, power generation and times of day) to determine the assessment of rating level of noise immissions. The proposed range of conditions shall be those which prevailed during times when the complainant alleges there was disturbance due to noise, having regard to the written request of the Planning Authority under paragraph (5) above.
- (7) Where the property to which a complaint is related is not listed by name or location in Tables 1 or 2 at part (1) of this condition, the Company shall submit to the Planning Authority, for its written approval, proposed noise limits selected from those listed in Tables 1 and 2 to be adopted at the complainant's property for compliance checking purposes, prior to compliance checking. The proposed noise limits are to be those limits selected from Tables 1 and 2 specified for a listed location which the independent consultant considers as being likely to experience the most similar background noise environment to that experienced at the complainant's property. The protocol shall include a justification of the choice of the representative background method to determine compliance at the complainant's property based on the noise environment provided by the independent consultant. levels measured at the agreed location and, where appropriate, any limit apportionment undertaken to consider cumulative impacts.
- (8) The rating level of noise immissions resulting from the combined effects of the wind turbines when determined in accordance with the Guidance Notes and approved Noise Assessment Protocol shall not exceed the noise limits approved in writing by the Planning Authority for the complainant's property.
- (9) In the event that a complainant does not allow the Company access to undertake a compliance assessment, the assessment protocol shall set out details of the proposed alternative representative measurement position. Where the proposed measurement location is close to the wind turbines, rather than at the complainant's property (e.g. to improve the signal to noise limits to ratio)

(10) The Company shall provide to the Planning Authority the independent consultant's assessment of the rating level of noise immissions undertaken in accordance with the Guidance Notes and the approved Noise Assessment Protocol within two months of the date of the written request of the Planning Authority for compliance measurements to be made under part (5), unless the time limit is extended in writing by the Planning Authority. The assessment shall include all data collected for the purposes of undertaking the compliance measurements, such data to be provided in the format set out in the Guidance Notes. The instrumentation used to undertake the measurements shall be calibrated in accordance with the Guidance Notes and certificates of calibration shall be submitted to the Planning Authority with the independent consultant's assessment of the rating level of noise immissions.

(11) Where a further assessment of the rating level of noise immissions from the wind farm is required pursuant to (in accordance with the Guidance Notes), the Company shall submit a copy of the further assessment within 21 days of submission of the independent consultant's assessment pursuant to part (8) above unless the time limit has been extended in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect amenity and to ensure that noise limits are not exceeded and to enable prompt investigation of complaints.

Guidance Notes for Operational Noise Condition

These notes are to be read with and form part of the noise condition. They further explain the condition and specify the methods to be employed in the assessment of complaints about noise immissions from the wind farm. The rating level at each integer wind speed is the arithmetic sum of the wind farm noise level as determined from the best-fit curve described in Guidance Note 2 of these Guidance Notes and any tonal penalty applied in accordance with Guidance Note 3. Reference to ETSU-R-97 refers to the publication entitled "The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms" (1997) published by the Energy Technology Support Unit (ETSU) for the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). IOA GPG is "A Good Practice Guide to the Application of ETSU-R-97 for the Assessment and Rating of Wind Turbine Noise" (2013) and includes Supplementary Guidance Notes 1 to 5 of the IOA GPG.

Guidance Note 1

- (a) The LA90,10 minute noise statistic should be measured in accordance with the IOA GPG. Measurements shall be undertaken in such a manner to enable a tonal penalty to be applied in accordance with Guidance Note 3.
- (b) To enable compliance with the conditions to be evaluated, the Company shall continuously log arithmetic mean wind speed in metres per second and wind direction in degrees from north for each turbine and arithmetic mean power generated by each turbine, all in successive 10-minute periods. All 10 minute

periods shall commence on the hour and in ten minute increments thereafter, synchronised with Universal Coordinated Time (UTC). The wind speeds at turbine hub height shall be 'standardised' to a reference height of ten metres as described in ETSU-R-97 at page 120 using a reference roughness length of 0.05 metres. Unless an alternative procedure is previously agreed in writing with the Planning Authority, it is these standardised ten metre height wind speed data which are correlated with the noise measurements determined as valid.

- (c) Data provided to the Planning Authority in accordance with the noise condition shall be provided in comma separated values in electronic format unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.
- (d) A data logging rain gauge shall be installed in the course of the assessment of the levels of noise immissions. The gauge shall record over successive 10-minute periods synchronised with the periods of data recorded in accordance with Note 1(b).

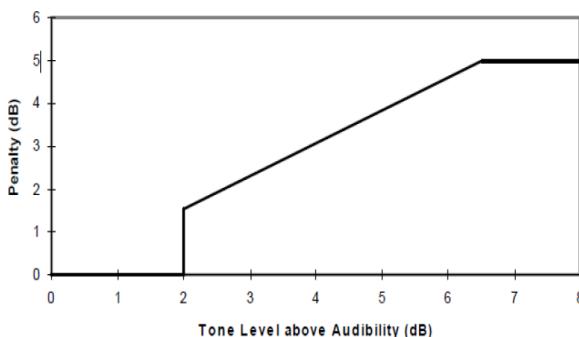
Guidance Note 2

- (a) The noise measurements shall be made so as to provide not less than 20 valid data points as defined in Guidance Note 2 (b)
- (b) Valid data points are those measured in the conditions specified in the agreed written protocol, but excluding any periods of rainfall measured in the vicinity of the sound level meter. Rainfall shall be assessed by use of a rain gauge that shall log the occurrence of rainfall in each 10 minute period concurrent with the measurement periods set out in Guidance Note 1. In specifying such conditions the Planning Authority shall have regard to those conditions which prevailed during times when the complainant alleges there was disturbance due to noise or which are considered likely to result in a breach of the limits.
- (c) For those data points considered valid in accordance with Guidance Note 2(b), values of the LA90,10 minute noise measurements and corresponding values of the 10- minute 10- metre height wind speed averaged across all operating wind turbines using the procedure specified in Guidance Note 1(d), shall be plotted on an XY chart with noise level on the Y-axis and the 10- metre height mean wind speed on the X-axis. A least squares, "best fit" curve of an order deemed appropriate by the independent consultant (but which may not be higher than a fourth order) should be fitted to the data points and define the wind farm noise level at each integer speed.

Guidance Note 3

- (a) Where, in accordance with the protocol, noise immissions at the location or locations where compliance measurements are being undertaken contain or are likely to contain a tonal component, a tonal penalty is to be calculated and applied using the following rating procedure.

- (b) For each 10 minute interval for which LA_{90,10} minute data have been determined as valid in accordance with Guidance Note 2 a tonal assessment shall be performed on noise immissions during 2 minutes of each 10 minute period. The 2 minute periods should be spaced at 10 minute intervals provided that uninterrupted uncorrupted data are available (“the standard procedure”). Where uncorrupted data are not available, the first available uninterrupted clean 2 minute period out of the affected overall 10 minute period shall be selected. Any such deviations from the standard procedure, as described in Section 2.1 on pages 104-109 of ETSU-R-97, shall be reported.
- (c) For each of the 2 minute samples the tone level above or below audibility shall be calculated by comparison with the audibility criterion given in Section 2.1 on pages 104-109 of ETSU-R-97.
- (d) The tone level above audibility shall be plotted against wind speed for each of the 2 minute samples. Samples for which the tones were below the audibility criterion or no tone was identified, a value of zero audibility shall be used.
- (e) The average tone level above audibility shall be calculated for each wind speed bin, each bin being 1 metre per second wide and centred on integer wind speeds. This process shall be repeated for each integer wind speed for which there is an assessment of overall levels in Note 2.
- (f) The tonal penalty is derived from the margin above audibility of the tone according to the figure below.



Guidance Note 4

- (a) If a tonal penalty is to be applied in accordance with Guidance Note 3 the rating level of the turbine noise at each wind speed is the arithmetic sum of the measured noise level as determined from the best fit curve described in Guidance Note 2 and the penalty for tonal noise as derived in accordance with Guidance Note 3 at each integer wind speed within the range specified by the Planning Authority in its written protocol.
- (b) If no tonal penalty is to be applied then the rating level of the turbine noise at each wind speed is equal to the measured noise level as determined from the best fit curve described in Guidance Note 2.

- (c) In the event that the rating level is above the limit(s) set out in the Table attached to the noise conditions or the noise limits for a complainant's dwelling, the independent consultant shall undertake a further assessment of the rating level to correct for background noise so that the rating level relates to wind turbine noise immission only.
- (d) The Company shall ensure that all the wind turbines in the development are turned off for such period as the independent consultant requires to undertake the further assessment. The further assessment shall be undertaken in accordance with the following steps:
 - (e) Repeating the steps in Guidance Note 2, with the wind farm switched off, and determining the background noise (L3) at each integer wind speed within the range requested by the Planning Authority in its written request and the approved protocol.
 - (f) The wind farm noise (L1) at this speed shall then be calculated as follows where L2 is the measured level with turbines running but without the addition of any tonal penalty:

$$L_1 = 10 \log \left[10^{\frac{L_2}{10}} - 10^{\frac{L_3}{10}} \right]$$

- (g) The rating level shall be re-calculated by adding arithmetically the tonal penalty (if any is applied in accordance with Note 3) to the derived wind farm noise L1 at that integer wind speed.
- (h) If the rating level after adjustment for background noise contribution and adjustment for tonal penalty (if required in accordance with note 3 above) at any integer wind speed lies at or below the values set out in the Table attached to the conditions or at or below the noise limits approved by the Planning Authority for a complainant's dwelling in accordance with the noise condition then no further action is necessary. If the rating level at any integer wind speed exceeds the values set out in the Table attached to the conditions or the noise limits approved by the Planning Authority for a complainant's dwelling in accordance with the noise condition then the Development fails to comply with the conditions.

27. Site Decommissioning, Restoration and Aftercare

- (1) The Development shall cease to generate electricity to the grid network by no later than the date falling 40 years from the Date of Final Commissioning.
- (2) No later than one year prior to the Date of Final Generation or the expiry of the planning permission (whichever is earlier), a decommissioning, restoration and aftercare plan shall be submitted for the written approval of the Planning Authority, in consultation with SEPA, NatureScot, and Transport Scotland. The detailed decommissioning, restoration and aftercare plan shall provide updated and detailed

proposals, in accordance with relevant guidance at that time, for the removal of the Development, the treatment of ground surfaces, the management and timing of the works and environment management provisions which shall provide:

- (a) a site waste management plan (dealing with all aspects of waste produced during the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases and, including details of measures to be taken to minimise waste associated with the Development and promote the recycling of materials and infrastructure components);
- (b) details of the formation of the construction compound, welfare facilities, any areas of hardstanding, turning areas, internal access tracks, car parking, material stockpiles, oil storage, lighting columns, and any construction compound boundary fencing;
- (c) a dust management plan;
- (d) details of measures to be taken to prevent loose or deleterious material being deposited on the local road network, including wheel cleaning and lorry sheeting facilities, and measures to clean the site entrances and the adjacent local road network;
- (e) a pollution prevention and control method statement, including arrangements for the storage and management of oil and fuel on the site;
- (f) details of measures for soil storage and management;
- (g) a surface water and groundwater management and treatment plan, including details of the separation of clean and dirty water drains, and location of settlement lagoons for silt laden water;
- (h) details of measures for sewage disposal and treatment;
- (i) temporary site illumination;
- (j) the construction of any temporary access into the site and the creation and maintenance of associated visibility splays;
- (k) a Traffic Management Plan based on the principles of the Construction Traffic Management Plan approved under Condition 20, to manage traffic associated with the decommissioning of the wind farm;
- (l) a Schedule of Works and Transport Report based on the principles of the Schedule of Works and Transport Report approved under Condition 21;
- (m) an Abnormal Load Route Assessment Report based on the principles of the Abnormal Load Route Assessment Report approved under Condition 22;
- (n) a species protection plan based on surveys for protected species (including birds) carried out no longer than eighteen months prior to submission of the plan.

(3) The Development shall be decommissioned, the site restored and aftercare undertaken prior to the date falling three years after the Date of Final Generation and in accordance with the approved detailed decommissioning, restoration and aftercare plan.

Reason: To ensure the decommissioning and removal of the Development in an appropriate and environmentally acceptable manner and the restoration and aftercare of the site, in the interests of safety, amenity and environmental protection.

28. Financial Guarantee

- (1) There shall be no Commencement of Development until a bond or other form of financial guarantee in terms which secures the cost of performance of all decommissioning, restoration and aftercare obligations referred to in Conditions 13 part (w) and 27 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority.
- (2) The value of the financial guarantee shall be agreed between the Company and the Planning Authority or, failing agreement, determined (on application by either party) by a suitably qualified independent professional as being sufficient to meet the costs of all decommissioning, restoration and aftercare obligations referred to in Conditions 13 part (w) and 27.
- (3) The financial guarantee shall be maintained in favour of the Planning Authority until the completion of all decommissioning, restoration and aftercare obligations referred to in Conditions 13 part (w) and 27.
- (4) The value of the financial guarantee shall be reviewed by agreement between the Company and the Planning Authority or, failing agreement, determined (on application by either party) by a suitably qualified independent professional not less than every five years, and at the time of the approval of the detailed decommissioning, restoration and aftercare plan approved under Condition 27. The value of the financial guarantee shall be increased or decreased to take account of any variation in costs of compliance with decommissioning, restoration and aftercare obligations referred to in Conditions 13 part (w) and 27 and best practice prevailing at the time of each review.

Reason: to ensure that there are sufficient funds to secure performance of the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare conditions attached to this deemed planning permission in the event of default by the Company.

29. Redundant Turbines

In the event that any wind turbine installed and commissioned fails to produce electricity on a commercial basis to the public network for a continuous period of 12 months, then unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority, after consultation with the Scottish Ministers, such wind turbine will be deemed to have ceased to be required. If deemed to have ceased to be required, the wind turbine and its ancillary equipment will be dismantled and removed from the site within the following 12 month period, and the ground reinstated to the specification and satisfaction of the Planning Authority after consultation with the Scottish Ministers.

Reason: To ensure that any redundant wind turbine is removed from Site, in the interests of safety, amenity and environmental protection.

30. Site Inspection Strategy

- (1) Prior to the Date of Final Commissioning, the Company shall submit an outline Site Inspection Strategy ("Outline SIS") for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The Outline SIS shall set out a strategy for the provision of site inspections and accompanying Site Inspection Reports ("SIRs") to be carried out at 25 years of operation from the Date of Final Commissioning and every five years thereafter.
- (2) No later than 24 years after the Date of Final Commissioning, the Company shall submit a final detailed Site Inspection Strategy ("Final SIS"), based on the principles of the approved Outline SIS for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The Final SIS shall set out updated details for the provision of site inspections and accompanying SIRs, in accordance with relevant guidance at that time, to be carried out at 25 years of operation from the Date of Final Commissioning and every five years thereafter.
- (3) At least one month in advance of submitting each Site Inspection Report to the Planning Authority, the scope of the Site Inspection Report shall be agreed with the Planning Authority.
- (4) The SIRs shall include, but not be limited to:
 - (a) Details to demonstrate that the infrastructure components of the Development are still operating in accordance with Condition 8 and Condition 31; and
 - (b) An engineering report which details the condition of tracks, turbine foundations and the wind turbines and sets out the requirements and the programme for the implementation for any remedial measures which may be required.
- (5) The SIS and each Site Inspection Report shall be implemented in full unless otherwise agreed in advance in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the Development is being monitored at regular intervals throughout after the first 25 years of operation.

31. Local Employment Scheme

Prior to the Commencement of Development, a Local Employment Scheme for the construction and operation of the development shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by The Highland Council. The submitted Scheme shall make reference to the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) (August 2023) and Supplementary Environmental Information Report (SEIR) (April 2025). The Scheme shall include the following:

- a) details of how the staff/employment opportunities at the development will be advertised and how liaison with the Council and other local bodies will take

place in relation to maximising the access of the local workforce to information about employment opportunities;

- b) details of how sustainable training opportunities will be provided for those recruited to fulfil staff/employment requirements including the provision of apprenticeships or an agreed alternative;
- c) a procedure setting out criteria for employment, and for matching of candidates to the vacancies;
- d) measures to be taken to offer and provide college and/or work placement opportunities at the development to students within the locality;
- e) details of the promotion of the Local Employment Scheme and liaison with contractors engaged in the construction of the development to ensure that they also apply the Local Employment Scheme so far as practicable having due regard to the need and availability for specialist skills and trades and the programme for constructing the development;
- f) a procedure for monitoring the Local Employment Scheme and reporting the results of such monitoring to The Highland Council; and
- g) a timetable for the implementation of the Local Employment Scheme.

Thereafter, the development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: In order to ensure compliance with NPF4 Policy 11c) and to maximise the local socioeconomic benefits of the development to the wider local community. To make provision for publicity and details relating to any local employment opportunities.

32. Community Liaison Group

No development or Site Enabling Works shall commence unless and until a Community Liaison Plan has been approved in writing by the Planning Authority after consultation with the relevant local community councils. The community Liaison Plan shall include the arrangements for establishing a Community Liaison Group to act as a vehicle for the community to be kept informed of project progress by the Company. The terms and condition of these arrangements must include that the Community Liaison Group will have timely dialogue in advance on the provision of all transport-related mitigation measures and keep under review the timing of the delivery of turbine components. The terms and conditions shall detail the continuation of the Community Liaison Group until all construction and reinstatement works associated with the wind farm have been completed and the development is fully operational. The approved Community Liaison Plan shall be implemented in full.

Reason: To assist with the provision of mitigation measures to minimise potential hazards to road users including pedestrians, travelling on the road networks.

33. Planning Monitoring Officer

- (1) There shall be no Commencement of Development until the terms of appointment by the Company of an independent and suitably qualified consultant as Planning Monitoring Officer (“PMO”) have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The terms of appointment shall:
 - (a) impose a duty to monitor compliance with the terms of the deemed planning permission and the conditions attached to it;
 - (b) require the PMO to submit a quarterly report to the Planning Authority summarising works undertaken on site, matters of compliance or otherwise with the terms of the deemed planning permission and conditions attached to it, alongside a summary of the incidents recorded and reported by the ECoW; and
 - (c) require the PMO to report to the Planning Authority any incidences of non-compliance with the terms of the deemed planning permission and conditions attached to it at the earliest practical opportunity, and no later than 10 working days following the incidence of non-compliance.
- (2) The PMO shall be appointed on the approved terms throughout the period from Commencement of Development to completion of construction works and post-construction site reinstatement works.
- (3) Prior to the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases of the Development or the expiration of the operational period of the consent (whichever is the earlier), details of the terms of appointment of a and suitably qualified consultant as PMO by the Company throughout the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases of the Development shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the Planning Authority.
- (4) the PMO shall be appointed on the terms approved under part (3) throughout the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases of the Development.

Reason: To enable the development to be suitably monitored to ensure compliance with the permission and the conditions attached to it.

REASON FOR DECISION

All relevant matters have been taken into account when appraising this application. It is considered that the proposal accords with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan and is acceptable in terms of all other applicable material considerations.

REASONED CONCLUSION

The Highland Council is in agreement with the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Supplementary Environmental Information that: Balmeanach Wind Farm comprising up to 9 wind turbines with a maximum blade tip height of 149.9m, substation

compound including control building, access tracks, temporary borrow pits and construction compound, and ancillary infrastructure is unlikely to give rise to any new or other significant adverse impact on the environment. The exceptions being the potential to give rise to significant adverse landscape effects on the character of parts of the Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Skye and Lochalsh and Stepped Moorland LCTs and on the wider seascape character of Loch Bracadale, on the ‘variety, intimacy and intricacy of the coastal seascape’ attribute of the ‘Dynamic Coastline’ SQ of North West Skye, and significant visual impacts for residential, recreational, and road receptors at six viewpoints, four of which are within 7.5km VPs 2 (Edinbane Top Road), 4 (Roag) for residents, 6 (B884 near Lonmore), and 7 (Minor Road to Greshornish), all of which lie within 7.5km, and an additional two viewpoints VP3 (A863 Road) and VP12 (Fiskavig), the latter being 11.39km from the nearest turbine, as well as potential significant adverse impacts on peatland habitats including blanket bog, along with golden and white-tailed eagles due to a combination of factors including habitat loss / disturbance and collision risk. These effects would however be sufficiently localised and would be mitigated to an acceptable degree. The Council has incorporated the requirement for a schedule of environmental commitments within conditions 13 of this permission. Monitoring of construction has been secured through Conditions 35 of this permission.

INFORMATIVES

Initiation and Completion Notices

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) requires all developers to submit notices to the Planning Authority prior to, and upon completion of, development. These are in addition to any other similar requirements (such as Building Warrant completion notices) and failure to comply represents a breach of planning control and may result in formal enforcement action.

1. The developer must submit a Notice of Initiation of Development in accordance with Section 27A of the Act to the Planning Authority prior to work commencing on site.
2. On completion of the development, the developer must submit a Notice of Completion in accordance with Section 27B of the Act to the Planning Authority.

Copies of the notices referred to are attached to this decision notice for your convenience.

Flood Risk

It is important to note that the granting of planning permission does not imply there is an unconditional absence of flood risk relating to (or emanating from) the application site. As per Scottish Planning Policy (paragraph 259), planning permission does not remove the liability position of developers or owners in relation to flood risk.

Scottish Water

You are advised that a supply and connection to Scottish Water infrastructure is dependent on sufficient spare capacity at the time of the application for connection to Scottish Water. The granting of planning permission does not guarantee a connection. Any enquiries with regards to sewerage connection and/or water supply should be directed to Scottish Water on 0845 601 8855.

Local Roads Authority Consent

In addition to planning permission, you may require one or more separate consents (such as road construction consent, dropped kerb consent, a road openings permit, occupation of the road permit etc.) from the Area Roads Team prior to work commencing. These consents may require additional work and/or introduce additional specifications and you are therefore advised to contact your local Area Roads office for further guidance at the earliest opportunity.

Failure to comply with access, parking and drainage infrastructure requirements may endanger road users, affect the safety and free-flow of traffic and is likely to result in enforcement action being taken against you under both the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.

Further information on the Council's roads standards can be found at:
<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/roadsandtransport>

Application forms and guidance notes for access-related consents can be downloaded from:
http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20005/roads_and_pavements/101/permits_for_working_on_public_roads/2

Trunk Roads Authority Consent

The granting of planning consent does not carry with it the right to carry out works within the trunk road boundary and that permission must be granted by Transport Scotland Roads Directorate.

Where any works are required on the trunk road, contact details are provided on Transport Scotland's response to the planning authority which is available on the Council's planning portal.

Trunk Road modification works shall, in all respects, comply with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and the Specification for Highway Works published by HMSO. The developer shall issue a certificate to that effect, signed by the design organisation.

Trunk Road modifications shall, in all respects, be designed and constructed to arrangements that comply with the Disability Discrimination Act: Good Practice Guide for Roads published by Transport Scotland. The developer shall provide written confirmation of this, signed by the design organisation.

The road works which are required due to the above Conditions will require a Road Safety Audit as specified by the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

Any trunk road works will necessitate a Minute of Agreement with the Trunk Roads Authority prior to commencement.

Transport Scotland Contact Details:-

Roads - Development Management

Transport Scotland, 2nd Floor, George House, 36 North Hanover St, Glasgow G1 2AD

Telephone Number: 0141 272 7100

e-mail: development_management@transport.gov.scot

Mud and Debris on Road

Please note that it is an offence under Section 95 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 to allow mud or any other material to be deposited, and thereafter remain, on a public road from any vehicle or development site. You must, therefore, put in place a strategy for dealing with any material deposited on the public road network and maintain this until development is complete.

Construction Hours and Noise-Generating Activities

You are advised that construction work associated with the approved development (incl. the loading/unloading of delivery vehicles, plant or other machinery), for which noise is audible at the boundary of the application site, should not normally take place outwith the hours of 08:00 and 19:00 Monday to Friday, 08:00 and 13:00 on Saturdays or at any time on a Sunday or Bank Holiday in Scotland, as prescribed in Schedule 1 of the Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971 (as amended).

Work falling outwith these hours which gives rise to amenity concerns, or noise at any time which exceeds acceptable levels, may result in the service of a notice under Section 60 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 (as amended). Breaching a Section 60 notice constitutes an offence and is likely to result in court action.

If you wish formal consent to work at specific times or on specific days, you may apply to the Council's Environmental Health Officer under Section 61 of the 1974 Act. Any such application should be submitted after you have obtained your Building Warrant, if required, and will be considered on its merits. Any decision taken will reflect the nature of the development, the site's location and the proximity of noise sensitive premises. Please contact env.health@highland.gov.uk for more information.

Protected Species – Halting of Work

You are advised that work on site must stop immediately, and NatureScot must be contacted, if evidence of any protected species or nesting/breeding sites, not previously detected during the course of the application and provided for in this permission, are found on site. For the avoidance of doubt, it is an offence to deliberately or recklessly kill, injure or disturb protected species or to damage or destroy the breeding site of a protected species. These sites are protected even if the animal is not there at the time of discovery. Further information regarding protected species and developer responsibilities is available from NatureScot: <https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/protected-areas-and-species/protected-species>

Protected Species - Ground Nesting Birds

Construction/demolition works have the potential to disturb nesting birds or damage their nest sites, and as such, checks for ground nesting birds should be made prior to the commencement of development if this coincides with the main bird breeding season (April - July inclusive). All wild bird nests are protected from damage, destruction, interference and obstruction under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Some birds (listed on schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act) have heightened protection where it is also an offence to disturb these birds while they are in or around the nest.

Signature: Dafydd Jones

Designation: Area Planning Manager – North

Author: Mark Fitzpatrick

Co-author: Rohan Sinha (Landscape and Visual)

Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file.

Relevant Plans: Plan 1 - Location Plan - SEI Figure 1 Site Location

Plan 2 - Site Layout Plan - SEI Figure 3.1a

Plan 3 - Typical Turbine Elevation - EIA Figure 3.3

Appendix 1 – Letters of Representation

Appendix 2 - Cumulative Wind Farm Developments

Appendix 3 - Development Plan and Other Material Policy Considerations

Appendix 4 - Compliance with the Development Plan / Other Material Policy Considerations

Appendix 5 - LVIA Methodology

Appendix 6 - Viewpoint Visual Assessment Appraisal (operational only)

Appendix 7 - Assessment against Landscape and Visual Assessment Criteria contained within Section 4 of the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance

Appendix 1 – Letters of Representation

OBJECTORS

Dr Jo Chapman Campbell	3 Church Place, Kirkcudbright , DG6 4AF	13/07/25
Cherry Alexander	Burn Song, Kincardine, Ardgay, IV24 3DJ,	13/07/25
Pauline Maddocks	Lochside, Burravoe, Yell, Shetland, ZE29BA,	13/07/25
Sue Weeks	1 Balmeanach, Glenhinnisdal, Portree, IV51 9UX,	13/07/25
Ian Huxham	19 Roag, Dunvegan, IV558ZA	11/07/25
Martin Fox		13/07/25
Judith Wallace	The Cedars, 10 Sconser, Isle Of Skye, IV48 8TD,	13/07/25
Melissa Macdougall	5 Limepark Terrace, Broadford, Isle Of Skye, IV49 9AF,	14/07/25
Phil Munro	30 Old Kyle Farm Road, Kyleakin, Isle Of Skye, IV41 8PR,	29/07/25
Dan Bailey	The Round House, 5 Kinellan, Strathpeffer, IV14 9ET,	29/07/25
Angela Funk	Woodside, Echt, Westhill, AB32 7AJ	29/07/25
Mrs Rachael Tracy	Sturrock Cottage, Balmeanach, Struan, Isle Of Skye, IV56 8FH	03/07/25
Colin McAlpine	Boisdale, 4 - 5 Uigshadder, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9LN,	08/07/25
Mrs Elspeth Calder	Hillton, Culrain, Ardgay, IV24 3DW	29/07/25
Karina Nicolson	New House Ardbeg, Heights Of Brae, Strathpeffer, IV14 9AF,	29/07/25
Margaret Bale	Old Schoolhouse, Alness, IV17 0XJ,	29/07/25
Bettine Scott	Eabost House, 5 Eabost, Struan, Isle Of Skye, IV56 8FE,	29/07/25
Lindsay Thatcher	Tor-Na-Sithe, Sallachy, Dornie, Kyle, IV40 8DZ,	29/07/25
Joy MacKenna	Carnban, 3 Camus An Arbhair, Plockton, IV52 8TS,	29/07/25
Mr Ian And Marcella Grant And Fitzgerald	An Sgaileag, Half Of 11, Carbost, Isle Of Skye, IV47 8SR	29/07/25
Mr And Mrs Martin Farquhar	Rowan Croft, Ellishadder, Culnacnock, Portree, IV51 9JE,	10/07/25

Chris Watkiss	Redwood House, Greshornish, Edinbane, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9PN,	30/07/25
Diane Airey	Kildonan, IV51 9PU	30/07/25
Jon Howarth	An Caorann, 11 Flashadder, Edinbane, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9PT,	30/07/25
Alison MacDonald	5 Suladale, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9PA,	30/07/25
Paul Ryder	15 Colbost, Dunvegan, IV55 8ZT	08/07/25
Angus Jack	10 Manse Street, Tain, IV19 1AN,	09/07/25
Paul Mounsey	Mile End House, Balmeanach, Glenhinnisdal, Portree, IV51 9UX,	09/07/25
Neil Roberts	17, Borve, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9PE	09/07/25
Norman & Christina Chisholm	The Glen, Kindeace, Invergordon, IV18 0LL,	30/07/25
Gordon Low	Tigh Na Creagadh, Clachan, Staffin, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9JX,	30/07/25
Deborah Roberts	Tigh Ard, 17 - 18 Borve, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9PE,	30/07/25
Gemma MacFadyen	157/4 Morningside Road, Edinburgh, EH10 4AX	30/07/25
Mrs Sylvia Meyer	Àite Subhach, 6 Altavid, Dunvegan, IV55 8ZF	28/07/25
Mrs Donna Peacock	5 Allarburn Park, Kiltarility, Beauly, IV4 7HD	13/07/25
Ruth Stevenson	Taigh Tearlach, 1 Old Kyle Farm Road, Kyleakin, Isle Of Skye, IV41 8PR,	28/07/25
Mr Ruaraidh Kieran	Pabay, Achachork, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9HT	07/07/25
Robert Jopling	Taigh Fiadh, Ose, Struan,, Isle Of Skye, IV56 8FJ,	18/07/25
Sadie-Michaela Harris	The Cottage, Strathgarve Mains, Garve, IV23 2PU	18/07/25
Pam Ryder	Chameleon, 15 Colbost, Dunvegan, Isle Of Skye, IV55 8ZT,	20/07/25
Melanie Auchterlonie	Kilvian Lodge, 210 Doll, Brora, KW9 6NN,	20/07/25
Diane N J Hampson	Taigh Na Mara, 5A Upper Milovaig, Glendale, Isle Of Skye, IV55 8WY,	20/07/25
R Woodhouse	34 Lower Breakish, Breakish, Isle Of Skye, Isle Of Skye, IV42 8QA,	20/07/25
Eilidh & Fiona Towers	6 Carbostmore, Carbost, Isle Of Skye, IV47 8ST,	20/07/25

Roderick And Jacquie Wathen	Mary Ann's Cottage, Talisker, Carbost, Isle Of Skye, IV47 8SF,	20/07/25
Margaret Govier	7 Lower Breakish, Breakish, Isle Of Skye, Isle Of Skye, IV42 8QA,	21/07/25
Beads At		07/07/25
Mr Nick Ferguson	40 Lower Breakish, Breakish, Isle Of Skye, IV42 8QA	22/07/25
Jeannie Wallis	Taigh Chuileann, Kiltarility, Beauly, IV4 7HG,	17/07/25
Ronan Martin	12 Upper Breakish, Isle Of Skye, IV42 8PY	10/07/25
Jennifer Painting	Sealladh Na Mara, 29 Lower Breakish, Isle Of Skye, IV42 8QA,	12/07/25
Bob Paul	23 Upper Edinbane, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9PR,	31/07/25
Colin King	Bracadale Views, 6 Balgowan, Struan, Isle Of Skye, IV56 8FA,	13/07/25
Steven Douglas	19 Cherrybrook Drive, Penkridge, ST19 5EA	08/07/25
Imogen And Alexander Macdonald	Prabost Cottage, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9PQ,	31/07/25
Carrie MacKenzie	Kilmuir, Dunvegan, Isle Of Skye	28/07/25
Charles Mansfield	Struan , Isle Of Skye	28/07/25
Sheena MacLeod	Dunvegan, Isle Of Skye	28/07/25
Dr Susan Carpenter	ESB LLB , Edinburgh	28/07/25
Mary Young	32 Birch Road, Killearn, Glasgow G63 9SQ,	29/07/25
Douglas Stewart	Hazyview, Lower Breakish, Breakish, Isle Of Skye, IV42 8QA,	29/07/25
Miss Aileen Nicolson	Ar Dachaидh Beag, Ord, Teangue, Isle Of Skye, IV44 8RN	14/07/25
Euan Kieran	Tarradale Place, Inverness, IV2 6FZ	16/07/25
Jacqueline Ross	Hazeldean, 5 Colbost, Dunvegan, IV55 8ZT	16/07/25
Martyn Ayre	Beinn Li, Broadford, Isle Of Skye, IV49 9AB,	16/07/25
Helena Forsyth		14/07/25
Maria Pelletta	19 Borreraig, Dunvegan, Isle Of Skye, IV55 9ZY	
Mr & Mrs N Ward	Darach Brae, Beauly, IV4 7AE	
Mr Peter Dunn	Glencairn, 21 Ruisaurie, Beauly, IV4 7EY,	
Patricia Petri-Clark	Tigh Sjefke, Armadale, Isle Of Skye, IV45 8RS	

Martin & Rachael Tracy	Sturrock Cottage, 4 Balmeanach, Struan, Isle Of Skye, IV56 8FH	
John Biscoe	Le Chambon, 63480 Bertignat, France	
Kirsty Yoxon	Half Of 1 Brogaig, Staffin, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9JY	
Robert & Lily Sloan	Robtree Cottage, Edinbane, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9PW	
Paul Kieran	Station House, Station Road, Kyle, IV40 8AH,	
Fiona Carter	Piecemeal Cottage, Killimster, Wick, KW1 4RX,	
Alison Ellerington	Glenssor, Latheron, KW5 6DU,	
Elaine Hodgson	Bothan Learag, 8 Cabrich, Kirkhill, Inverness, IV5 7PJ,	
Mr Graeme Gunn		
Hannah Fox		
Andrew D, Mary M And Iseabail Strachan	6 Ashaig, Breakish, Isle Of Skye, IV42 8PZ,	30/07/25
Mr And Mrs John And Jackie McKay	Hebron House, Flashadder, Edinbane, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9PT,	31/07/25
Layla Sawford	13 MacFarlane Buildings, Cruachan Place, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9AF,	
Lorraine Ballantine	8 Callanish, Isle Of Lewis, HS2 9DY	
Mr Ludwig Appeltans	Rubha Phoil, Armadale, Ardvasar, Isle Of Skye, IV45 8RS,	
Mr Mark Smith	21 South Shawbost, Isle Of Lewis, Western Isles, HS2 9BJ	
Natalie Zitzmann		
Nicky Spinks	Mark Farm, Pinwherry, Girvan, South Ayrshire, KA26 0SP	
Sarah Topping	20 Lime Park, Broadford, Isle Of Skye, IV49 9AG,	
Fiona Towers	Coorie Doon, 6 Carbostmore, Carbost, Isle Of Skye, IV47 8ST,	07/07/25
Leslie Cannon	2 Brookside, Clachamish, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9NY,	
Mr Alasdair Galbraith	52 Aird Bernisdale, Bernisdale, Skeabost Bridge, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9NU,	
Mrs Helen Smith	Westraven, Beechwood, Strathpeffer, IV14 9AB,	

Geoff & Cathy Pritchard	Hollywell, 3 Balmeanach, Struan, Isle Of Skye, IV56 8FH,	
Kyle Sterry	Ruadh, Balmeanach, Struan, Isle Of Skye, IV56 8FH,	
Mr Morten Hansen	Niflheim, Portnalong, Carbost, Isle Of Skye, IV47 8SL,	
Peter Borthwick	53 South Shawbost, Isle Of Lewis	
Sandra MacDonald	Glenfalloch, 4 Torvaig, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9HU	
Susan Merrick		
Fiona Murdoch	Luskentyre, 21 Earlish, Portree, IV51 9XL,	24/06/25
Mrs Lindsey Brooke	12A Totescore, Portree, IV51 9YW,	24/06/25
Dr Frances Wilkins	Taigh Na H-Airigh, 12 Upper Breakish, Breakish, Isle Of Skye, IV42 8PY,	24/06/25
Fiona MacLeod	Burnside Cottage, Sconser, Isle Of Skye, IV48 8TD,	24/06/25
Helen Roberts	Cuckoo House, 9B Kildonan, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9PU,	24/06/25
Julia O'Connell	Spindrift, Balmeanach, Struan, Isle Of Skye, IV56 8FH,	24/06/25
Karen Parker	Lochshore House, Kildonan, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9PU,	24/06/25
Katherine Piotrowski	Kilcamb, 8 Blackhill, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9PW,	24/06/25
Sue Tate	21 Portnalong, Carbost, Isle Of Skye, IV47 8SL,	24/06/25
Tim Smith	Lluest Wen, Glan Yr Afon, Corwen, LL21 0HD	24/06/25
Stewart Brown	3 Birch Drive, Maryburgh, Dingwall, IV7 8ES,	24/06/25
Anonymous		24/06/25
Sarah Williams	The Larch House, Vatten, Dunvegan, Isle Of Skye, IV55 8ZE,	20/06/25
Julia Thomas	Spindrift, Balmeanach, Struan, Skye, IV56 8FH	20/06/25
Nick Hodgetts	Cuillin Views, 15 Earlish, Portree, IV51 9XL,	20/06/25
Christopher & Angela Kirker	Tayinloan Lodge, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9NY	20/06/25
David And Alison Dean	Taigh Daibhidh, Four And A Half Kilbride, Broadford, Isle Of Skye, IV49 9AT,	20/06/25

Linda Ridsdill Smith	5 Upper Edinbaine, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9PR	20/06/25
Mr & Mrs Geoff & Peggy Semler	11 Ullinish, Struan, Isle Of Skye, IV56 8FD,	20/06/25
Sheana Roberts	Ostaig Beag, Teangue, Isle Of Skye, IV44 8RQ,	30/08/25
C McClelland		
Trevor & Elaine Procter	Meikle Mochrum, Castle Douglas, DG7 3PD	29/07/25
Janet Addie	21 Route De Verteuil, 16460, France	
Mr & Mrs Marcel & Sylvia Meyer	Aite Subhach, 6 Altvoid, Dunvegan, Isle Of Skye, IV55 8ZF,	
Mrs Janet McNaughton	5 Geshader, Uig, Isle Of Lewis, H2W 9HL	
Stephen Wright	Strathord, 51 Kilmuir, Dunvegan, Isle Of Skye, IV55 8GT,	
Anonymous		
Anonymous	6 Roag, Dunvegan, Isle Of Skye, IV55 8ZA,	
David Smith	Manor House, Midmar, Inverurie, AB51 7LX	
John M K Galloway	Tulach Ard, Drumbuie, Kyle, IV40 8BD,	
Kevin And Rebecca Booth And Watts	14 Husabost, Totaig, Dunvegan, Isle Of Skye, IV55 8ZU,	03/07/25
Mrs Anne Trimmer	Morven, 5 Altvoid, Dunvegan, Isle Of Skye, IV55 8ZF,	
Neil Burrows	5 Borrve, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9PE,	
Richard Forster	13 Torrin, Isle Of Skye, IV49 9BA,	
Ruth Whittaker	48 Gartymore, Helmsdale, KW8 6HJ,	
Harry Bell	Hazelbank, 16 Lochbay, Waternish, Isle Of Skye, IV55 8GD,	
Keith Ranicar	11 Roag, Dunvegan, Isle Of Skye, IV55 8ZA,	
Mrs Mary Kilmister	East Half Of 16, Linicro, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9YN,	
Steve Twaddle	Colgrain, Edinbane, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9PW,	
Neil & Bed Halon	Borrve Cottage, Arnisort, Edinbane, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9PS,	
Carole Inglis	Lochview House, Harlosh, Isle Of Skye, IV55 8ZH	
Debora Viola	Ashaig, 3 Kildonan, Edinbane, Portree, IV51 9PU	

Mr And Mrs Andrew And Emma Whatson	Nethallan, 12 Lower Breakish, Isle Of Skye, IV42 8QA	22/07/25
Philip Kirkby	Kilchoan Cottage, Dunvegan, Isle Of Skye, IV55 8WA	
Duncan And Susan MacInnes	Tigh Eachainn, 8 Upper Breakish, Breakish, Isle Of Skye, IV42 9PY	22/07/25
Vivienne Boyd	Heatherlea, Kyleakin, Isle Of Skye, IV41 8PQ,	
John Wood	Bridge Cottage, Poolewe, Achnasheen, IV22 2JU,	
Phil Bolger	2 Waterloo, Breakish, Isle Of Skye, IV42 8QE,	
Richard Whatley	Shepherd's Cottage, Greshornish, Edinbane, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9PN,	
Ruaraidh Kieran	Pabay, Achachork, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9HT,	20/06/25
Andrew & Jules Robinson & Kirkby	Upper Glen, Greshornish, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9PN	20/06/25
Ann Nicolson		20/06/25
Denise Davis	Taigh Dubh, Kiltarilty, Beauly, IV47 7JL	20/06/25
Esther Juliet. Geordie And Charles Macdonald	Tote House, Skeabost Bridge, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9PQ	20/06/25
Kevin & Alison Ashmore	Totaig House, 23 Colbost, Dunvegan, Isle Of Skye, IV55 8ZT,	20/06/25
Mr & Mrs Kurt & Sarah Ballstadt	8 Priors Lane, Hinton Waldrist, Faringdon, Oxon, SN7 8RX	20/06/25
Mr Iain Sanders	30 Urquhart Place, Portree, IV51 9HJ	20/06/25
Keith & Sami McBride	Heather Brae, Linicro, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9YN	20/06/25
Mr Robert McMillan	8 Scullamus Moss, Breakish, Isle Of Skye, IV42 8QB	20/06/25
Ellen Ritter	Clach Mhor, Dalnacroich, Strathconon, Muir Of Ord, IV6 7QQ,	20/06/25
Martin And Diane Airey	Hentilagged, 1 Kildonan, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9PU,	20/06/25
Karen Davies	3 Aligro, Dunvegan, Isle Of Skye, IV55 8ZQ,	20/06/25
Mr Nick Ferguson	40 Lower Breakish, Breakish, Isle Of Skye, IV42 8QA	20/06/25
Paul Smith	1 Brookside, Clachamish, Portree, IV51 9NY	20/06/25

Nick And Yvonne Sands And Gerrard	Ceathru Mhor, 15 Earlish, Portree, IV51 9XL,	20/06/25
Carole Couper	Froylehurst, The Friars, Jedburgh, TD8 6BN	20/06/25
Rev Jo Royle	13 Suisnish Place, Broadford, Isle Of Skye, IV49 9BZ,	20/06/25
Lauren Jones	Duncreggan, 16 Lower Breakish, Breakish, Isle Of Skye, IV42 8QA,	20/06/25
Stewart Brown	36 East Kip Walk, Murieston, EH54 9FY	
Teresa McGhie	Camus Edge, Camus Lusta, Waternish, IV55 8GA	
Lynn Drummond	Loch Eyre House, Kensaleyre, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9XE,	
Mr Colin Ewing	Creagan Cottage, 8 Vatten, Dunvegan, Isle Of Skye, IV55 8ZE,	
Emma Fraser	Shenavall, Rhenetra, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9XF,	
J L Waimisley	Clar Inis, Ardmore, Dunvegan, Isle Of Skye, IV55 8ZJ,	
Sam & Lynn Richards		
Mr And Mrs Anthony And Patricia Scoffield	Avalon, 15 Harrapool, Broadford, Isle Of Skye, IV49 9AH,	
Monika Meier	16 Combrun, 87210, Oradour Saint Genest	
Mr Tom Armstrong	24 Belvidere Street, Aberdeen, AB25 2QS	
Gordon Hunter		
Louise Kerr	4 Knott Road, Knott, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9NZ,	
Richard Neath	Hartaval, 9C Kildonan, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9PU,	
RSPB Scotland	Etive House, Beechwood Park, Inverness, IV2 3BW,	24/06/25
Thor And Lena Klein And Vurma	Half Of 8 Carbostmore, Carbost, Isle Of Skye, IV47 8ST	24/06/25
Marie Khalil	16 Portnalong, Carbost, Isle Of Skye, IV47 8SL,	24/06/25
Mr Matthew O'Connell		24/06/25
Ronan Martin		24/06/25
Malcolm And Derith Taberner	5 Vatten, Dunvegan, Isle Of Skye, IV55 8ZE,	24/06/25

Lena Vurma	Caravan , Half Of 8 Carbostmore, Carbost, Isle Of Skye, IV47 8ST,	24/06/25
Keith Davies	Dormans, Balmeanach, Struan, Isle Of Skye, IV56 8FH,	24/06/25

SUPPORTERS

Alasdair Beaton	The Bungalow, 4 Balmeanach, Struan, Isle Of Skye, IV56 8FH,	24/06/25
Donald R & Fiona & Murdo & H Beaton	An Cairidh, Balmeanach, Struan, Isle Of Skye, IV56 8FJ,	24/06/25
Mr Donald MacDonald	Strathglas, 1 Portree House Gardens, Portree, Isle Of Skye, IV51 9LD,	24/06/25
Murdo Macphie	Doune, Balmeanach, Struan, Isle Of Skye, IV56 8FH,	24/06/25
Ms Heather Feachnie	3 Feorlig, Dunvegan, Isle Of Skye, IV55 8ZL,	24/06/25
Mr Alexander Ross	4 Caroy, Struan, Isle Of Skye, IV56 8FQ,	24/06/25
Ms Pamela Ann MacLennan	Braeburn, 2 Balmeanach, Struan, Isle Of Skye, IV56 8FH,	24/06/25

REPRESENTATIONS

Struan Community Council	3 Coillore, Struan, Isle Of Skye, IV56 8FX,	24/06/25
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Appendix 2 - Cumulative Wind Farm Developments

Windfarm	No Turbines	Blade Tip Height (m)	Status	Distance from nearest proposed development turbine (km)
Ben Aketil	12	100m	Operational	1.3km west
Edinbane	18	100m	Operational	0.5km east
Beinn Mheadhonach	4	120m	Consented	9km southeast
Ben Sca and extension	9	135m – 149.9m	Consented	0.7km northwest
Glen Ullinish	11	149.9m	Consented	2.8km southeast
Glen Ullinish II	33 (as amended)	200m	Application	1.5km east
Waternish	15	200m	Withdrawn	5.8km northwest
Ben Aketil Repower and Extension	9	200m	Application	1.3km west
Edinbane Repower and Extension	19	200m	Withdrawn	0.5km east
Ben Sca Redesign	8	149.9m	Application	0.7km northwest
Beinn Mheadhonach Redesign 23/05638/FUL	5	149.9m	Application	9km southeast
Breakish	20	180	Scoping	42.6km southwest

Appendix 3 – Development Plan and Other Material Policy Considerations

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

A3.1 The Development Plan comprises National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), the adopted Highland-wide Local Development Plan 2012 (HwLDP), the adopted West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan 2019 (WestPlan) and all statutorily adopted supplementary guidance, including the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG).

National Planning Framework 4 (2023)

A3.2 The NPF4 policies of most relevance to this proposal include:

National Development 3 (NAD3) - Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure

1 - Tackling the climate and nature crisis.

2 - Climate mitigation and adaptation

3 - Biodiversity

4 - Natural places

5 - Soils

6 - Forestry, Woodland and Trees

7 - Historic assets and places

11 - Energy

13 - Sustainable transport

18 - Infrastructure First

22 - Flood risk and water management

23 - Health and safety

25 - Community wealth benefits

33 - Minerals

Highland Wide Local Development Plan 2012 (HwLDP)

A3.3 The HwLDP policies of most relevance to this proposal include:

28 - Sustainable Design

29 - Design Quality and Place-making

30 - Physical Constraints

31 - Developer Contributions

- 51 - Trees and Development
- 52 - Principle of Development in Woodland
- 53 - Minerals
- 55 - Peat and Soils
- 56 - Travel
- 57 - Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage
- 58 - Protected Species
- 59 - Other important Species
- 60 - Other Importance Habitats
- 61 - Landscape
- 62 - Geodiversity
- 63 - Water Environment
- 64 - Flood Risk
- 66 - Surface Water Drainage
- 67 - Renewable Energy Developments
- 72 - Pollution
- 73 - Air Quality
- 74 - Green Networks
- 77 - Public Access
- 78 - Long Distance Routes

**The West Highlands and Islands Local Development Plan ('WestPlan')
(adopted 2019)**

A3.4 Dunvegan located to the northwest of the site is designed a 'main settlement' by WestPlan. It is identified as a key service centre for northwest Skye. The Plan aims to 'safeguard, enhance and promote the natural and built heritage of the area'. The majority of the site is designated 'fragile' by WestPlan. This is defined as 'areas which are in decline or in danger of becoming so as a consequence of remoteness and socioeconomic factors, such as population loss, erosion of services and facilities and lack of employment opportunities. In some areas the natural heritage is a dominant influence on appropriate land management'. The Plan focuses on increasing employment opportunities in these areas including support for tourism expansion where it would better utilise the area's outstanding natural and cultural heritage.

Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance, Nov 2016 (OWESG)

A3.5 The Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG) provides additional guidance on the principles set out in HwLDP Policy 67 for renewable energy developments. The Guidance sets out the Council's agreed position on onshore wind energy matters, and, although reflective of Scottish Planning Policy at the time of its adoption prior to the adoption of NPF4, the document remains an extant part of the Development Plan and is therefore a material consideration in the determination of onshore wind energy planning applications. Nevertheless, the Spatial Framework included in the document is no longer relevant to the assessment of applications as in effect, the policies of NPF4, specifically Policy 11 Energy, removes Group 2 Areas of significant protection from consideration by effectively making all land in Scotland either Group 1 Areas where wind farms will not be acceptable, or Group 3, Areas with potential for wind farm development.

Other Highland Council Supplementary Guidance

A3.6

- Biodiversity Enhancement Planning Guidance (May 2024)
- Construction Environmental Management Process for Large Scale Projects (August 2010)
- Developer Contributions (Mar 2018)
- Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment (Jan 2013)
- The Flow Country Planning Position Statement 2 (June 2025)
- Green Networks (Jan 2013)
- Highland Historic Environment Strategy (Jan 2013)
- Highland's Statutorily Protected Species (Mar 2013)
- Highland Renewable Energy Strategy and Planning Guidelines (May 2006)
- Physical Constraints (Mar 2013)
- Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments (May 2013)
- Special Landscape Area Citations (Jun 2011)
- Sustainable Design Guide (Jan 2013)
- Trees, woodland and development (Jan 2013)

OTHER MATERIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Emerging Highland Council Development Plan Documents and Planning Guidance

A3.7 The HwLDP is currently under review and is at main issues report stage. It is anticipated the proposed plan will be published following publication of secondary legislation post National Planning Framework 4.

A3.8 The Highland Council also has further advice on the delivery of major developments in several documents, which include the Construction Environmental Management Process for Large Scale Projects; and The Highland Council Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments.

Other National Guidance

A3.9 Onshore Wind Energy Policy Statement (2022)
Biodiversity Guidance (2025)
Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023)
Scottish Energy Strategy (2017)
2020 Route map for Renewable Energy (2011)
Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map, Scottish Government (2018)
Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape, SNH (2017)
Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas, Technical Guidance, NatureScot (2020)
Historic Environment Policy for Scotland, HES (2019)
PAN 1/2011 - Planning and Noise (2011)
PAN 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage (2008)
Circular 1/2017: Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (2017)

Appendix 4 - Compliance with the Development Plan / Other Planning Policy

Determining Issues

A4.1 Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 requires the application to be assessed against all policies of the Development Plan relevant to the application (unless material considerations indicate otherwise). The Development Plan comprises National Planning Framework 4 2024 (NPF4), the adopted West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan 2019 (WestPlan) all national and local policy guidance and all other material considerations.

National Planning Framework 4 (2023)

A4.2 NPF 4 forms part of the Development Plan and was adopted in February 2023. It comprises three parts:

- Part 1 – sets out an overarching spatial strategy for Scotland in the future. This includes spatial principles, national and regional spatial priorities, and action areas;
- Part 2 – sets out policies for the development and use of land to be applied in the preparation of local development plans; local place plans; masterplans and briefs; and for determining the range of planning consents. This part of the document should be taken as a whole in that all relevant policies should be applied to each application; and
- Part 3 – provides a series of annexes that give the rationale for the strategies and policies of NPF4, it outlines how the document should be used, and sets out how the Scottish Government will implement the strategies and policies.

A4.3 **Part 1 - Spatial Strategy** explains the unprecedented national challenges and need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to future impacts of climate change. It sets out that that Scotland's environment is a national asset which supports the nation's economy, identity, health and wellbeing and explains that choices need to be made on sustainable use of natural assets in a way which benefits communities. The spatial strategy reflects legislation in setting out decisions required in the long-term public interest. However, in doing so it is clear that the right choices about where development should be located need to be made to ensure clarity over the types of infrastructure provided and the assets that should be protected to ensure they continue to benefit future generations. The spatial priorities support the planning and delivery of sustainable places to reduce emissions, restore and better connect biodiversity; liveable places for better and healthier lives; and productive places where there is a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy.

A4.4 Onshore wind farms with a capacity exceeding 50MW would qualify are classified as of national development status under National Development 3. This development application provides a capacity of 45MW which means it is not classified as national development by NPF4. However, at the national level, NPF4 considers that strategic renewable electricity generation and transmission infrastructure will assist in the delivery of the Spatial Strategy and Spatial Priorities for the north of Scotland, and that Highland can continue to make a strong contribution toward meeting Scotland's ambition for net zero. Alongside these ambitions, the strategy for Highland aims to protect environmental assets as well as to stimulate investment in natural and engineered solutions to address climate change. This aim is not new and will clearly require a balancing exercise to be undertaken, which is reflected throughout NPF4.

A4.5 **Part 2 – Policies: NPF4 Policies 1, 2, and 3** now apply to all development proposals Scotland-wide, which means that significant weight must be given to the global climate and nature crises when considering all development proposals, as required by NPF4 Policy 1. To that end, development proposals must be sited and designed to minimise lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions as far as is practicably possible in accordance with NPF4 Policy 2, while contributing to the enhancement of biodiversity, as required by NPF4 Policy 3.

A4.6 Specific to this proposal, as well as the support in Policy 1 (significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crisis when considering development), Policy 11 of NPF4 supports all forms of proposals for renewable, low-carbon and zero emission technologies including wind farms.

A4.7 Complementing those policies is NPF4 Policy 4 Natural Places, which sets out that development proposals by virtue of type, location, or scale that have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment will not be supported. The policy goes on to clarify what that means for different designations. It sets out that proposals with likely significant effects on European sites (SACs or SPAs) require appropriate assessment, and that development proposals that will affect a National Park, NSA or SSSI 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.

A4.8 The proposed development does not form part of any statutory or non-statutory sites for nature conservation. It is not anticipated to have a significant negative impact on any national, regional or local sites designated for ecological resources including the Cuillins SPA (14km south) and Trotternish NSA (18km northeast).

A4.9 Similarly, sites designated in Development Plans for local nature conservation or Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) are protected in NPF4 Policy 4 unless the development will not result in significantly adverse effects on its qualities or its integrity, or these effects are clearly outweighed by social, environmental, or economic benefits of at least local importance. The proposed development is not anticipated to have a negative significant effect on Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA (12km northeast). However, it is predicted that there will be significant adverse effects on North West Skye SLA (4.7km west) and Greshornish SLA (5km north) however, these effects are within acceptable limits and would not undermine the integrity of the designations.

A4.10 The most significant policy change for Natural Places brought about by NPF Policy 4 is with regard Wild Land Areas, which states that renewable energy developments that support national targets will be supported in Wild Land Areas (WLA) and that buffer zones around WLAs will not be applied, so that effects of development out with WLAs will not be a significant consideration.

A4.11 There are no Wild Land Areas within the site, the nearest being WLA 22 Duirinish 11km to the west and the Cuillin WLA 18km to the south. The proposed development is predicted to have negligible impact on the qualities of these WLAs.

A4.12 Specific for energy developments, NPF4 Policy 11 states that the principle of all forms of renewable, low-carbon, and zero emission technologies is supported with the exception of wind farm proposals located in National Parks or National Scenic Areas. Policy 11 Part c) qualifies this position by stating that wind farms should only be supported where they maximise net economic impact, including local and community socioeconomic benefits such as employment, associated business, and supply chain opportunities. The policy goes on to state that while significant weight will be placed on the contribution of the proposal to renewable energy generation targets and on reduction of greenhouse gas emissions targets, the development's impacts, including cumulative impacts, must be suitably addressed and mitigated against. In this regard, The Highland Council has consistently given significant weight to a development's contribution to environmental targets prior to and post the adoption of NPF4.

A4.13 NPF4 Policy 11 Part e) sets out the additional project design and mitigation requirements for energy proposals. This includes a broad range of matters akin to those to be assessed under HwLDP Policy 67. This includes consideration of the landscape and visual impacts and advises that where impacts are localised and / or appropriate design mitigation has been applied such effects will generally be considered acceptable. Members will be aware that the concept of wind energy developments that have only localised impacts as being more likely to be acceptable is not new and is also reflected in previous planning decisions.

While the adopted NPF4 reflects a stronger presumption in favour of all national scale energy developments, judgment still requires to be applied at the project level to ensure proposals do not have unacceptable landscape and visual impacts even if the contribution to national renewable energy targets is considerable. The landscape and visual impacts of this proposal are considered to be within acceptable limits.

A4.14 It is considered that the threshold of the appropriate design mitigation policy test is reached.

A4.15 **Part 3: Annex B – National Developments Statements of Need.** National developments are significant developments of national importance. Annex B identifies national development which will support the delivery of the spatial strategy. Any project identified as national development is required to be considered at a project level to ensure all statutory tests are met. This project is not classified as National Development under Annex B Section 3.

Local Development Plan 2012 (HwLDP)

A4.16 The HwLDP identifies the site as of Local and Regional Importance under Policy 57: Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage. It states that 'all proposals will be assessed taking into account the level of importance and type of heritage features'. The principal HwLDP policy on which the application needs to be determined is Policy 67 - Renewable Energy. HwLDP Policy 67 sets out that renewable energy development should be well related to the source of the primary renewable resource needed for operation, the contribution of the proposed development in meeting renewable energy targets and positive/negative effects on the local and national economy as well as all other relevant policies of the Development Plan and other relevant guidance. In that context the Council will support proposals where it is satisfied they are located, sited and designed such as they will not be significantly detrimental overall, individually or cumulatively with other developments having regard to 11 specified criteria (as listed in HwLDP Policy 67). Such an approach is consistent with the concept of Sustainable Design (HwLDP Policy 28) and the concept of supporting the right development in the right place at the right time.

A4.17 Although HwLDP Policy 67 is considered compatible with NPF4 Policy 11, NPF4 expresses greater support for renewable energy projects out with National Parks and NSAs and requires greater weight to be attributed to the twin climate and biodiversity crises in the decision making process, whilst still recognising that a balancing exercise must still be carried out.

Area Local Development Plan - The West Highlands and Islands Local Development Plan ('WestPlan') (adopted 2019)

A4.18 Dunvegan located to the northwest of the site is designed a 'main settlement' by WestPlan. It is identified as a key service centre for northwest Skye. The Plan aims to 'safeguard, enhance and promote the natural and built heritage of the area'. The majority of the site is designated 'fragile' by WestPlan. This is defined as '*areas which are in decline or in danger of becoming so as a consequence of remoteness and socioeconomic factors, such as population loss, erosion of services and facilities and lack of employment opportunities. In some areas the natural heritage is a dominant influence on appropriate land management*'. The Plan focuses on increasing employment opportunities in these areas including support for tourism expansion where it would better utilise the area's outstanding natural and cultural heritage.

Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG)

A4.19 The Council's OWESG forms part of the Development Plan and remains a critical document in the determination of applications. The supplementary guidance does not provide additional tests in respect of the consideration of development proposals against Development Plan policy. However, it provides a clear indication of the approach the Council takes towards the assessment of proposals, and thereby aids consideration of applications for onshore wind energy proposals.

A4.20 The OWESG approach and methodology to the assessment of proposals is applicable and is set out in the OWESG Para 4.16 - 4.17. It provides a methodology for a judgement to be made on the likely impact of a development on assessed "thresholds" to assist the application of HwLDP Policy 67. The 10 criteria are particularly useful in considering visual impacts, including cumulative impacts. An appraisal of how the proposal relates to the thresholds set out in the criteria, is included in Appendix 5 of this report.

Onshore Wind Energy Policy Statement (2022), Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023) and Onshore Wind Sector Deal for Scotland (2023)

A4.21 The Onshore Wind Energy Policy Statement supersedes the previously adopted Onshore Wind Energy Policy Statement which was published in 2017. The document sets out a clear ambition for onshore wind in Scotland and for the first time sets a national target for a minimum level of installed capacity for onshore wind energy, being 20 GW. This is set against a currently installed capacity of 9.4 GW (June 2023). Therefore, a further 10.6 GW of onshore wind requires to be installed to meet the target. It is however acknowledged that targets are not caps. In delivering such a target Scotland would play a significant role in meeting

the requirement of 25-30 GW of installed capacity across the UK identified by the Climate Change Committee.

A4.22 Like the previous iteration of the Onshore Wind Energy Policy Statement, the document recognises that balance is required and that no one technology can allow Scotland to reach its net zero targets. The document is clear that in achieving a balance, environmental and socioeconomic benefits to Scotland must be maximised. In taking this approach, this echoes Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy.

A4.23 The document recognises that there may be a need to develop onshore wind energy development on peat. Peatland is present on the site, the applicant has made several refinements to reduce disturbance of deep peat and peat excavation such that SEPA has removed its objection, while NatureScot is satisfied that the revisions have resulted in the development's impacts on peatland habitats being within acceptable limits.

A4.24 Additionally, the document acknowledges that for Scotland to achieve its climate targets and the ambition for the minimum installed capacity of 20 GW by 2030, the landscape will change. However, the OWEPS also sets out that the right development should happen in the right place. Echoing NPF4, the document sets out that significant landscape and visual impacts are to be expected and that where the impacts are localised and / or appropriate mitigation has been applied the effects will be considered acceptable.

A4.25 The role of Landscape Sensitivity Appraisals in considering wind energy proposals is promoted through the document. This highlights the importance of applying those contained within the Council's OWESG when assessing applications.

A4.26 Benefits to rural areas, such as provision of jobs and opportunities to restore and protect natural habitats, are also highlighted in the document. It considers some of the wider benefits and challenges faced by in delivery of ambition and vision for onshore wind energy in Scotland. These include shared ownership, community benefit, supply chain benefits, skills development and financial mechanisms for delivery. The proposed development does lead to such benefits being delivered, however, in relation to maximising socioeconomic benefits, there is no current guidance on what that should look like and evidence of a significant shift of requirements is yet to emerge, which Members may expect to see, from what was likely to be offered pre-adoption of NPF4.

A4.27 Finally, the document also highlights technical considerations, those relevant to this application have been considered and mitigation, where required has been secured by condition.

A4.28 The Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan has been published for consultation. Ministers will likely give consideration to this document in their decision on the application; however, limited weight can be applied to the document given its draft status. Unsurprisingly, the material on onshore wind in the document reflects in large part that contained in NPF4 and the Onshore Wind Energy Policy Statement 2022. A fundamental part of the Strategy is expanding the energy generation sector. Overall, the draft Energy Strategy forms part of the new policy approach alongside the OWEPS and NPF4 and confirms the Scottish Government's policy objectives and related targets reaffirming the crucial role that onshore wind and enabling transmission infrastructure will play in response to the climate crisis which is at the heart of all these policies.

A4.29 To deliver the ambition for onshore wind, the Onshore Wind Sector Deal for Scotland was introduced in September 2023. The document focuses on necessary high-level actions by Government and the Sector to support onshore wind delivery. Jointly, Government and the Sector are committed to working together to ensure a balance is struck between onshore wind and the impacts on land use and the environment. The document looks to expedite decision making and consent implementation to achieve 20 GW of installation by 2030, meaning we should be seeing faster decisions on applications that are already in the system, with more consents being built out. Again, the sector deal does not detail what the socioeconomic commitments should be.

Conclusion

A4.30 This Appendix has assessed the compliance of the application against the Development Plan which comprises NPF4 (2024), the HwLDP (2012) and WestPLan (2019). It is noted that both legislation and planning law indicate that where there may be incompatibility between NPF4 and the Local Development Plan (LDP) and Highland Council Supplementary Guidance) published prior to NPF4, then the more recent document shall prevail. Notwithstanding however, in instances of incompatibility, this requirement may not eliminate the provisions of the LDP in their entirety whilst these documents remain an extant part of the adopted Development Plan. That means that the Council may wish to give more weight to the provisions of its LDP over national policies where there is strong justification for doing so, such as where it feels that LDP policy is better equipped to respond to local conditions for example. However, this matter is yet to be tested through the planning system.

A4.31 The design is considered to have been successful in bringing general collective landscape effects on the local landscape composition, as received in locations in and around northwest, north, and east Skye to within acceptable limits, while the proposal will not be significantly detrimental to the integrity of nearby landscape designations including the North West Sky and the Greshornish

Special Landscape Areas. Similarly, visual impacts are considered to be within acceptable limits including when experienced in combination and sequentially with other wind energy development in the wider landscape. Subject to conditions, there are no statutory consultee objections to the application while the report has set out that the impacts and effects of the proposal as they relate to construction, built and cultural heritage, roads, traffic, transport, and access, the water environment and peat, amenity as it relates to noise and shadow flicker, telecommunications, aviation and radar, as well as decommissioning and aftercare, would be within acceptable limits.

Appendix 5 – LVIA Methodology

A5.1 The Applicant has presented a number of figures and visualisations to illustrate the landscape and visual effects of the proposal both singularly and cumulatively with existing, consented and other proposed wind farm developments. Following a review of the LVIA in Volume 2 Chapter 7 of the EIAR and SEI, sufficient information has been provided to enable an assessment and overall, the photomontages are considered to have been produced to a good standard. The EIAR and SEI include a description of the design process, along with assessments against several LCTs, National Scenic Area (NSA), Special Landscape Areas (SLA), and Wild Land Areas. A total of 20 viewpoints across a study area of 40km have also been assessed, however 19 viewpoints are within 20km and one viewpoint within 30km of the proposal. These viewpoints are representative of a range of receptors including settlements, dispersed communities, outdoor recreational users, and road users. A bare earth visibility of the proposal can be appreciated from the comparative ZTV to Blade Tip of the EIAR (Application) and SEI (Revised) layouts with Viewpoint locations in the SEI (Figure 7.5e). Other ZTV figures include Landscape Designations and Visibility (SEI Figure 7.7), Landscape Character and Visibility (SEI Figure 7.8), Key Routes and Settlements with Visibility (SEI Figure 7.9) and Cumulative ZTV (SEI Figure 7.15a). The information submitted is considered sufficient to allow THC to come to a reasoned conclusion on the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposal.

A5.2 The methodology for the LVIA generally follows that set out in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA3). As set out in para 3.32 of GLVIA 3 the “LVIA should always clearly distinguish between what are considered to be significant and non-significant effects.” The Applicant assessed Significant Effects following the combination of judgements based on the Sensitivity of the Receptor, as defined by the receptor’s susceptibility (the degree to which a landscape element can be restored, replaced, or substituted) against the importance (value) of the view / landscape, against the Magnitude of Change. Judgement of Magnitude of Change is based on an assessment of the size or scale of the change, the geographical extent of the area influenced by the change, and its duration and reversibility.

A5.3 Figure A3 of Technical Appendix 7.1 (Volume 4): Assessment of Landscape Effects and Overall Significance and Figure A6 of the same document, Assessment of Visual Effects and Overall Significance, sets out the diagrams the Applicant has used in the judgement of Significance of Effects whereby effects of Major and Major / Moderate correspond to Significant Effects, and Moderate, Moderate / Minor, Minor / None, and None correspond to Not Significant Effects.

A5.4 In relation to cumulative effects, the Applicant has only assessed the ‘additional effect’ of the proposal to the cumulative scenario. It has not assessed the ‘combined’ cumulative effects of the proposal with existing, consented and other application wind farms. It is acknowledged in the NatureScot 2021 Guidance that *‘The purpose of a Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (CLVIA) is to describe, visually represent and assess the ways in which a proposed windfarm would have additional impacts when considered in addition to other existing, consented or proposed windfarms. It should identify the significant cumulative effects arising from the proposed windfarm.’* The same document, however, further states that *‘Cumulative impacts can be defined as the additional changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together.’* THC’s officer takes this latter statement from NatureScot as assessing both the ‘additional’ and the ‘combined’ cumulative effects, although it is acknowledged that NatureScot’s main focus may be on the additional effects.

A5.5 The LVIA chapter (Chapter 7) of the EIAR methodically sets out the Applicant’s assessment of the proposal’s landscape and visual effects, including assessments of relevant Landscape Character Types (LCT) as mapped and described by NatureScot. The SEI LVIA chapter (Chapter 7) is a much shorter chapter and does not repeat the full assessment, however, it focuses on where there may be changes to landscape and visual effects as a result of the revised layout. The Applicant has grouped and assessed LCTs into 7 Character Areas which are as follows:

- Interior Skye Hills Character Area:
 - LCT 357: Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Skye and Lochalsh
 - LCT 359: Upland Sloping Moorland ('host' LCT)
 - LCT 360: Stepped Moorland
- Trotternish Character Area:
 - LCT 357: Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Skye and Lochalsh
 - LCT 360: Stepped Moorland
 - LCT 366: Landslide Edge and Undulating Ridge
- Portree, Surround Hills and Strath Character Area:
 - LCT 357: Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Skye and Lochalsh
 - LCT 358: Low Smooth Moorland
 - LCT 360: Stepped Moorland
- Waternish Character Area:
 - LCT 357: Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Skye and Lochalsh
 - LCT 360: Stepped Moorland
- Greshornish and coastal edge of Loch Snizort Character Area:
 - LCT 357: Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Skye and Lochalsh
 - LCT 358: Low Smooth Moorland
 - LCT 360: Stepped Moorland

- Dunvegan and Duirinish Character Area:
 - LCT 357: Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Skye and Lochalsh
 - LCT 358: Low Smooth Moorland
 - LCT 360: Stepped Moorland
 - LCT 361: Stepped Hills
- Bracadale Character Area:
 - LCT 357: Farmed and Settled Lowlands – Skye and Lochalsh
 - LCT 358: Low Smooth Moorland
 - LCT 360: Stepped Moorland

A5.6 The EIAR has provided an assessment of the Applicant's view on the Significance of visual effects for each of the viewpoints (Technical Appendix 7.3: Viewpoint Assessment (Volume 4)), which makes the Applicant's assessment easy to follow. The SEI does not include a full detailed viewpoint assessment, rather it just summarises the visual effects at the viewpoints in paragraphs 7.26-7.33 of the SEI LVIA Chapter 7 (Volume 2). The officer appraisal of the viewpoint assessment in Appendix 6 highlights the difference in assessment on specific viewpoints with the Applicant's assessment. This Appendix only focusses on the disputed viewpoints and not on viewpoints where the Applicant's viewpoint assessment is agreed.

A5.7 The Applicant's cumulative assessment sets out two cumulative scenarios as follows:

- Scenario 1 – Balmeanach with operational and consented wind farms; and
- Scenario 2 – Balmeanach with application and scoping wind farms. This Scenario has only been assessed in the SEI.

A5.8 Scenario 1 is the more certain scenario which already includes operational wind farms and those approved. Operational wind farms have been included as part of the baseline. Scenario 2 is more uncertain given the application and scoping wind farms have not yet been determined. Therefore, it is not fully appropriate for this assessment to make a judgement on Scenario 2 in the processing of this application. As such the judgement offered in this assessment is limited to Scenario 1 which sets out the resultant cumulative effects of the proposal in relation to operational and consented wind farms, including Ben Aketil Wind Farm, Edinbane, Ben Sca, Sumardale Croft Wind Turbine, Meadale Farm Wind Turbine, Beinn Mheadhonach; and Glen Ullinish. However, this assessment has been mindful of the adjacent and nearby applications given most are of similar or larger scale to the proposal and are pertinent to the rounded consolidated cluster of wind farm development in this landscape.

A5.9 The Applicant has also included a separate cumulative assessment of the combined effects, should the proposal be constructed alongside the proposed Ben Sca Wind Farm which is set out in Volume 5 of the SEIR.

A5.10 In addition to the above, the Applicant has included assessments of the effects of the proposal on the Trotternish and Cuillin Hills National Scenic Areas (NSAs), and North West Skye, Greshornish and Trotternish and Tianavaig Special Landscape Areas (SLAs), as well as the wild land qualities of Wild Land Areas (WLA) WLA 22: Duirinish; and WLA 23: Cuillin. It is to be noted that the Applicant's assessment on the NSAs and SLAs are brief and do not go through the assessment of the special qualities in detail as one would have expected. The WLA assessments are noted, however, given the policy status of WLAs in NPF4 relative to energy developments, this report does not include a review of this aspect of the assessment.

A5.11 A key part of the of the Council's assessment of landscape and visual effects is a consideration of the proposal against the Criterion set out in Section 4 of the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG), with the assessment against the criterion and view as to whether the threshold set out in the guidance is met or not, contained in Appendix 7 to this report. Furthermore, landscape and visual effects of the proposal may be reversible as it would be capable of being decommissioned as stated within the EIAR and SEI. However, as set out in Policy 11 (f) of NPF4, wind farm sites should be suitable in perpetuity, and it is therefore considered reasonable to assess the duration of all landscape and visual effects as non-reversible in that context.

Appendix 6 - Viewpoint Visual Assessment Appraisal (operational only)

This appendix sets out the viewpoint assessment appraisal of the disputed viewpoints by the officer which include Viewpoints 3, 12, 11, 16 and 17. The appraisal of the remaining 15 viewpoints are agreed with the Applicant's assessment which is noted below:

Summary of non-disputed viewpoints:

The level of visual effect of non-disputed viewpoints assessed by the Applicant is as follows:

- Major/moderate and significant adverse effects have been identified at Viewpoint 2 (Edinbane Top Road); Viewpoint 4 (residents at Roag); Viewpoint 6 (Lonmore); and Viewpoint 7 (Greshornish), all of which lie within 7.5km of the proposal;
- Moderate adverse and not significant effects have been identified at Viewpoint 1 (A863 at Feorlig); Viewpoint 4 (road users at Roag), Viewpoint 5 (A850); Viewpoint 6 (road users at Lonmore); Viewpoint 9 (Kingsburgh) Viewpoint 10 (residents at Borve) and Viewpoint 14 (residents at Totaig); and
- Moderate/minor to negligible and not significant effects were assessed at the other viewpoints.

The officer agrees with the Applicant's assessment at Viewpoints 2, 4, 6 and 7 as Major/Moderate adverse and Significant, noting that the effect from Viewpoints 4 and 6 are significant for residents and not road users. From all these viewpoints, the proposal turbines would either appear similar in size or larger than the consented Ben Sca turbines. However, in viewpoint 4, they would even appear larger than Ben Aketil and Edinbane wind farms due to a combination of the closer proximity of the site and size of the turbines. The scale and layout of the operational and consented developments, together with the proposal would relate to some degree to the extensive horizontal scale of their surroundings. By being seen partly beyond the skyline, they would appear as part of the distant landscape. Nonetheless, they would seem to diminish the perceived vertical scale of the hill slopes facing this viewpoint. The proposal would continue the repeating pattern of turbines seen on the skyline, with generally comparable spacing between turbines. Overall, the Applicant has reasonably assessed the sensitivity, magnitude and level of effect at these viewpoints.

In relation to Viewpoints 1, 4 (road users), 5, 6 (road users), 9, 10 (residents) and 14 (residents), the officer agrees with the Applicant's assessment as Moderate adverse and not significant. These effects are assessed as being not significant due to the relative

prominence of the existing and consented wind farms. The proposal would reinforce this established pattern of wind farm development, but it would not introduce elements that are not part of the baseline view. In a few instances, the proposal would also be clearly positioned behind the operational Ben Aketil Wind Farm and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm, both of which would be more prominent than the proposal. Overall, the Applicant has reasonably assessed the sensitivity, magnitude and level of effect at these viewpoints.

In relation to the remaining viewpoints – Viewpoints 8, 10 (road users), 13, 14 (road users), 15, 18, 19 and 20, the officer agrees with the Applicant's assessment as Moderate/minor to negligible and not significant. Overall, the Applicant has reasonably assessed the sensitivity, magnitude and level of effect at these more distant viewpoints.

The remaining viewpoints not noted above are Viewpoints 3, 12, 11, 16 and 17 which are disputed and the officer's appraisal is noted in the table below.

Appraisal of Disputed viewpoints

			Proposed Development			Cumulative Assessment (Scenario 1)		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of Receptor (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view)	Magnitude of change (Scale of change / geographic extent / duration and reversibility of effect)	Level of Effect (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change)	Significance (Major and Major / Moderate are Significant. Moderate effects are either Significant or not Significant)	Magnitude of Change (Scale of Change / Geographic Extent / Duration)	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / sensitivity of receptor)	Significance
VP3 A863 Road Distance 9.6 km Looking N	App	Medium (road users) – <i>Medium susceptibility and Medium value</i>	Medium	Moderate	Not Significant	Slight	<u>Additional:</u> Moderate / Minor <u>Combined:</u> <i>Not assessed</i>	<u>Additional:</u> Not Significant <u>Combined:</u> <i>Not assessed</i>
	THC	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Significant	Slight High-Medium	<u>Additional:</u> Moderate / Minor <u>Combined:</u> Major / Moderate	<u>Additional:</u> Not Significant <u>Combined:</u> Significant (due to Glen

			Proposed Development			Cumulative Assessment (Scenario 1)		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of Receptor (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view)	Magnitude of change (Scale of change / geographic extent / duration and reversibility of effect)	Level of Effect (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change)	Significance (Major and Major / Moderate are Significant. Moderate effects are either Significant or not Significant)	Magnitude of Change (Scale of Change / Geographic Extent / Duration)	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / sensitivity of receptor)	Significance
								Ullinish and Balmeanach)
		<p>The view is as described in Section 2.3 (Volume 4: EIAR, Technical Appendix 7.3). No change to the assessment is reported in Chapter 7 (Volume 2) of the SEI as a result of the revised layout.</p> <p>The proposed turbines would appear larger than the Ben Aketil, Ben Sca and Edinbane Wind Farms due to a combination of the closer proximity of the site and the size of the turbines. However, they would appear smaller than the Glen Ullinish turbines due to the relative proximity of this consented development. The scale and layout of the existing and consented wind farms, together with the proposal, would relate to some degree to the extensive horizontal scale of their surroundings. By being seen partly beyond the skyline, they would appear as part of the distant landscape. Nonetheless, they would seem to diminish the perceived vertical scale of the hill slopes of Ben Sca and Ben Aketil facing this viewpoint.</p> <p>The officer agrees that the effect would Moderate, however, assesses the visual effect as significant. Whilst appreciating that this is a transient view, the turbines would appear prominent on the skyline, only partially screened by intervening landform on</p>						

			Proposed Development			Cumulative Assessment (Scenario 1)			
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of Receptor (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view)	Magnitude of change (Scale of change / geographic extent / duration and reversibility of effect)	Level of Effect (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change)	Significance (Major and Major / Moderate are Significant. Moderate effects are either Significant or not Significant)	Magnitude of Change (Scale of Change / Geographic Extent / Duration)	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / sensitivity of receptor)	Significance	
		<p>some of the lower towers and bases. In comparison with existing and consented wind farms, it would create some visual clutter resulting in a slightly discordant effect.</p> <p>Cumulatively, it is not disputed that the addition of the proposal would result in Moderate / Minor and not significant effect. However, there would be a significant combined cumulative effect as a result of the proposal and the consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm which is not assessed by the Applicant.</p>							
VP12 Fiskavig Distance 11.4km Looking NE	App	High (residents) - High susceptibility and High value	Slight	Moderate	Not Significant	Slight	<u>Additional:</u> Moderate <u>Combined:</u> <i>Not assessed</i>	<u>Additional:</u> Not Significant <u>Combined:</u> <i>Not assessed</i>	
	THC	High	Medium-Slight	Moderate	Significant	Medium-Slight	<u>Additional:</u> Moderate	<u>Additional:</u> Significant	

			Proposed Development			Cumulative Assessment (Scenario 1)			
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of Receptor (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view)	Magnitude of change (Scale of change / geographic extent / duration and reversibility of effect)	Level of Effect (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change)	Significance (Major and Major / Moderate are Significant. Moderate effects are either Significant or not Significant)	Magnitude of Change (Scale of Change / Geographic Extent / Duration)	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / sensitivity of receptor)	Significance	
		<p>they would detract in views out from the Bay. It would appear higher than the existing and consented wind farms given the topography but also due to the scale of the development.</p> <p>Cumulatively, the additional and combined effect of the proposal will continue to lead to a Medium-Slight and Moderate significant effect. The proposal will be the most noticeable in comparison with operational and consented wind farms.</p>							
VP11 Macleod's Table North / Healabhal Mhòr	App	High (walkers) - High susceptibility and High value	Slight	Moderate / Minor	Not Significant	Slight	<u>Additional:</u> Moderate / Minor <u>Combined:</u> <i>Not assessed</i>	<u>Additional:</u> Not Significant <u>Combined:</u> <i>Not assessed</i>	
Distance 11.2km Looking NE	THC	High	Medium-Slight	Moderate	Not Significant	Medium-Slight	<u>Additional:</u> Moderate <u>Combined:</u>	<u>Additional:</u> Not Significant	

			Proposed Development			Cumulative Assessment (Scenario 1)		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of Receptor (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view)	Magnitude of change (Scale of change / geographic extent / duration and reversibility of effect)	Level of Effect (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change)	Significance (Major and Major / Moderate are Significant. Moderate effects are either Significant or not Significant)	Magnitude of Change (Scale of Change / Geographic Extent / Duration)	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / sensitivity of receptor)	Significance
						Medium-Slight	Moderate	<u>Combined:</u> Not Significant
		<p>The view is as described in Section 2.11 (Volume 4: EIAR, Technical Appendix 7.3). No change to the assessment is reported in Chapter 7 (Volume 2) of the SEI as a result of the revised layout.</p> <p>The proposal would be seen in the context of operational and consented wind farms visible within this panoramic view. It would relate to and appear broadly consistent with the pattern of existing and consented wind farms. The position of the proposal relative to this viewpoint means it would not extend the overall extent of turbines within the field of view, but it would intensify the wind farm development in the vicinity of Ben Aketil and Ben Sca. The proposed turbines would appear larger than the existing Ben Aketil and Edinbane turbines. However, they would be comparable with the consented Ben Sca turbines. These differences would be apparent due to the elevated view of the ground in-between these developments (revealing that the larger and wider spaced turbines are not closer to the viewer). However, all the turbines would be seen below the skyline and against a backcloth of receding hills, which combined with the intervening distance would help to limit apparent differences.</p>						

			Proposed Development			Cumulative Assessment (Scenario 1)		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of Receptor (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view)	Magnitude of change (Scale of change / geographic extent / duration and reversibility of effect)	Level of Effect (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change)	Significance (Major and Major / Moderate are Significant. Moderate effects are either Significant or not Significant)	Magnitude of Change (Scale of Change / Geographic Extent / Duration)	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / sensitivity of receptor)	Significance
	<p>The officer agrees that the effect would not be significant, however, assesses the magnitude as Medium-Slight and the visual effect as Moderate due to its irregular layout which makes it more noticeable than other wind farms.</p> <p>Cumulatively, it is agreed that the effect would not be significant, however, both the additional and combined effect of the proposal would be Moderate rather than Moderate/ Minor assessed by the Applicant.</p>							
VP16 Ben Tianavaig Distance 20.7km Looking NW	App	High (walkers) - High susceptibility and High value	Slight-Negligible	Minor	Not Significant	Slight to Negligible	<u>Additional:</u> Minor <u>Combined:</u> <u>Not assessed</u>	<u>Additional:</u> Not Significant <u>Combined:</u> <u>Not assessed</u>
	THC	High	Slight	Moderate/ Minor	Not Significant	Slight-Negligible	<u>Additional:</u> Minor <u>Combined:</u>	<u>Additional:</u> Not Significant

			Proposed Development			Cumulative Assessment (Scenario 1)		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of Receptor (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view)	Magnitude of change (Scale of change / geographic extent / duration and reversibility of effect)	Level of Effect (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change)	Significance (Major and Major / Moderate are Significant. Moderate effects are either Significant or not Significant)	Magnitude of Change (Scale of Change / Geographic Extent / Duration)	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / sensitivity of receptor)	Significance
						Slight	Moderate / Minor	<u>Combined:</u> Not Significant
		<p>The view is as described in Section 2.16 (Volume 4: EIAR, Technical Appendix 7.3). No change to the assessment is reported in Chapter 7 (Volume 2) of the SEI as a result of the revised layout.</p> <p>The proposal would be located largely to the left of the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm, behind the southern turbines of Edinbane Wind Farm. The proposed turbines would be set within the group of existing turbines and would not increase the horizontal extent of the view occupied by wind farm development. The proposed turbines would be largely seen against the landscape although the blades and blade tips of the turbines, together with the hubs of three of the turbines, would extend above the skyline. The wind turbines, collectively, would appear as large structures within the landscape and, due to a lack of surrounding size indicators, may seem to diminish the perceived extent of the interior moorland and forest between the site and Portree.</p> <p>The officer agrees that the effect would not be significant, however, assesses the magnitude as Slight and the visual effect as Moderate / Minor due to the proposal partially breaking the skyline in comparison with other wind farms which are located lower down in the landscape. The proposal would be slightly more perceptible than the other wind farms.</p>						

			Proposed Development			Cumulative Assessment (Scenario 1)		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of Receptor (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view)	Magnitude of change (Scale of change / geographic extent / duration and reversibility of effect)	Level of Effect (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change)	Significance (Major and Major / Moderate are Significant. Moderate effects are either Significant or not Significant)	Magnitude of Change (Scale of Change / Geographic Extent / Duration)	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / sensitivity of receptor)	Significance
	Cumulatively, it is agreed that the effect would not be significant, however, both the combined effect of the proposal would be Moderate / Minor.							
VP17 Uig (Idrigill) Distance 17.3km Looking SW	App	High (residents) - <i>High susceptibility and High value</i> Medium (road users) - <i>Medium susceptibility and High value</i>	Slight-Negligible	Moderate/ Minor (residents) Minor (road users)	Not Significant	Slight to Negligible	<u>Additional:</u> Moderate / Minor to Minor <u>Combined:</u> <i>Not assessed</i>	<u>Additional:</u> Not Significant <u>Combined:</u> <i>Not assessed</i>
	THC	High (residents), Medium (road users)	Slight	Moderate/ Minor (residents)	Not Significant	Slight	<u>Additional:</u> Moderate / Minor to Minor	<u>Additional:</u> Not Significant

			Proposed Development			Cumulative Assessment (Scenario 1)		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of Receptor (Susceptibility of receptor to change / value of the view)	Magnitude of change (Scale of change / geographic extent / duration and reversibility of effect)	Level of Effect (Sensitivity of receptor / Magnitude of change)	Significance (Major and Major / Moderate are Significant. Moderate effects are either Significant or not Significant)	Magnitude of Change (Scale of Change / Geographic Extent / Duration)	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / sensitivity of receptor)	Significance
		The officer agrees that the effect would be Moderate / Minor to Minor and not significant, however, assesses the magnitude as Slight given the noticeability of the proposal's irregular layout on the skyline in comparison to the linear layouts of the other wind farms. Cumulatively, it is agreed that the additional and combined effect of the proposal would not be significant.						

Appendix 7 - Assessment against Landscape and Visual Assessment Criteria contained within Section 4 of the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance

Criterion 1 is related to relationships between settlements/key locations and the wider landscape.

The development would increase the prominence and density of turbines in portions of the view where they already exist from settlements and are not visually prominent in the majority of views within or from LDP defined settlements. However, this assessment would not apply to those coastal communities that are not defined settlements in the WestPlan where significant effects are identified.

Threshold is met.

Criterion 2 is related to the extent to which the proposal reduces or detracts from the transitional experience of key Gateway Locations and routes.

THC has not pre-emptively identified Key Gateway Locations for Skye as the Landscape Sensitivity work for wind energy has yet to consider this area.

While there will be significant effects along main and local routes as a result of the development, the turbines will not significantly change the character or experience of these routes when compared to the current baseline (operational and approved) with the likely exception of the B885 that traverses east to west of northwest Skye.

Threshold is met.

Criterion 3 is related to the extent to which the proposal affects the fabric and setting of valued natural and cultural landmarks

The location is within the interior of northwest Skye, removed and set back from the natural landmarks of Macleod's Tables, the Cuillan Hills, and Trotternish in the majority of views where they do not compete for prominence.

The proposal will impact the setting of Dunvegan Castle and its Garden and Designed Landscape however the visual effect of the proposal where viewed from across Loch Dunvegan is assessed as not significant due to distance and set back.

Threshold is met

Criterion 4 is related to the extent that the amenity of key recreational routes and ways is respected by the proposal.

While some significant adverse visual effects would be experienced from formal and informal recreational routes particularly across the site, these effects would not be overwhelming or likely to significantly detract from the appeal of these routes overall.

Threshold is met

Criterion 5 is related to the extent to which the proposal affects the amenity of transport routes.

As described for Criterion 2 above.

Criterion 6 is related to respecting the existing pattern of development

The proposal consolidates two existing wind farms to create a single wind farm cluster with some turbines larger than others, although Balmeanach turbines are of a consistent size to those of the approved turbines of Ben Sca Extension Wind Farm. However they are not of such a scale as to overwhelm the existing turbines or the hosting landscape and would be experienced as being in the same landscape and setting.

Threshold is met.

Criterion 7 relates to the extent to which the proposal maintains or affects the spaces between existing developments and/ or clusters

Although the proposal will effectively bring Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms closer together in many views, there remains a degree of separation with the proposal not overwhelming the landscape features that define the spatial definition between and settings of existing wind farms.

Threshold is met.

Criterion 8 relates to the extent that the proposal maintains or affects receptors' existing perception of landscape scale and distance.

The scale, number, and positioning of turbines do not overwhelm landscape features, so while there is some reduction in the sense of landscape scale and distance, particularly of the interior of northwest Skye, and when viewed in relation to the smaller coastal features of Loch Bracadale, and to some extent between Skye's larger landscape features, the effect is not significant overall.

Threshold is met.

Criterion 9 is related to the extent to which the landscape setting of nearby wind energy developments is affected by the proposal.

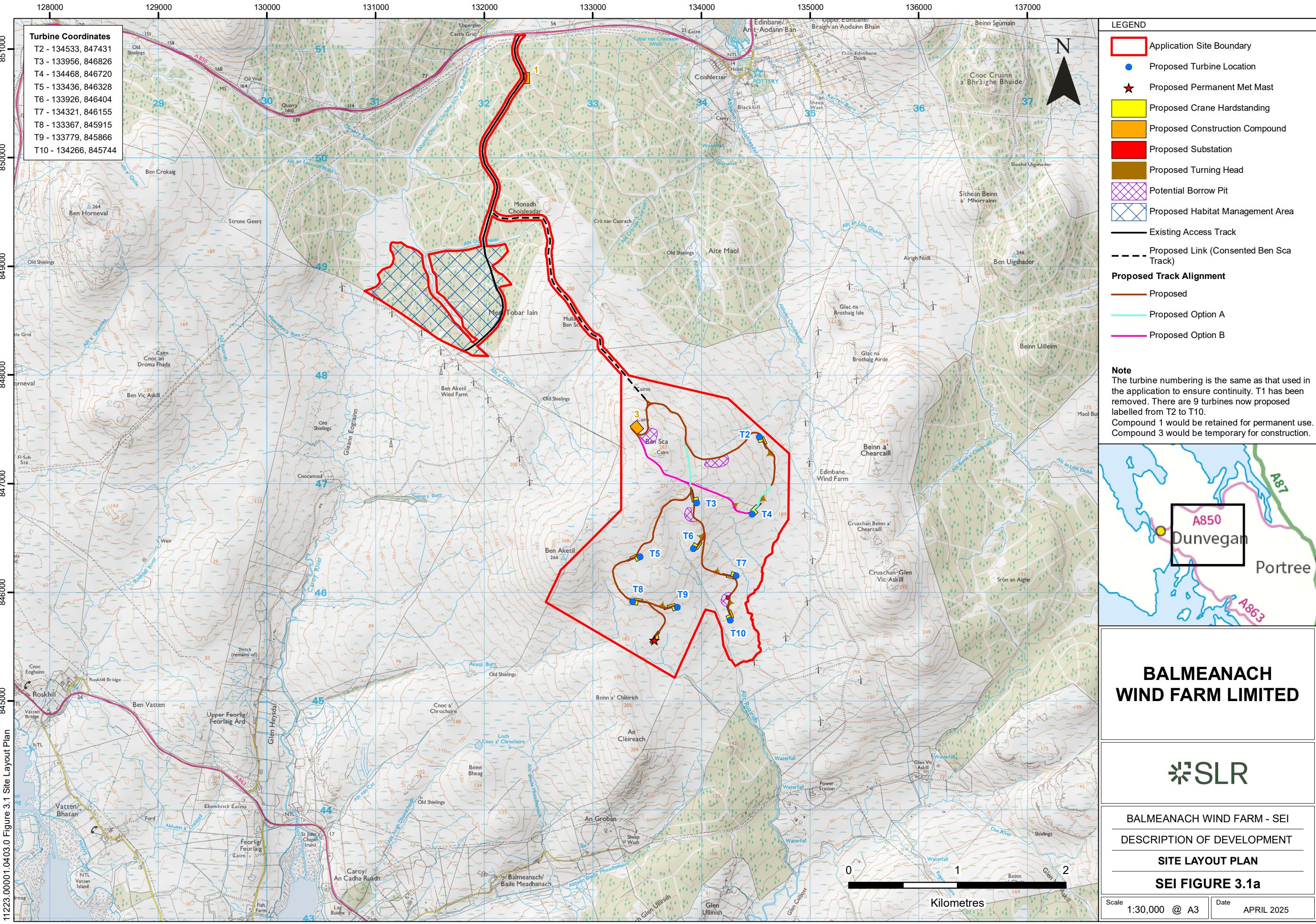
As per Criterion 7. Threshold is met.

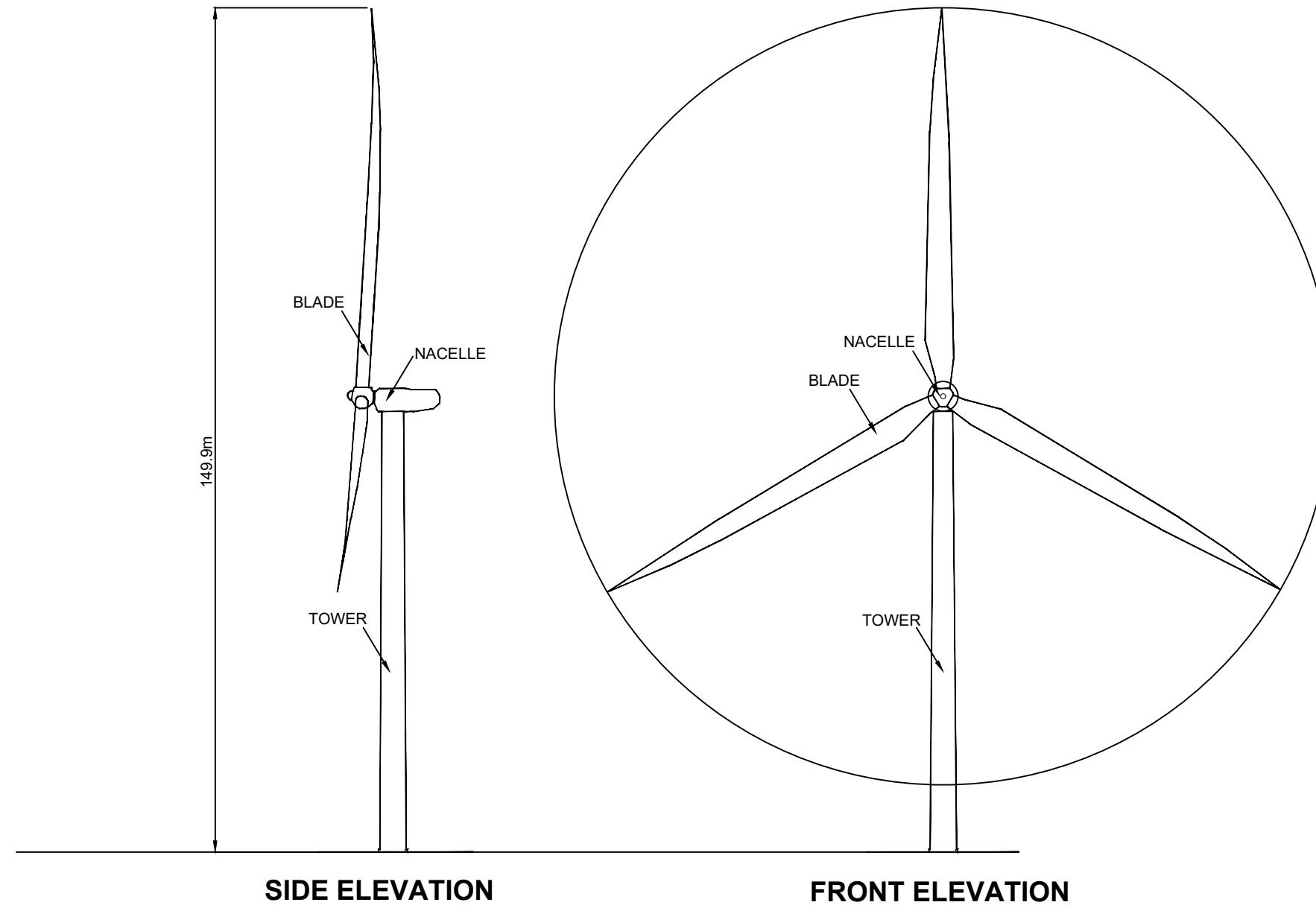
Criterion 10 is related to distinctiveness of landscape character.

Agree that there is not a strong 'differentiation between adjacent moorland types' while the turbines are set back from the coast when compared to the existing Ben Aketil Wind Farm so as not to overwhelm the small scale features of Loch Bracadale. An appreciation of the variety of landscape characters is not undermined.

Threshold is met.





**SIDE ELEVATION****FRONT ELEVATION**

**BALMEANACH
WIND FARM LIMITED**

4/5 LOCHSIDE VIEW
EDINBURGH PARK
EDINBURGH
EH12 9DH



T: +44 (0)131 335 6830
www.slrconsulting.com

BALMEANACH WIND FARM - EIA
DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT
TYPICAL TURBINE ELEVATION

FIGURE 3.3

Scale 1:1000 @ A3	Date MAY 2023
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