



TA 8.1: Preliminary Access Management Plan

Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm

Ben Sca Wind Farm Limited

Prepared by:

SLR Consulting Limited

Suite 223ab, 4 Redheughs Rigg Westpoint, South Gyle, Edinburgh EH12 9DQ

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Basis of Report

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1.0 Introduction

1. This document presents a Preliminary Public Access Management Plan (PAMP) for the Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm which outlines the principles and procedures which would be put in place to address any potential impacts to public access during the construction and decommissioning phases of the wind farm (hereafter referred to as ‘the Proposed Development’). It outlines provisions for public access management during the operational life of the Proposed Development, as well as aspirations for future long term access to the wider area.
2. This document should be read in conjunction with the following documents that form part of the Ben Sca Wind Farm Redesign Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report:
 - **Chapter 1: Introduction and Project Description;**
 - **Chapter 8: Socio-economics and Land Use;**
 - **Technical Appendix 1.1: Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP);**
 - **Technical Appendix 9.1: Transport Statement;** and
 - **Technical Appendix 9.2: Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP).**
3. This PAMP is not meant to be a formal Outdoor Access Plan (OAP) and, therefore, has not been drafted in line with NatureScot’s OAP Guidance.

1.1 Purposes, Aims and Objectives

4. The purpose of this document is to outline how the Applicant would manage public access during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. The PAMP accompanies the EIA Report for the Proposed Development and, should consent be granted, it is envisaged that this PAMP would be revised and updated following discussion with The Highland Council (THC), NatureScot and the relevant landowners, to ensure that the aims, objectives and details meet the stakeholder’s requirements.
5. It is envisaged that the finalised Access Management Plan (AMP) for the Proposed Development would be secured and enforced via a planning condition. It is anticipated that, should the adjacent Balmeanach Wind Farm be consented, then this PAMP would be implemented in conjunction with the PAMP secured under that consent.
6. The final AMP is intended to be deliverable, to safeguard access during construction, provide access enhancements during the operational phase of the Proposed Development and facilitate opportunities for improving access in the local area surrounding the Proposed Development. It would aim to address the basic infrastructure associated with improving access such as car parks, trailheads¹ and path improvement within the Proposed Development and to set up a framework for delivering improved access arrangements throughout the life of the Proposed Development.
7. This PAMP does not provide specific details of signage and interpretation etc., and instead it provides outline examples or suggestions for further discussion and

¹ The point at which a path begins and includes for signage / signposting.



agreement with consultees. If the Proposed Development is permitted and this PAMP further developed, there would be a requirement to agree a number of specific details with THC Access Officer, such as path surfacing and upgrade specifications.

8. This PAMP aims to cover and / or include outline specifications for the following:
 - access management during construction and decommissioning, including the rights of access and where necessary, the provision of alternative routes;
 - these would be defined on the ground by maps and signage;
 - longer term access proposals, including enhancement of existing routes within the Proposed Development. This should include:
 - details of the arrangements to be made for enabling and improving access rights, e.g. paths, and signs within the Proposed Development;
 - the specification for any additional paths which should be constructed to a multi-use standard;
 - the specification of access controls (e.g. location of locked gates), which should also make provision for all non-motorised users;
 - the location, design, and layout of car parking facilities;
 - the location, design and layout of access points and path networks for pedestrians, cyclists, equestrian and other users;
 - the location and details of any interpretative / information facilities including mapping at appropriate road heads and any other visitor facilities to be provided (if any);
 - provisions for maintenance of any existing, upgraded, or new routes; and
 - outline the opportunity for the path system developed as part of the Proposed Development to be linked with the wider path network, providing long distance walking and cycle routes from both east-to-west and north-to-south, including:
 - details of the timescales for implementing all of these measures.
9. This last point would be included within the final AMP, if permission is granted and stakeholder discussions are advanced.

1.2 Location of the Proposed Development

10. The Proposed Development, centred on OSGB² National Grid Reference (NGR) 132800, 848600, is located in the northwest of the Isle of Skye, on the Coishletter Estate within THC administrative boundary (hereafter referred to as 'the site'). The site is located on moorland, utilised for game shooting, and commercial forestry production, approximately 2.5km to the southwest of the settlement of Edinbane and approximately 7km to the east of the settlement of Dunvegan.
11. The application site boundary, which comprises approximately 429ha of land within it, encompasses both the previous Ben Sca Wind Farm (20/00013/FUL) and Ben Sca Extension Wind Farm (21/05767/FUL) application boundaries (hereafter referred to as 'the consented development').
12. No new land is included within the planning red line boundary (i.e. all infrastructure remains within the application boundaries of the consented development), as the

² Ordnance Survey Great Britain



- proposed changes to the infrastructure maintain a similar alignment to that which was previously consented.
13. Access to the site remains unchanged from the consented applications, and would be via the existing Ben Aketil Wind Farm access track from the A850.
 14. The surrounding area is rural in nature, with land predominantly used for agriculture, grazing, forestry and game shooting. There are several settlements located in the vicinity of the site, including Edinbane approximately 2.5km to the north east, Dunvegan approximately 7km to the west, Balmeanach approximately 6km to the south and Bernisdale approximately 8km to the east. There is coniferous plantation to the north, east and west of the site.
 15. Regarding other wind farms in the surrounding area, the operational Edinbane Wind Farm is located the east and southeast of the site, comprising 18 turbines. To the southwest of the site lies the operational Ben Aketil Wind Farm and its extension, which comprises 12 turbines. The proposed Balmeanach Wind Farm (currently being considered by THC) would be located directly to the southeast of the Proposed Development, which, if consented, would provide an enabling link between the Proposed Development and the Edinbane Wind Farm tracks.
 16. The turbine layout and infrastructure for the Proposed Development is shown on EIA Report **Figure 1.6**, whilst the land use and recreational baseline is described in detail in the EIA Report at **Chapter 8: Socioeconomics and Land Use**.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Access Baseline

17. There is no definitive record of Rights of Way (RoW) in Scotland, but data from The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (Scotways) and the THC Access Officer have identified a number of RoW, Core Paths and informal routes in the wider area around the site, which are shown on **Figure 8.3 and Figure 8.1.1a-b**.

2.2 Paths, Access and RoW within the Site

The site would be accessed from the A850 and via the existing Ben Aketil Wind Farm access track as was the case for the consented development. Use of the consented site entrance and existing access tracks would minimise the length of upgraded or new track required to be built for the Proposed Development. The bellmouth leading to/from the A850 would require to be widened to the same extent as the proposed Balmeanach Wind Farm to enable delivery of the longer turbine blades (when compared to the consented development).

18. Within the site boundary there are no other paths, RoWs, Core Paths, Heritage Paths or long-distance routes to be considered. However, the access route to the operational Ben Aketil Wind Farm can be used recreationally similar to a RoW, allowing users to walk around the rural Proposed Development site. Once constructed, the public would have access rights across the Proposed Development site.

2.3 RoW in the Surrounding Area

19. The Edinbane to Greshornish Road End Core Path is located on the A850, north adjacent to the proposed site access. To the east on the same road is the Edinbane Link Path, whilst to the west is the Greshornish Forest Path, which extends north from the A850. The final Core Path which could be associated with



- the site's access is the Loch Caroy to Glen Vic Askill route, which is located to the south of the site, as shown on **Figure 8.1.1a-b**.
20. Further Core Paths in the wider area, as shown on **Figure 8.3 and 8.1.1a-b**, which are less likely to be impacted by the restriction of, or creation of new, access to the site are:
- Churches Walk – a 3km path located west of the site;
 - Healaval Forest – a 4.25km path located within the Healaval Forest to the west of the site;
 - Tayinloan to Fanks Road End – a 2.18km path to the northeast of the site;
 - Vatten to Feorlig;
 - Seakbost to Carbost – track located east of the site; and
 - South Cuidrach to Earlish.
21. Also within the wider area is a Heritage Path, tracks to Idrigill Point Townships and a 23km circular rural path which runs 4km southwest of the site, forming a circular route. These paths do not lie within the site, and the distance from the site means they would remain unimpacted by the construction and operation of the Proposed Development.
22. There are several planned, consented and constructed wind farms in the area, with the site sharing access via the current operational Ben Aketil Wind Farm access track, which could potentially share or link more routes, allowing for greater public access throughout the rural area.
23. If the proposed Ben Aketil Repowering Wind Farm is consented and constructed, then access tracks would be increased over that site providing additional linkages to the ridge and to the south.
24. If the proposed Balmeanach Wind Farm is consented, then this would provide a linkage between the Proposed Development and the existing Edinbane Wind Farm (and possibly the proposed Edinbane Repowering Wind Farm should it be consented) (**Figure 8.1.1b**).
25. It is noted that the public would have access rights across all of these wind farm developments.

2.4 Potential Access Impacts

26. During the construction period, conflicts with the public may occur when works are taking place on or near existing routes which may be used by the public, including the access route to the Ben Aketil Wind Farm. Measures would need to be put in place to ensure that there is safe and convenient access for users of the RoWs, access tracks and informal paths.
27. The infrastructure and traffic requirements for the Proposed Development are outlined within the EIA Report **Chapter 9: Other Considerations, Technical Appendix 9.1: Transport Statement and Technical Appendix 9.2: Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP)**.
28. The following elements, in particular, are most likely to affect members of the public wishing to access the site using existing tracks or routes:
- use of the site entrance and first 1.8km of Ben Aketil Wind Farm access track;
 - construction of up to 4.5km of onsite access tracks;



- the site access track would be adjacent to the Edinbane to Greshornish Road End Core Path; and
 - access by other construction/maintenance traffic associated with Ben Aketil Wind Farm and the consented development.
29. In respect of recreational users, this disruption from construction works would be temporary, and expected to occur only during the construction and decommissioning phases. The routine maintenance related to the operation of the Proposed Development is not expected to cause undue restrictions.
30. Any temporary restrictions would be managed, as per **Technical Appendix 9.2: Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP)**, during the construction and decommissioning phases. Plans for temporary access management, including traffic management and access restrictions, would be communicated with the public prior to taking place, where feasible.

3.0 Construction Access Arrangements

3.1 Construction Arrangements

31. During construction, access restrictions and limitations should be kept to a minimum, to enable day-to-day access. The Applicant is committed to safeguarding the safety of members of the general public, whilst also ensuring that the construction progress is not comprised.
32. The final version of the AMP would include detailed information on how access would be managed by the Applicant. Mitigation measures would need to be implemented prior to, or during construction of the Proposed Development and in outline such measures would include:
- details of the temporary re-routing of publicly utilised access tracks during construction. Such measures might include provision of temporary paths set back from the existing roads and tracks so that there is clear separation of pedestrians and other recreational users from any construction traffic;
 - details of the provision of signage and other information alerting the public to construction works;
 - sufficient temporary advance signage would be erected at key access locations both within and out with the Proposed Development working area prior to the start of construction, to inform all access users of the location and timing of the construction activities;
 - signage would also be employed onsite, for both site personnel and the public, to clearly define the boundary of the works where they coincide with areas accessible to the public. **Annex 8.1A** of this document provide examples of such signs;
 - proposed measures to warn recreational users of the Ben Aketil Wind Farm track about the use of this access track by construction traffic for the Proposed Development would be set out in the final Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). Signage would present detailed maps illustrating where the route would be impacted upon, suggest other routes and detours where possible and detail and recommend a number of Safety Measures which users should adhere to ensuring they would not be affected by the construction work;



- details of any fencing or barriers to be provided during the construction period, including the type of fencing and gate access to be used, where access is not precluded on the basis of health and safety. For instance, all site access gates would be locked to non-construction vehicle users, but the Applicant would provide kissing gates or low-level wooden boards / logs to allow walkers, equestrian and bicycle access;
 - details as to how publicly utilised access tracks would be inspected prior to and monitored during the construction period and a commitment to return all tracks impacted by the Proposed Development to the same condition as they were, or better, once the construction period has ceased;
 - details of an active management plan for crossing points for public rights of way during the construction works. As a standard this would include signage but could also include a banksman at busy junctions; and
 - details of a communication and liaison strategy to advise local communities and other users of construction works and vehicle movements. This would be aimed at walkers, cyclists, and horse riders;
 - further consultation with stakeholders including THC's Access Officer. These meetings would be closely aligned with the commencement of construction of the Proposed Development; and
 - the community liaison strategy could be designed not just to establish processes to keep the community informed, but also to review incidents that have occurred and how these have been / should be resolved and to discuss the forthcoming programme of work.
33. The Applicant would liaise with local community and other users prior to any construction starting onsite and communication would be maintained on a regular basis until construction is complete and the Proposed Development is operational.
34. The Applicant is also willing to work with stakeholders towards any additional mitigation measures which would reduce the effect of the construction activities on recreational users.

3.2 Implementation and Control

35. The final AMP, together with the final Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and CTMP (see **Technical Appendices: 1.1** and **9.2** for outline reports), would be used by the Principal Contractor (PC) to ensure that appropriate access and environmental management is implemented throughout the construction phase of the Proposed Development.
36. The final CEMP would set out measures to ensure that recreational users of the site are informed of the construction work and directed into safe areas where there would be no conflict with plant and machinery. Compliance with the CEMP is the key control measure required during construction to ensure mitigation is appropriately addressed. It documents the principles and processes to be followed to implement all relevant agreed environmental mitigation. The personnel who would implement, monitor and respond to the CEMP and final AMP would be the Applicant construction team and the PC. The PC would be required to prepare a series of method statements in accordance with the Schedule of Mitigation set out in the CEMP. These method statements would detail how the contractor intends to implement the mitigation set out in the CEMP and would be integrated with their detailed Construction Method Statements.



37. The Applicant and PC would also ensure that during all phases of the Proposed Development, the requirements of both the Land Reform Act (Scotland) 2003 (as amended) and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code are met or are exceeded.

4.0 Operational Arrangements

38. During the operational phase of the Proposed Development, all access restrictions and limitations would be removed, and general recreational public access rights would be restored. The final version of the AMP (to be agreed) would include detailed information about how access would be managed by the Applicant during the lifespan of the Proposed Development as well as the following aspects:

- details of potential funds for improved signage, orientation, and interpretation (potentially as a part of the offered community benefit fund, and if considered an appropriate project for funding by members of the community who may manage such funds);
- details of any new access routes for the life of the development;
 - identified routes are discussed in **Section 4.1.1**;
- details of the path surfacing which should be multifunctional in usage.
 - The British Horse Society typically requests that any off-road tracks or non-motorised user tracks or paths are multi-use, catering for all including horse riders and carriage drivers;
- details of linkages offered with other constructed, consented, or planned wind farms;
- details of a communications campaign linked with the end of the construction period;
- details of any opportunities for betterment within the boundaries of the Proposed Development; and
- where relevant, and upon agreement with the relevant stakeholders, details of the facilitation of wider access benefits.

39. This PAMP provides some outline information in the following sections, and should be considered the basis of future discussions between stakeholders.

4.1 Wind Farm Access Track Enhancements

40. The requirements of the PAMP are to provide infrastructure to support access to the site.

4.1.1 New and Anticipated Wind Farm Access Tracks within the Area

41. To improve access within the site and to the wider area, a strategic route is being proposed which would create a link between the Ben Aketil Wind Farm access track and the Edinbane Wind Farm access tracks. The enhancement of paths and trails within the site would be achieved through the presence of up to 4.5km of new wind farm tracks that would open up the area for informal recreational opportunities e.g. cyclists, mountain bikers, equestrian users, cross country skiing and walking.

42. There is potential for linkages to be formed between the proposed tracks and other access tracks in the area through the agreement of the Applicant and other wind farm developers. This agreement could facilitate the implementation of



longer recreational routes, including a proposed additional footpath link to adjoin with the existing Edinbane Wind Farm access tracks (and Edinbane Repowering Wind Farm should it be consented in the future), which could result in a circular route to and from Edinbane (as shown on **Figure 8.1.1a-b**).

43. **Figure 8.1.1a** shows the proposed linkage between the Proposed Development and Edinbane, without the proposed Balmeanach Wind Farm. **Figure 8.1.1b** shows how the moorland could be opened up to much greater recreational use with the addition of the Balmeanach Wind Farm Access tracks, should that development gain consent.
44. The potential new routes would also enhance the opportunity for all types of users to link with the existing, consented and proposed wind farm sites, opening up new areas that might enhance a person's experience of the wider area. It is considered likely that with the formal designation of paths and trails for recreational use, the level of use within the area would increase and new visitors would be attracted to the area, whether for walking, running, cycling (including mountain biking) and / or horse riding.

4.1.2 Management of Access

45. It is anticipated that the Applicant, alongside the landowners, nearby existing and future wind farms and access stakeholders, would be responsible for access management within the site, In order to control vehicular access to the site, and prevent joy riding or off road rallying, there would be a necessity to install locked, access barrier gates to restrict non-construction / forestry vehicle users, but would still allow for non-vehicular access, as per the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.
46. The details of any fencing or barriers to be provided during the operation phase are subject to further consideration and detail design and final details would be agreed with the access stakeholders prior to their installation. This would include the type of fencing and gate access to be used.

4.1.3 Permanent Signage, Interpretation Boards and Leaflets

47. The Applicant would be willing to discuss the provision of signage and interpretation boards with the relevant access stakeholders. The purpose of signage would be to provide information about the Proposed Development. However, this could be extended to attract a wider audience such as walkers, cyclists or horse riders.
48. The information on the signs would as a minimum include the name of the path / wind farm, the destination and distance. It is envisaged that signs would be installed at strategic locations i.e. route start and end points, trails heads and at route junctions.
49. Subject to agreement, further interpretation panels could also be designed and installed at points of interests along the routes. These could be identified in cooperation with stakeholders and people with detailed local knowledge. For instance, it may be possible to attract a larger audience to the area by providing additional information about the local area, wildlife, history and estate management throughout the operational phase of the Proposed Development, with nearby locations worthwhile to visit.
50. If suitable, locations for wildlife hides can be identified, these might also offer the opportunity to observe wildlife in their natural surroundings.



4.1.4 Maintenance of Wind Farm Access Tracks

51. As part of the development of the final AMP, a maintenance plan and programme of works would be prepared. It is anticipated that route inspections and reasonable maintenance would be implemented by the Applicant in collaboration with THC's Access Officer.
52. It is anticipated that maintenance would be carried out on a yearly basis following path and infrastructure inspection. Reasonable maintenance of the routes could be considered undertaken through the agreement of the Applicant and neighbouring wind farm developments and to be agreed with all other access stakeholders.

4.1.5 Enhancement Timescales

53. The Applicant has informal agreements with the landowners and crofters to deliver the terms of the PAMP but only within the terms of its land agreement, further access proposals would be subject to discussions with all relevant access stakeholders. It cannot secure or provide any certainty beyond the 40-year life of the project. At least three years prior to decommissioning however the Applicant would initiate discussions with the landowners, crofters and wider consultee bodies regarding the ongoing use of facilities provided by the PAMP.

4.2 Long Term Aspirations

54. THC has aspirations for betterment within and outside of the site. They consider that there is an opportunity for the existing path system to be developed further as part of the Proposed Development and to be linked with the proposed, consented and constructed neighbouring wind farms, to provide long distance walking and cycle routes.
55. It is considered that such a vision is not deliverable by the Applicant working alone; however, it is acknowledged that with close liaison between current and future local wind farm operators, THC, the Applicant, landowners and local interest groups, the future and wider integration of the wind farm path network could be facilitated. Suggestions from consultees on how this long term aspiration could be enabled and funded would be welcomed. It is possible that an annual betterment budget could be allocated from the proposed community benefit package that has been put forward for the Proposed Development (subject to community agreement). This could be used to cover new linkages and upgrading, and could also be used to implement some of the long term aspirations in this PAMP.

5.0 Conclusions

56. This PAMP is a working document and provides an outline of the range information, and level of detail that would be provided within the final AMP, should consent be granted for the Proposed Development. It is envisaged that further consultation and discussion with all other access stakeholders, would be necessary. Comments and suggestions on the PAMP are therefore welcomed from all other access stakeholders.
57. Through the future development of the PAMP and final AMP, the Applicant would consult with other stakeholders including other developers, the landowners, THC Access Officer and the Community Councils/Community Development Trusts.



References

Reference Documents

Doc Ref.	Reference Documents
1	NatureScot (2018), <i>Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook</i> , Appendix 6. Available at: https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2018-05/Publication%202018%20-%20Environmental%20Impact%20Assessment%20Handbook%20V5.pdf
2	Scotways, (2023), <i>Heritage Paths</i> . Available at: https://scotways.com/heritage-path/#zoom=13&lat=57.4337&lon=-6.4431
3	Scottish Parliament (2003), <i>The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003</i> . Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2003/2/contents
4	NatureScot (2023), <i>The Scottish Outdoor Access Code</i> . Available at: https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/

Abbreviations

Doc Ref.	Reference Documents
AMP	Access Management Plan
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
CTMP	Construction Traffic Management Plan
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
OAP	Outdoor Access Plan
PAMP	Outline Access Management Plan
PC	Principal Contractor
RoW	Rights of Way
Scotways	The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society
SLR	SLR Consulting Limited
THC	The Highland Council



Annex 8.1A

Sample Pedestrian Warning Sign



Warning!

Wind Farm
Construction Traffic
Ahead

For further information or in an emergency
please call: *Site manager, Tel No*

Sample Construction Staff Warning Sign



Warning!

This track is used by the
public.
Be vigilant!

For further information or in an emergency
please call: *Site manager, Tel No*





Making Sustainability Happen