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INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Sections 25 and 37(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act (“the 1997 Act”) require that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 2.2 The consented development was appraised by The Highland Council (THC) against the applicable Development Plan policies and National policy framework at the time of the two planning applications for Ben Sca Wind Farm in January 2020 and subsequently Ben Sca Wind Farm Extension in November 2021 when approvals were issued. THC notes in their Reports of Handling that the consented development is considered to “*accord with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan and is acceptable in terms of all other applicable material considerations*” and is “*seen to be compatible with Scottish Government policy and guidance and increase its overall contribution to the Government, UK and European energy targets.*”
- 2.3 The Development Plan at the time of determination of the consented development comprised the Highland-wide Local Development Plan adopted in April 2012 (HwLDP), the Supplementary Guidance ‘Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance’ (amended 2017) (OWESG) and the West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan 2019.
- 2.4 National policy applicable at the time of consideration of the consented development planning applications comprised of National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3) and Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) 2014 which focused on spatial planning frameworks for wind energy development. Whilst the planning application for Ben Sca Wind Farm Extension was being considered, National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) was published in draft form in November 2021. The document was still going through the parliamentary process and consultation, therefore the weight to be attached was not the same as the adopted SPP, NPF3 or the Development Plan; however, in the Report of Handling (06 April 2022) the planning officer noted that NPF4 “*can be given weight in the process of determining applications*” and the following matters were considered to be compliant and acceptable with draft NPF4:
- Significant weight given to the Global Climate Emergency: as a development that generates renewable energy the Ben Sca Wind Farm Extension was considered to have “*inherent support from this aspect of NPF4*”, and the overall carbon payback period was “*considered to be acceptable*”.
 - Recognising the Ecological Emergency, the draft NPF4 set out that proposals should contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity: the Ben Sca Wind Farm Extension was considered by the planning officer to be compliant with this aspect as it “*includes provision for peatland restoration which meets with the provisions of the proposed approach in draft NPF4 for the restoration of degraded habitats and the strengthening of nature networks.*”
- 2.5 Since the consented development was approved by THC, National Policy has been updated with the adoption of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) by the Scottish Government on 13 February 2023. NPF3 and SPP are no longer in force and are superseded by NPF4. NPF4 now forms part of the Development Plan, alongside THC’s LDP’s and Supplementary Guidance.
- 2.6 This Chapter identifies the current main Development Plan policies and other material considerations relevant to the determination of this planning application for the Proposed

Development. These policies and other material considerations provide the context for the more detailed topic analysis as set out in **Chapters 3 to 9** of this EIA Report.

- 2.7 It is not the purpose of this Chapter to provide an assessment of the Proposed Development against planning policy. Instead, it sets out the key context in which the Proposed Development will be considered. The detailed assessment of the Proposed Development against the Development Plan and other material considerations is contained within a separate supporting Planning Statement which accompanies this application.

STATUTORY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

National Planning Policy Framework 4 (NPF4)

- 2.8 NPF4 was adopted by the Scottish Government on 13 February 2023 and now forms part of the statutory Development Plan for planning applications made under the 1997 Act.
- 2.9 Section 24(3) of the 1997 Act provides that in the event of any incompatibility between the provision of the National Planning Framework and a provision of the Local Development Plan, whichever of them is the later in date is to prevail. The Scottish Government's (2023) Chief Planner's advice on the transitional arrangement for NPF4 states that *"provisions that are contradictory or in conflict [between NPF and an LDP] would be likely to be considered incompatible."*
- 2.10 Part 1 of NPF4 sets out the overarching spatial strategy for Scotland until 2045. The foundations for the spatial strategy as a whole are identified as being the *"global climate emergency and the nature crisis"*, therefore explicitly recognising that these are now the two key drivers of national planning policy.
- 2.11 Eighteen national developments are identified in total in NPF4. These are defined as *"significant developments of national importance that will help to deliver our spatial strategy"*. NPF4 identifies that *"national development status does not grant planning permission for the development"* but does clarify that *"their designation means that the principle of the development does not need to be agreed in later consenting processes."*
- 2.12 Annex B of NPF4 provides further details and Statements of Need for each of the eighteen national developments. National Development 3 is for Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure, for which NPF4 states that:
"This national development supports renewable electricity generation, repowering, and expansion of the electricity grid.
A large and rapid increase in electricity generation from renewable sources will be essential for Scotland to meet its net zero emissions targets. Certain types of renewable electricity generation will also be required, which will include energy storage technology and capacity, to provide the vital services, including flexible response, that a zero carbon network will require. Generation is for domestic consumption as well as for export to the UK and beyond, with new capacity helping to decarbonise heat, transport and industrial energy demand. This has the potential to support jobs and business investment, with wider economic benefits."
- 2.13 National Development 3 is identified as being applicable to the whole of Scotland, including the North and West Coast and Islands within which the Proposed Development is located. Although Appendix B clarifies that only onshore wind farms with a capacity exceeding 50MW would qualify as being classified as of national development status under National Development 3, it is considered that the inclusion of renewable energy

projects as national development clearly establishes beyond any reasonable doubt the strengthened need case for their continued development.

2.14 NPF4 policies of relevance to the Proposed Development are:

- Policy 1: Tackling the climate and nature crises;
- Policy 3: Biodiversity;
- Policy 4: Natural places;
- Policy 5: Soils;
- Policy 6: Forestry, woodland and trees;
- Policy 7: Historic assets and places;
- Policy 11: Energy;
- Policy 14: Design, quality and place;
- Policy 20: Blue and green infrastructure;
- Policy 22: Flood risk and water management; and
- Policy 23: Health and safety.

2.15 The key policies of NPF4 that are most relevant to the Proposed Development are Policies 1, 3, 5 and 11. The following looks at the relevant aspects of these policies in more detail.

Policy 1: Tackling the climate and nature crises

2.16 A key new policy is Policy 1: Tackling the climate and nature crises. The intent of Policy 1 is “*to encourage, promote and facilitate development that addresses the global climate emergency and nature crisis.*”

2.17 Policy 1 requires that, when considering all development proposals, “*significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crises*”. The addition of this policy is reflective of the increased prominence and weight which the Scottish Government now expects to be given to the climate emergency in all planning decisions. Whilst it was previously open for decision makers to give such weight as they thought appropriate to the global climate emergency, Policy 1 is entirely new in that it is now a matter of policy that decision makers give significant weight to the global climate emergency and nature crisis.

Policy 3: Biodiversity

2.18 Policy 3: Biodiversity is another policy which will impact the decision process for the Proposed Development. This policy intends to: “*protect biodiversity, reverse biodiversity loss, deliver positive effects from development and strengthen nature networks.*”

2.19 Policy 3(a) states that “*Development proposals will contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity, including where relevant, restoring degraded habitats and building and strengthening nature networks and the connections between them. Proposals should also integrate nature-based solutions, where possible.*”

2.20 Policy 3(b) states that “*Development proposals for national or major development, or for development that requires an Environmental Impact Assessment will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, including nature networks so they are in a demonstrably better state than*

without intervention.” Part (b) continues and sets five criteria that such development proposals will be expected to meet.

- 2.21 In the consideration of development proposals against Policy 3, it must be noted that there is currently no single standardised approach or established Scottish biodiversity metric to demonstrate changes in biodiversity.

Policy 5: Soils

- 2.22 Policy 5: Soils intends to “*protect carbon-rich soils, restore peatlands and minimise disturbance to soils from development*” and is especially relevant to this Proposed Development due to the relative prevalence of peatland present on the site, and the amount of peatland present within the region as a whole.

- 2.23 Policy 5 (a) notes that:

“Development proposals will only be supported if they are designed and constructed:

i. In accordance with the mitigation hierarchy by first avoiding and then minimising the amount of disturbance to soils on undeveloped land.”

- 2.24 A key difference between this policy and the previous policy position in SPP (2014) is that renewable energy developments that optimise the contribution of the area to greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets are one of the types of development that are now expressly permitted on peat, as set out in Policy 5 (c):

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

ii. The generation of energy from renewable sources that optimises the contribution of the area to greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets; and

v. Restoration of peatland habitats.”

- 2.25 Policy 5 (d) goes into further detail regarding what is required of developments that are proposed on peatland, carbon rich soils, or priority peatland habitat. It states that in these instances:

“a detailed site-specific assessment will be required to identify:

i. the baseline depth, habitat condition, quality, and stability of carbon rich soils;

ii. the likely effects of the development on peatland, including on soil disturbance; and

iii. the likely net effects of the development on climate emissions and loss of carbon.

This assessment should inform careful project design and ensure, in accordance with relevant guidance and the mitigation hierarchy, that adverse impacts are first avoided and then minimised through best practice. A peat management plan will be required to demonstrate that this approach has been followed, alongside other appropriate plans required for restoring and/ or enhancing the site into a functioning peatland system capable of achieving carbon sequestration.”

Policy 11: Energy

- 2.26 Regarding onshore wind, Policy 11: Energy, intends to “encourage, promote and facilitate all forms of renewable energy development onshore and offshore.” Policy outcomes are identified as: “expansion of renewable, low carbon and zero emission technologies”. The policy declares that development proposals for wind farms outwith National Parks and National Scenic Areas should be supported, whilst also considering the impacts that have been identified. It is recognised that “significant landscape and visual impacts.... are to be expected for some forms of renewable energy. Where impacts are localised and/or appropriate design mitigation has been applied, they will generally be considered to be acceptable”. In terms of the impacts, the policy goes on to state that: “In considering these impacts, significant weight will be placed on the contribution of the proposal to renewable energy generation targets and on greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets”.

Policy 11: Energy

a) Development proposals for all forms of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies will be supported. These include:

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

b) Development proposals for wind farms in National Parks and National Scenic Areas will not be supported.

c) Development proposals will only be supported where they maximise net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities.

d) Development proposals that impact on international or national designations will be assessed in relation to Policy 4.

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

- i. impacts on communities and individual dwellings, including, residential amenity, visual impact, noise and shadow flicker;
- ii. significant landscape and visual impacts, recognising that such impacts are to be expected for some forms of renewable energy. Where impacts are localised and/or appropriate design mitigation has been applied, they will generally be considered to be acceptable;

- iii. public access, including impact on long distance walking and cycling routes and scenic routes;*
- iv. impacts on aviation and defence interests including seismological recording;*
- v. impacts on telecommunications and broadcasting installations, particularly ensuring that transmission links are not compromised;*
- vi. impacts on road traffic and on adjacent trunk roads, including during construction;*
- vii. impacts on historic environment;*
- viii. effects on hydrology, the water environment and flood risk;*
- ix. biodiversity including impacts on birds;*
- x. impacts on trees, woods and forests;*
- xi. proposals for the decommissioning of developments, including ancillary infrastructure, and site restoration;*
- xii. the quality of site restoration plans including the measures in place to safeguard or guarantee availability of finances to effectively implement those plans; and*
- xiii. cumulative impacts.*

In considering these impacts, significant weight will be placed on the contribution of the proposal to renewable energy generation targets and on greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

Grid capacity should not constrain renewable energy development. It is for developers to agree connections to the grid with the relevant network operator. In the case of proposals for grid infrastructure, consideration should be given to underground connections where possible.

f) Consents for development proposals may be time-limited. Areas identified for wind farms are, however, expected to be suitable for use in perpetuity.

Highland-wide Local Development Plan (2012)

- 2.27 The Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) was adopted in April 2012. Preparation of the second HwLDP was underway in 2017, with preparatory stages such as the Main Issues Report complete and published. However, now NPF4 has been adopted and forms part of the Development Plan, it is noted by THC that this will likely reduce the number and range of policies that they require in their new Local Development Plan. THC contributed to the preparation of NPF4 and now expect to take forward review of the HwLDP under the new arrangements for Local Development Plans (LDPs) with a focus on land allocation through the spatial strategy and interpreting national policy in a local context, with formal work having started in Spring 2023.
- 2.28 Currently therefore, the adopted HwLDP (2012) is considered to be the relevant LDP, however, as outlined in **paragraph 2.5**, where there is any incompatibility between the National Planning Framework and a provision of the LDP that whichever of them is the later in date (in this instance, NPF4) is to prevail.
- 2.29 The HwLDP Policy most relevant to the Proposed Development is Policy 67 – Renewable Energy Developments, which sets out THC’s support in principle for renewable energy developments. The first part of Policy 67 states:

“Renewable energy development proposals should be well related to the source of the primary renewable resources that are needed for their operation. The Council will also consider:

- *the contribution of the Proposed Development towards meeting renewable energy generation targets;*
- *any positive or negative effects it is likely to have on the local and national economy; and*
- *will assess proposals against other policies of the development plan the Highland Renewable Energy Strategy and Planning Guidelines and have regard to any other material considerations, including proposals able to demonstrate significant benefits including by making effective use of existing and proposed infrastructure of facilities.”*

2.30 The second part of Policy 67 ‘Renewable Energy Developments’ sets out a number of criteria that must be addressed by wind farm applications. The policy states:

“Subject to balancing with these considerations and taking into account any mitigation measures to be included, the Council will support proposals where it is satisfied that they are located, sited and designed such that they will not be significantly detrimental overall¹, either individually or cumulatively with other developments (see Glossary), having regard in particular to any significant effects on the following:

- *natural, built and cultural heritage features;*
- *species and habitats;*
- *visual impact and impact on the landscape character of the surrounding area (the design and location of the proposal should reflect the scale and character of the landscape and seek to minimise landscape and visual impact, subject to any other considerations);*
- *amenity at sensitive locations, including residential properties, work places and recognised visitor sites (in or outwith a settlement boundary);*
- *the safety and amenity of any regularly occupied buildings and the grounds that they occupy- having regard to visual intrusion or the likely effect of noise generation and, in the case of wind energy proposals, ice throw in winter conditions, shadow flicker or shadow throw;*
- *ground water, surface water (including water supply), aquatic ecosystems and fisheries;*
- *the safe use of airport, defence or emergency service operations, including flight activity, navigation and surveillance systems and associated infrastructure, or on aircraft flight paths or MoD low-flying areas;*
- *other communications installations or the quality of radio or TV reception;*
- *the amenity of users of any Core Path or other established public access for walking, cycling or horse riding;*
- *tourism and recreation interests²;*
- *land and water-based traffic and transport interests.*

¹ It is noted that this policy test is no longer consistent with NPF4 and is discussed further in the Planning Statement.

² NPF4 no longer includes tourism and recreational interests as matters to be addressed for wind farm developments.

Proposals for the extension of existing renewable energy facilities will be assessed against the same criteria and material considerations as apply to proposals for new facilities.

In all cases, if consent is granted, the Council will approve appropriate conditions (along with a legal agreement/obligation under section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, where necessary), relating to the removal of the development and associated equipment and to the restoration of the site, whenever the consent expires, other than in circumstances where fresh consent has been secured to extend the life of the project, or the project ceases to operate for a specific period.”

- 2.31 The ‘Highland Renewable Energy Strategy’ referred to in Policy 67, was removed as a material consideration in August 2016 by the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee.
- 2.32 The following policies of the HwLDP are also considered relevant to the Proposed Development:
- Policy 28 – Sustainable Design;
 - Policy 51 – Trees and Development;
 - Policy 52 – Principle of Development in Woodland;
 - Policy 53 – Minerals;
 - Policy 55 – Peat and Soils;
 - Policy 57 – Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage;
 - Policy 58 – Protected Species;
 - Policy 59 – Other Important Species;
 - Policy 60 – Other Important Habitats;
 - Policy 61 – Landscape;
 - Policy 64 – Flood Risk; and
 - Policy 69 – Electricity Transmission Infrastructure.

Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (2017)

- 2.33 Under the transitional provisions of the 1997 Act, as amended by the Planning (Scotland) Act, 2019, Supplementary Guidance associated with adopted LDPs which came into force before 12 February 2023 continues to form part of the Local Development Plan. The relevant Supplementary Guidance pertaining to the Proposed Development is the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG), which was adopted as part of the Development Plan for Highland in November 2016.
- 2.34 The HwLDP refers to a spatial framework for wind energy development of over 50m to tip height, detailed in the Supplementary Guidance³. The HwLDP notes that:
- “Supplementary Guidance will include a spatial framework for windfarm development in Highland, together with other guidance for developers”.*

³ NPF4 has now removed the requirement for spatial frameworks for onshore wind in LDPs. This is discussed further in the Planning Statement.

- 2.35 The spatial framework presented in the OWESG classifies the majority of the site as a Group 2 area, which is an “*area of significant protection*”, but which does not rule out wind farm development, noting that further consideration would be required to demonstrate that any significant effects can be sustainably overcome by siting, design or other mitigation. The classification is due to the site being located within areas of Carbon Rich Soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat (CPP) which are Group 2 constraints. A small part of the site (between proposed turbines 9 and 10) is classified as Group 3 (Areas with potential for wind farm development).

West Highlands and Islands Local Development Plan

- 2.36 The West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan (abbreviated to WestPlan) was adopted in September 2019 and is the third of three new area local development plans that, along with the HwLDP and Supplementary Guidance, will form “the Development Plan” that guides future development in the Highlands. WestPlan focuses on where development should and should not occur in the West Highland and Islands area over the next 20 years. The Plan area comprises Wester Ross, Skye and Lochalsh, Lochaber and a small, mountainous part of Badenoch.
- 2.37 There are no relevant policies within WestPlan. The plan is only considered to be of relevance in identifying the boundaries of the Special Landscape Areas within the vicinity of the site. Further details on these SLAs are provided in **Chapter 3: Landscape and Visual** of this EIA Report.

RELEVANT MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Onshore Wind Policy Statement 2022

- 2.38 The Scottish Government’s ‘Onshore Wind Policy Statement 2022’ (OWPS) was published in December 2022, focussing on the following key areas:
- main ambitions and aspirations;
 - delivering on their ambitions in Scotland;
 - environmental considerations: how to achieve a good balance and maximise benefits;
 - benefits to local communities and financial mechanisms;
 - benefits to Scotland;
 - aviation considerations;
 - technical considerations; and
 - energy systems and regulation.
- 2.39 The OWPS has been published with a purpose of restating the importance of onshore wind as a tool to accelerate Scotland’s transition towards a net zero society. The policy cites the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and subsequent global energy crisis as an additional reason for the further development of onshore wind in Scotland. The statement emphasises the importance of onshore wind in Scotland as a cheap and reliable source of zero carbon electricity. Within the statement, the Scottish Government commits to enabling a minimum of 20 Gigawatts (GW) of total installed onshore wind capacity by

2030, increasing the current installed capacity by 11.3GW⁴. Referring to the projection that Scotland's peak demand for electricity will at least double within the next two decades, the report states that *"This will require a substantial increase in installed capacity across all renewable technologies."*

- 2.40 The statement highlights the relative inexpensiveness to develop, and increasing profitability of onshore wind, showing that the cost of onshore wind has continued to fall over the contract for difference allocation rounds – showing costs of around 45% lower than in 2015.
- 2.41 The necessity for taller turbines has been reaffirmed in section 3.4.6 *"...What would previously have been considered 'taller' turbines are now more common and must continue to be deployed in appropriate locations..."* whilst in section 3.4.7 it reiterates why these turbines are a necessity *"Taller turbines have a higher installed capacity which results in the need for fewer turbines per site."*
- 2.42 The statement clarifies the Scottish Government's position on the construction of new wind farms and their effect on the landscape further in section 3.6.2 *"The only areas where wind energy is not supported are National Parks and National Scenic Areas. Outside of these areas, the criteria for assessing proposals have been updated, including stronger weight being afforded to the contribution of the development to the climate emergency, as well as community benefits"* in accordance with NPF4.
- 2.43 The OWPS promotes community benefits, and the Scottish Government continues to encourage community benefits from all renewable energy businesses. Along with community benefits, the statement advocates for an increase in shared ownership of renewables developments. The Scottish Government has set a target of 2GW of community and locally owned energy by 2030 as a minimum and encourages developers to consider shared ownership opportunities in all projects.

Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan 2023

- 2.44 On 10 January 2023, the Scottish Government published the Draft version of its 'Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan - delivering a fair and secure zero carbon energy system for Scotland'. This plan outlines the key ambitions for Scotland's energy future, with an even greater focus on renewable energy. It is predicted that these policies would result in a net jobs gain across the energy production sector and will increase renewable energy exports whilst also reducing exposure to future global energy market fluctuations.
- 2.45 The Plan outlines several of the government's targets to reach a net zero Scotland, with the main milestones and dates outlined as:
- to substantially increase Scotland's renewable electricity generation capacity from the current level of 13.4GW with an additional 20GW resulting in an overall capacity of at least 33.4GW by 2030;
 - aims to have 8-11GW of installed offshore, and an additional 12GW of installed onshore wind capacity by 2030;
 - for renewable and low-carbon hydrogen power to provide 5GW (the equivalent of 15% of Scotland's current energy needs) by 2030, increasing to 25GW by 2045; and

⁴ OWPS identifies that as of June 2022 that Scotland had approximately 8.7GW of onshore wind deployed and 11.3GW in the pipeline (but acknowledges that not all of the projects will receive consent and be built).

- to phase out the necessity for new petrol and diesel cars by 2030, and to reduce total car kilometres by 20% by 2030.

2.46 The plan also outlines general commitments made by the Government to assist with the transition to net zero, which include the following:

- to establish a national public energy agency – ‘Heat and Energy Efficiency Scotland’;
- to increase the contributions of solar, hydropower and marine energy within Scotland’s energy mix;
- to accelerate the decarbonisation of domestic industry, transport and heat in buildings;
- to generate surplus electricity – allowing for the export of electricity and renewable hydrogen to support decarbonisation across Europe;
- to create energy security – through the development of Scotland’s resources and additional energy storage;
- to allow for a just transition by maintaining or increasing employment in Scotland’s energy production sector against a decline in North Sea production; and
- to maximise the use of Scottish manufactured components in the energy transition, ensuring high-value technology and innovation.

Onshore Wind Sector Deal 2023

2.47 On 21 September 2023, the Scottish Government published ‘The Onshore Wind Sector Deal’. The deal sets out the commitments from the Scottish Government and the onshore wind farm industry to deliver 20GW of onshore wind energy by 2030. The Government and the onshore wind farm industry’s commitments within the deal include:

- support the enhancement of current skills and training provisions through further higher education and training to focus on delivery of the needs of the wind industry;
- continue to collaborate with local communities, building on good practices to enhance its existing ‘good neighbour’ approach through engagement at all stages of the project’s lifecycle and offering impactful community benefits and practical routes to shared ownership;
- new onshore wind projects will enhance biodiversity and optimise land use and environmental benefits;
- reduction in time taken to determine section 36 applications for onshore wind farm projects by increasing skills and resources by streamlining approaches to scoping EIA Reports;
- develop evidence to support a more strategic approach to delivering the investment in our electricity network and to inform a coordinated approach to the transportation of wind turbine components across Scotland’s road network; and
- deliver cooperative coexistence between onshore wind deployment and safe aviation operations.

2.48 It is considered that the Proposed Development would contribute to the 20GW of onshore wind energy which could be connected to the grid network by 2030.

Progress Towards Targets

- 2.49 The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 initially established long term statutory targets for Scotland of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% of 1990 levels by 2050, with an interim target of reducing emissions by at least 42% by 2020. The Act also placed climate change duties on Scottish public bodies and included provisions on climate change including adaptation, forestry, energy efficiency and waste reduction.
- 2.50 In May 2019 the Scottish Government formally declared a climate emergency. The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 was amended by the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019, increasing the ambition of Scotland's emissions reduction targets to net zero by 2045 and revising interim and annual emissions reduction targets.
- 2.51 **Tables 2-1** and **2-2** and **Graphs 2-1** and **2-2** set out how Scotland has made progress towards the renewable energy and greenhouse gas targets set by the Scottish Government. Since renewable energy targets are not yet being met it is considered that the Proposed Development would make a valuable contribution to trying to achieve these ambitious targets.

Table 2-1: Progress Against Renewable Energy Targets

| Year | Target | Achieved/Progress |
|------|--|---|
| 2020 | Equivalent of 100% of all electricity used in Scotland to come from renewable sources ⁵ . | No - equivalent of 98.6% of all electricity used in Scotland came from renewable sources ⁵ . |
| 2021 | Equivalent of 100% of all electricity used in Scotland to come from renewable sources (continuation of 2020 target as target was not met). | No - equivalent of 85.2% of all electricity used in Scotland came from renewable sources (Graph 2-1). |
| 2030 | To increase the installed onshore wind capacity in Scotland to 20GW ⁶ . | Latest figures published in September 2023 (most recently available) show that the installed onshore wind capacity in Scotland in September 2023 was 9.4GW ⁷ . |
| 2030 | To generate 50% of Scotland's overall energy consumption from renewable sources ⁸ . | Final figures for 2021 indicate that the equivalent of 23.7% of total Scottish energy consumption came from renewable sources. (Graph 2-2). ⁹ |
| 2050 | To have decarbonised the energy system almost completely ¹⁰ . | Future target and difficult to gauge progress against. |

⁵ Scottish Government (2011) *2020 Renewable Routemap for Renewable Energy in Scotland Update 2011*

⁶ Scottish Government Onshore Wind Policy Statement 2022

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/onshore-wind-policy-statement-2022/documents/>

⁷ Scottish Government Scottish Energy Statistics Hub Operational Renewable Capacity 2001 Q1 - 2023 Q2

<https://scotland.shinyapps.io/Energy/?Section=RenLowCarbon&Subsection=RenElec&Chart=RenElecCapacity>

⁸ Scottish Government (2017). *The future of energy in Scotland: Scottish energy strategy* 20 December 2017

⁹ Scottish Government Energy Statistics for Scotland – Q2 2023

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/energy-statistics-for-scotland-q2-2023/pages/progress-towards-energy-targets/>

¹⁰ Scottish Government (2017). *The future of energy in Scotland: Scottish energy strategy*. 20 December 2017

Table 2-2: Progress Against Greenhouse Gas Emissions Targets

| Year | Current Target ¹¹ (% Reduction of Emissions relative to 1990) | Recommended Revised Target ¹² (% Reduction of Emissions relative to 1990) | Achieved/Progress |
|------|---|---|--|
| 2020 | 56% | n/a | Achieved – GHG account reduced by 59% between the baseline period and 2020 ⁹ . As detailed in the Scottish Emissions Targets – First Five-Yearly Review (December 2022): “ <i>The fall in emissions in 2020 was largely due to the travel restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic and it is unlikely the target would have been achieved without the impacts of the pandemic.</i> ” |
| 2021 | 57.9% | 51.1% | Not achieved – GHG account reduced by 49.9% ¹³ between baseline period and 2021. |
| 2022 | 59.8% | 53.8% | Most recent data available is 2021 figure. |
| 2023 | 61.7% | 56.4% | Most recent data available is 2021 figure. |
| 2024 | 63.6% | 59.1% | Most recent data available is 2021 figure. |
| 2025 | 65.5% | 61.7% | Most recent data available is 2021 figure. |
| 2026 | 67.4% | 64.4% | Most recent data available is 2021 figure. |
| 2027 | 69.3% | 67.0% | Most recent data available is 2021 figure. |
| 2028 | 71.2% | 69.7% | Most recent data available is 2021 figure. |
| 2029 | 73.1% | 72.3% | Most recent data available is 2021 figure. |
| 2030 | 75% | 75% | Most recent data available is 2021 figure. |
| 2040 | 90% | 90% | Most recent data available is 2021 figure. |
| 2050 | 100% | 100% | Most recent data available is 2021 figure. |

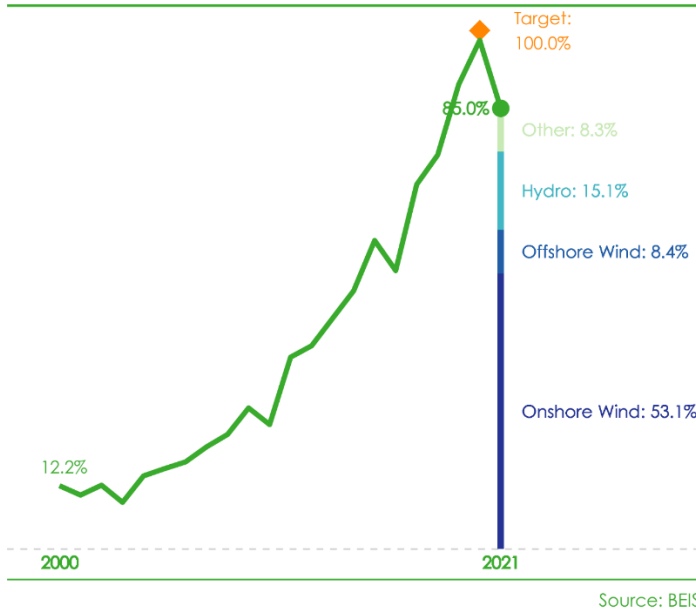
¹¹ Scottish Government (2009) Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009; and Climate Scottish Government (2019). Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019

¹² Independent Climate Change Committee (2022). Scottish Emissions Targets – First Five-Yearly Review

¹³ Scottish Government (2021). Scottish Greenhouse Gas Statistics 2021

Graph 2-1: Renewable Electricity Generation in Scotland

Share of renewable electricity in gross electricity consumption
Scotland, 2000 - 2021



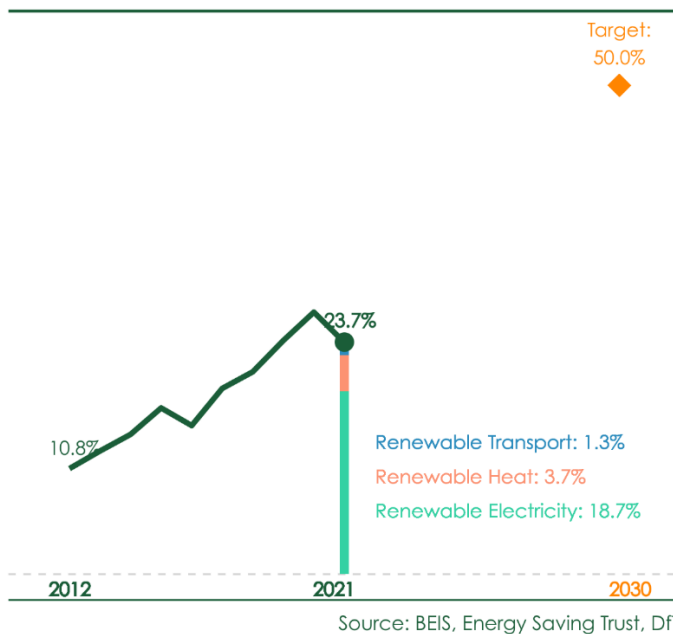
Source: Energy Statistics for Scotland Q3 2022 (Scottish Energy Statistics Hub, 2022)

Available at:

<https://scotland.shinyapps.io/Energy/?Section=RenLowCarbon&Subsection=RenElec&Chart=RenElecTarget>

Graph 2-2: Progress Against Renewable Energy Targets

Share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption
Scotland, 2012 - 2021



Available at: <https://scotland.shinyapps.io/Energy/?Section=WholeSystem&Chart=RenEnTgt>

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