



Balmeanach Wind Farm

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Non-Technical Summary

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Balmeanach Wind Farm Limited

wind2



NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Balmeanach Wind Farm
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Figure 1: Site Location

Figure 2: Application Boundary

Figure 3: Site Layout

1.0 Introduction

This Non-Technical Summary (NTS) summarises the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report for the Balmeanach Wind Farm referred to as the 'Proposed Development'.

Balmeanach Wind Farm Limited (the Applicant) proposes to install and operate up to 10 wind turbines with associated infrastructure on land approximately 3km to the south of Edinbane, approximately 8km to the east of Dunvegan and approximately 7km to the north of Struan on the Isle of Skye (the site) (**Figure 1**)¹. The site application boundary is shown on **Figure 2**.

The Proposed Development is being developed by Wind2 Ltd (Wind2) on behalf of EDP Renewables (EDPR).

The Proposed Development would be located within The Highland Council (THC) area (mostly within the Struan Community Council area and partly within Skeabost & District Community Council and Dunvegan Community Council areas) centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 133900, 846750². It is being progressed with a community shared ownership opportunity for communities on the Isle of Skye, being offered up to a 5% share of the project. Discussions have progressed with representative community groups on Skye.

The Proposed Development would have a capacity of 45MW and produce approximately 167,140 Mega Watt hours (MWh) of electricity annually. This equates to the power consumed by approximately 47,600 average UK households³, which would be well above the energy requirements of the 13,143 homes on the Isle of Skye⁴, and provide a meaningful contribution to the Scottish Government's target of 20 Giga Watt (GW) installed capacity from onshore wind by 2030.

Since the generating capacity of the Proposed Development would exceed 20MW, but be no greater than 50MW, an application is being submitted for planning permission for a major development (as classed under The Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Development) (Scotland) Regulations 2009) under the Town and County Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended).

Environmental effects of the Proposed Development have been considered as part of an iterative design process and included within the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The results of the EIA are presented within the EIA Report and summarised in this NTS. The EIA Report informs readers of the nature of the Proposed Development, likely significant environmental effects and measures proposed to protect the environment, during site preparation, construction, and the operation of the Proposed Development.

1 Measurements taken from main development area including turbine array

2 Centre point of proposed turbine array

3 Calculated using the most recent statistics from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) showing that annual UK average domestic household consumption is 3,509kWh (RenewableUK, December 2022).

4 Taken from estimated 2017 data, source: Skye and Lochalsh Population and demography, Paper 1 of a population needs assessment for Skye and Lochalsh NHS Highland April 2019.

2.0 The Proposed Development

2.1 Design Evolution (EIA Report Chapter 2)

The design of any wind farm is driven by the key objective of positioning turbines so that they capture the maximum energy possible within a suitable area further informed by environmental and technical constraints.

The designations within the site and surrounding area were identified as the first part of the constraints mapping process. The known environmental and technical constraints within the site were then identified to define the initial potential development area within the site boundary. Further studies, survey work and data collection further informed the onsite constraints. These constraints were used to inform the evolution of the location of the proposed turbines and associated infrastructure.

The design optimisation process was iterative, involving review of multiple layouts and related wirelines from key landscape and visual receptor locations in the study area, and adjustment to turbine locations to minimise potentially adverse impacts on peat habitats, the water environment and landscape and visual insofar as possible, whilst also taking into consideration the energy generation, particularly seeking to maintain wake loss expectations, other environmental, technical and economic considerations.

The final design is a balance of the, sometimes, competing interests together.

2.2 Proposed Infrastructure (EIA Report Chapter 3)

The Proposed Development is described in detail in Chapter 3 (Description of the Development) of the EIA Report. An outline Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is contained in the EIA Report as Technical Appendix 3.1. The key components of the Proposed Development (as shown on **Figure 3**) which would be constructed in accordance with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 including detailed design and relevant Health and Safety requirements, comprise the following:

- 10 variable pitch (three bladed) wind turbines, each with a maximum blade tip height of up to 149.9m and maximum rotor diameter of up to 138m;
- turbine foundations and a crane hardstanding area which includes areas for blade, tower and nacelle storage at each wind turbine;
- a lattice met mast up to 83.5m height, including foundation and hardstanding area;
- up to 9.4km of new onsite access track and associated drainage with a typical 5m running width (wider on bends) and nine turning heads;
- underground cabling and electrical infrastructure along access tracks to connect the turbine locations, and the onsite electrical substation;
- one onsite substation which would accommodate 33KV Switchgear to collect electricity from different parts of the site. The substation compound would include a control and metering building;
- search area for up to four borrow pits;
- a construction compound; and
- clearance of up to 77.75ha of low yielding conifer forest for Habitat Management and Biodiversity Enhancement.

2.3 Habitat Management Plan (Technical Appendix 8.5)

An Outline Habitat Management Plan (HMP) is provided in Technical Appendix 8.5. It is anticipated that the document would be developed following the granting of planning permission in discussion with THC, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and NatureScot. The aim of the Outline HMP is to establish the key objectives and principles by which parts of the site would be restored and managed to the benefit of biodiversity, which would then form the basis for the more detailed HMP. The Outline HMP is intended to cover the restoration, management and monitoring of peatland habitats during the operational life of the wind farm.

The broad principal aim of the Outline HMP is to restore and manage c. 77.75ha of peatland habitat within the afforested area to the west of the site. The habitat management area would be adjacent to the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and Ben Sca Wind Farm Extension habitat management areas and therefore would have an enhanced benefit by increasing the patch size of restored bog; and increasing the habitat connectivity with the open hill and other bog/heath habitats.

The following measures and specific objectives are proposed within the habitat restoration area:

- felling of trees within the 77.75ha area of conifer plantation, and maintain the area free of trees (through ground smoothing and removal of regenerating conifers where necessary);
- increase the water table across the habitat management area, through ditch blocking and ground smoothing to remove the stump/ridge furrow legacy in order to restore the underlying processes suitable for blanket bog restoration; and
- create conditions that should in time, increase the abundance and distribution of bog plants, particularly peat forming Sphagnum mosses, and facilitate its recovery back to blanket bog habitat.

3.0 Benefits of the Proposed Development

3.1 Contribution Towards Government Targets

The Proposed Development would:

- make a meaningful contribution of 45MW towards meeting the Scottish Government's renewable energy generation target for a minimum installed capacity of 20GW of onshore wind by 2030 which is particularly relevant given that it is anticipated that this project would connect into the grid before 2030;
- make a valuable contribution towards UK generation targets and the reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases, principally carbon dioxide (CO₂), in becoming carbon neutral in 2 years as demonstrated by the carbon calculator; and
- make Scotland, and therefore the UK, less reliant on imported and price-volatile fossil fuels by generating the equivalent energy to supply the approximate domestic needs of 47,600 average UK households.

3.2 Proposed Community Shared Ownership

The Proposed Development is being brought forward with the opportunity for community shared ownership. The preferred model at this stage for shared ownership in the project is through revenue (profit) sharing. Discussions have progressed with representative community groups on Skye. It is proposed that the community shared ownership opportunity which is developed for Ben Sca Wind Farm will be adapted as appropriate to allow inclusion of the Proposed Development at Balmeanach. The community of interest and reasons for selection of the area for the shared ownership opportunity is illustrated in the PAC Report, accompanying the application. Discussion relating to the community shared ownership offering is also provided in the Planning Statement.

3.3 Proposed Community Benefit

In addition to the shared ownership opportunity, should the Proposed Development gain consent, a Community Benefit Fund would be made available to the community of interest. It is estimated that, depending on the type of investment selected, the Community Benefit Fund alone would accrue benefits to the local economy of approximately £9 million based on a 40 year operational life of the wind farm.

3.4 Reducing the Cost of Electricity

Consultation with the local community has highlighted concern over the relatively high cost of electricity on Skye, despite several wind farms now in operation or consented. The Applicant is proposing to offer, as part of its Community Benefit package, a contribution to electricity bills to residents within a distance of the turbines to be agreed in consultation with the communities, over the 40 year life of the wind farm. Part of this offer also looks to encourage properties and communities to increase their energy efficiency and reduce their carbon emissions by offering a capitalised lump sum to enable this.

3.5 Other Economic Benefits

During the construction phase, the Proposed Development is expected to provide up to 17 new jobs. During the operational phase the Proposed Development is expected to create between eight and 10

indirect jobs created in the operational and maintenance supply chain for the project locally, and a total of between 11 and 14 jobs created in THC area.

The Applicant is committed to employing good practice measures with regard to maximising local procurement such as those set out in the Renewables UK Good Practice Guidance 2014: 'Local Supply Chain Opportunities in Onshore Wind' (RenewablesUK, 2014). The Applicant would also build on recent UK best practice in innovative local procurement including the implementation of a Local Contractor Policy, where additional weight is given in the tendering process to primary contractors that show a clear commitment to increasing local content in their supply chains. An auditing process would also be conducted so that the amount of local content sourced during the construction phase is recorded and fed back to the local business community.

As part of its Local Contractor Policy, the Applicant intends to establish a presence on Skye long before construction starts so that local suppliers are aware of opportunities. A number of 'Meet the Supplier' events would be organised well in advance of the main tender process commencing to ensure that local businesses are aware of opportunities to bid for contracts.

The Scottish economy would be expected to be boosted by a total of £1.8 million of net GVA during the 18 month development, construction and commissioning period. This is considered to be a positive benefit of the Proposed Development.

At this stage in the development process, it is not possible to quantify economic benefits in respect of individual supply chain companies, as contracts would not be let until consent is granted. However, it is evident from recent wind farm construction experience in Scotland (including BVGA report on economic benefits (BVG Associates, 2017) that suppliers of a wide range of goods and services within the Highland region and Scotland as a whole would obtain benefit from the Proposed Development. The 2023 annual Supply Chain Impact Statement by Scottish Renewables has revealed that 89% of Scotland's renewable energy supply chain believe renewable energy is the biggest economic opportunity facing Scotland, 83% having recruited new employees as a result of opportunities in the renewable energy industry.

4.0 Environmental Impact Assessment

4.1 Landscape and Visual (EIA Report Chapter 7)

4.1.1 Baseline Studies

The site is located on hilly ground between the settlements of Edinbane and Dunvegan in the north west of Skye. The site lies on the moorland slopes to the south east of the ridge that comprises Ben Sca and Ben Aketil and forms part of the hill backcloth that surrounds lower-lying, coastal and settled landscapes to the north, west and south. The Proposed Development would be located between two existing wind farms: Edinbane to the east and Ben Aketil to the west. It also lies to the south of the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and Extension and north of the consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm.

Computer generated Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTVs) identify the landscape and visual receptors within the study area which would have potential visibility of the Proposed Development.

Landscape baseline conditions comprise the NatureScot Landscape Character Types (LCT). The LVIA focuses on the key landscape characteristics that are relevant to the Proposed Development and upon which there are most likely to be significant landscape effects. There are no landscape designations within the site, but the Proposed Development would be visible from some designated areas, including National Scenic Areas (NSAs), Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) and Wild Land Areas.

Key visual receptors (people) in the landscape surrounding the site comprise the residents of settlements and dispersed properties, road users, people walking through the landscape (using footpaths, Core Paths and visiting summits) and recreational visitors to attractions in the surrounding area.

4.1.2 Assessment

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken following the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA)⁵ produced by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013). The LVIA has assessed the predicted effects of the Proposed Development upon landscape character, visual amenity and areas of recognised landscape value (including as experienced along sequential routes).

The LVIA has focused upon likely significant effects in addition to the baseline conditions which may include existing developments, including existing and consented wind farms, with which the Proposed Development may have effects (recognising that these are either existing or highly likely to be constructed).

The Cumulative LVIA has focused on likely significant effects in addition to the baseline conditions (as above) plus possible future cumulative effects, and proposed developments for which an application has been submitted (recognising that these schemes are possible, but not certain).

Mitigation of the predicted landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development was an integral part of the design evolution process as described in Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution and Chapter 3: Description of Development. This included assessment of different wind turbine layouts and sizes. Based on this assessment, the following factors have influenced the mitigation measures

⁵ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment GLVIA. 3rd Edition. Abingdon, Routledge.

factored into the Proposed Development:

- consideration of the scale and number of turbines proposed, both in isolation and cumulatively with existing wind farms in the area;
- the potential landscape and visual effects resulting from the Proposed Development have been considered extensively from key receptors, including the composition of the array of turbines and how this relates to existing and consented wind farms in the locality;
- utilising existing and consented access tracks where possible to reduce the extent of new development;
- siting the substation to limit potential visibility; and
- selection of internal wind turbine transformers.

Secondary landscape and visual mitigation measures would be adopted where possible to reduce further any predicted adverse landscape and visual effects, including the following:

- vegetation restoration adjacent to the proposed turbines and tracks, and upon the site of the borrow pits as described in Technical Appendix 3.1: Outline Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP); and
- selection of wind turbine colour and finish to match the consented Ben Sca and Extension turbines and existing Ben Aketil turbines.

4.1.3 Predicted Landscape Effects

The Proposed Development would be visible from all seven of the landscape character areas included in the assessment to a greater or lesser degree. The level of effect on the character areas differs primarily due to:

- the level of intervening landform screening;
- their variable sensitivity to wind farm development; and
- the existing influence of the operational wind farms at Ben Aketil and Edinbane.

The Proposed Development is predicted to result in a moderate/minor or minor adverse level of effect (not significant) within five character areas and a moderate level of effect (not significant) within Greshornish and Coastal Edge of Loch Snizort Character Area. Although landscape effects are specific to each character area, some of the general effects identified or influences on those effects are:

- visibility of the Proposed Development from character areas is primarily limited by the undulating landform and the assessment of change to the characteristics of each character area is generally from the perspective of slopes which orientate towards the site. The Proposed Development would generally be more prominent from character areas to the north of the site. This is due to the position of the Proposed Development in relation to the local landform and the hill summits that restrict theoretical visibility to the south and south east. From none of the character areas would there be blanket ZTV coverage of the Proposed Development which has been a consideration in the assessment of effects on each area;
- the addition of the Proposed Development would appear to collectively extend the effects of the existing and consented wind farms on the character areas. However, this change would be localised, visible from only parts of the character areas and would generally be seen in relation to a large scale, open landscape; and

- the location of the Proposed Development is within the moorland interior of Skye which provides a backcloth to adjacent character areas and therefore the assessment of change to those character areas generally focuses on the influence that the Proposed Development would have on that backcloth and the extent to which that influences the key characteristics of each area.

Overall, no significant adverse landscape effects have been identified. The moderate adverse effects on two landscape character areas are not considered to be significant. In relation to the Greshornish and Coastal Edge of Loch Snizort Character Area, and Bracadale Character Area, the Proposed Development would comprise a compact group of turbines between two existing wind farms. It would appear more prominent on the skyline in parts of these character areas. In the case of both character areas the Proposed Development could affect the simple backdrop and would distract to a limited degree from the intricacies around the coast. However, it would not introduce new elements to the landscape and would reinforce an established pattern of wind farm development.

The Proposed Development would contribute to the presence of wind farm development in the north western part of the Isle of Skye. However, given the context of the baseline, Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms, together with the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm, the addition of the Proposed Development would result in relatively limited additional change and the key characteristics of the landscape character areas from where the Proposed Development would be visible, would not be fundamentally altered.

4.1.4 Predicted Visual Effects

Visibility of the Proposed Development within the study area would be restricted from many places in the south and east by number of hills approximately 2 - 5km away from the Proposed Development, including: Beinn a' Chearcaill (264m AOD); Ben Uigshader (246m AOD); Cruachan-Glen Vic Askill (295m AOD), Beinn a' Ghlinne Bhig (208m AOD); and Beinn na Cloiche (232m AOD). Similarly, visibility of the Proposed Development would be limited from locations to the west by Ben Horneval (264m AOD) and Ben Vic Askill (180m AOD). This has the effect of limiting the extent of potential visual effects and focuses the area where the key effects are likely to occur.

For the visual impact assessment of the Proposed Development, visual effects have been assessed from 20 viewpoints which represent key receptor locations within the study area. These viewpoints were scoped and agreed through consultation, particularly with THC, and also draw on the locations that were used in LVIAs for other nearby developments. The selected viewpoints vary from medium to high in their sensitivity of visual resource. In summary, of the viewpoints assessed:

- major/moderate and significant adverse effects have been identified at four viewpoints: Viewpoint 2 (Edinbane Top Road); Viewpoint 4 (residents at Roag); Viewpoint 6 (Lonmore); and Viewpoint 12 (Greshornish), all of which lie within 7.5km of the Proposed Development;
- moderate adverse and not significant effects have been identified at eight viewpoints: Viewpoint 1 (A863 at Feorlig); Viewpoint 3 (A863); Viewpoint 4 (road users at Roag), Viewpoint 5 (A850); Viewpoint 9 (Kingsburgh) Viewpoint 10 (residents at Borve); Viewpoint 12 (Fiscavaig); and Viewpoint 14 (residents at Totaig). These effects are considered to be not significant due to the relative prominence of the baseline wind farms; and
- moderate/minor to negligible and not significant effects were assessed at the other eight viewpoints.

In all the representative views, the Proposed Development would be seen as part of the operational and consented wind farms located in the northern part of the Isle of Skye. At no location assessed is the Proposed Development seen in isolation in the view. Therefore, it would not add any new elements to the view, but would reinforce a pattern and type of development that forms an established feature.

In most instances the proposed turbines would be positioned between the Edinbane and Ben Aketil turbines, and also the consented Ben Sca turbines. In some instances, they would appear in the same part of the view as the consented Glen Ullinish turbines. They would intensify the level of wind energy development in the northern part of the Isle of Skye. However, in most cases they would be seen amongst the pattern of operational and consented turbines rather than increasing the overall extent of the view occupied by wind farm developments. The Proposed Development would also frequently be seen above the existing conifer plantation and in the context of other human influences in the landscape. Whilst the proposed turbines would be distinctly larger than those in the operational wind farms, they would be broadly consistent with the consented developments. In addition, consideration is currently being given to the repowering of the operational Edinbane and Ben Aketil Wind Farms, meaning these may be replaced with larger turbines in the future.

The more irregular pattern of the turbines would be more consistent with the layout of Edinbane Wind Farm, although the design of the Proposed Development has considered the composition of turbines in relation to all the neighbouring wind farms, existing and consented. Significant effects have generally been identified where the proposed turbines would appear as large, prominent structures, particularly in relation to the existing wind farms. Similar is the case where the Proposed Development would noticeably extend the horizontal angle occupied by the wind farm developments, such as Viewpoint 6 at Lonmore. As with the consented turbines, whilst their scale would seem to relate to the open horizontal space of their surroundings, they would seem to diminish the perceived vertical scale of the moorland hills.

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 extent occupied by wind farms.

4.1.5 Predicted Effects on Designated Landscapes

The Proposed Development is not sited within a designated landscape. The 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 Proposed Development would not compromise their key characteristics.

The assessment acknowledges that there would be some adverse effects experienced within parts of the two closer SLAs (North West Skye and Greshornish), including significant visual effects at particular viewpoints. However, given its location and the presence of existing operational wind farms, views of the Proposed Development would not overall fundamentally conflict with the key characteristics of either designation. It is further concluded that there would be negligible landscape and visual effects on the third more distant SLA (Trotternish and Tianavaig) and that distant visibility of the Proposed Development would not compromise its key characteristics.

4.1.6 Predicted Effects on Wild Land

Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Development would not have a significant effect on any wild land areas. This is due to a number of factors including, potential effects on the key qualities/attributes, the intervening distance and the operational wind farms, and emerging consented wind farms, that form part of the context for the Proposed Development.

4.1.7 Cumulative Effects

No significant cumulative landscape or visual effects have been identified. The cumulative assessment identified that, the addition of the consented cumulative developments further south of the Proposed Development, would extend wind development across the study area. The Proposed Development 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 Proposed Development to cumulative effects would be limited by its association with the adjacent operational Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farms and consented Ben Sca Wind Farm.

4.1.8 Residential Visual Amenity

Technical Appendix 7.4 summarises the findings of an assessment of effects on residential amenity within approximately 3km of the proposed turbines. Overall, it considered that the potential effects of the Proposed Development would not reach the residential visual amenity threshold at any of the locations assessed.

4.2 Ecology (EIA Report Chapter 8)

4.2.1 Baseline Studies

Baseline surveys undertaken included habitat and vegetation surveys (September 2020 and August 2022), bat surveys (May to September 2021) and surveys of protected mammal species and fish habitats (May 2021 and August 2022).

There are no ecologically designated sites within the site boundary. A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and two Sites of Conservation (SACs) lie within 10km of the site however these are designated for their geological interest or for their marine features and are therefore not considered to be ecologically important for the Proposed Development.

Within a 5km radius of the site, one small block of ancient woodland was identified within Edinbane. As this woodland would be unlikely to be affected by the Proposed Development, it was not assessed.

The site mainly comprises blanket bog and wet heath habitats. Although much of the site was damaged in a fire during 2018, signs of vegetation recovery were recorded during 2022. The peatland habitats were likely to be in good condition prior to the fire damage and are likely to recover to a more favourable status in time.

Small habitats such as flushes and springs were identified as being potentially groundwater dependent but further investigation has concluded that none of the habitats are fed by groundwater and are instead sustained by rainfall and surface water flow.

4.2.2 Predicted Effects

The Proposed Development has been designed to avoid flush habitats, watercourses, areas of deepest peat and sensitive bog habitat as far as possible. However, some loss of blanket bog and heath habitats were unavoidable and the Proposed Development would result in the direct/indirect loss of 26ha of blanket bog, 5.5ha of wet heath habitat and 2.9ha of dry heath habitat. The loss would be compensated for through measures to restore and manage peatland habitat within a c. 77.75ha area of conifer plantation felling, which would be delivered via the HMP.

The habitat within the site is not considered to be of particular importance for amphibians. As the habitats continue to recover, the majority of the site provides good habitat for the common lizard and may support other reptile species. Good practice mitigation measures would be implemented to

prevent the inadvertent injury or killing of individuals, therefore no significant effects are predicted, and no contravention of the relevant legislation is likely.

There were no signs of otter recorded during the May 2021 survey however one otter spraint was found during the August 2022 survey with suitable commuting and foraging habitats within the site. A pre-construction survey for otter would be undertaken. Following implementation of good practice measures no significant effects on otter would be likely to occur.

No signs of pine marten were recorded during the May 2021 or August 2022 surveys and the majority of the site is poor for pine marten, due to its open aspect and few shelter opportunities. A pre-construction survey for pine marten would be undertaken.

No signs of badger were found during the May 2021 or August 2022 surveys and the majority of the site offers limited suitability for badger sett building and foraging. A pre-construction survey for badger would be undertaken.

The habitats within the site are considered to be of low suitability for commuting and foraging bats. Low numbers of commuting or foraging bats may use the upper reaches of several minor watercourses. The site also offers limited opportunities for roosting. Only one species was recorded during the bat activity surveys. Bat activity was highest in summer and lowest in autumn but overall bat activity in all seasons was low. As such, there would be no direct effect on roosting bats and any disturbance to foraging bats is likely to be minimal and not significant.

No red deer were recorded on site during the May 2021 surveys however there were incidental sightings noted during the August 2022 surveys. It is understood that the area supports a small population of red deer at low density. Roe deer are reported to occur in the area on a very occasional basis. As such, adverse impacts are considered unlikely and no management measures are considered necessary.

Overall, the site has low suitability for fish. A minimum 50m buffer has been ensured between all proposed infrastructure and the watercourses. With the implementation of good practice pollution prevention measures the likelihood of a pollution event affecting fish within downstream watercourses is considered to be low. Therefore, no significant effect on salmonids or other fish species of conservation concern is considered likely.

Given the stand-off distance of 50m for all infrastructure and mitigation measures that will be in place, no significant cumulative effects are predicted for either watercourses, or for the fauna that use them.

4.3 Ornithology (EIA Report Chapter 9)

4.3.1 Baseline Studies

There are no statutory sites designated for their bird interest within 10km of the site boundary. The closest site is the Cuillins SPA at approximately 14km to the south/ south east. The Cuillins SPA supports a breeding population of European importance of the Annex I species, golden eagle.

Surveys undertaken from 2020 to 2022 were carried out in accordance with the relevant NatureScot guidance (SNH, 2017⁶). The following field studies were undertaken:

- Vantage Point (VP) Surveys from two locations (during the breeding and non-breeding season) from February 2020 to March 2021; and from October 2021 to September 2022;

⁶ SNH (2017). Recommended Bird Survey Methods to Inform Impact Assessment of Onshore Wind Farms. Version 2.

- Breeding wader surveys from April to July 2020 within a 500m buffer from the Proposed Development area;
- Breeding Raptor Surveys in 2020 and 2022 within a 2km buffer from the Proposed Development area; and
- Lochan surveys for breeding divers within 1km of the Proposed Development area in April, May and July 2020.

4.3.2 Predicted Effects

Following the field surveys, impacts on the following target bird species were assessed: white-tailed eagle; golden eagle; hen harrier; and golden plover.

All other species recorded are either relatively common or widespread and/or were recorded only infrequently/in small numbers and are therefore not considered important at the site.

Following the implementation of a range of good practice measures, no significant adverse effects on any of species assessed (i.e. white-tailed eagle, golden eagle, hen harrier and golden plover) are predicted during the construction phase of the Proposed Development.

During operation, potential displacement of golden eagle from foraging could occur and this could constitute an adverse effect on this feature at a local level, but this is not considered to be significant. Collision risk mortality is predicted to affect white-tailed eagle, golden eagle, hen harrier and golden plover, but the predicted mortality for these species is not considered significant.

During decommissioning, as during construction, potential displacement effects are possible, but a basic monitoring programme for breeding waders and raptors would inform any potential impacts and following the implementation of a range of accepted good practice measures no significant adverse effects are predicted.

4.3.3 Cumulative Effects

An assessment of the potential cumulative effects (potential habitat loss and collision mortality) on white-tailed eagle, golden eagle, hen harrier and golden plover from the Proposed Development along with all other operational, consented and submitted plans or projects within an appropriate zone of influence and against the relevant Natural Heritage Zone (NHZ) population estimates was undertaken.

As recommended by NatureScot, population viability analysis was undertaken for white-tailed eagle, both for the Proposed Development and cumulatively along with other wind farm developments on Skye – the modelling was conducted for both local (Skye) and regional (NHZ 6) scale. The overall effect of the levels of additional wind farm mortality modelled would be to reduce the year at which the population reach their carrying capacities. There is predicted to be no threat to the integrity of the white-tailed eagle populations at even the highest rate of modelled mortality. As such, the cumulative predicted collision mortality for white-tailed eagle is not considered to be significant.

To investigate potential displacement effects, a Golden Eagle Topography (GET) model was used to predict the habitat use by golden eagles within the Proposed Development. The results show that the site does not offer good suitability for golden eagles to forage, and the potential loss of some habitat would be insubstantial as the site itself does not constitute a breeding territory of golden eagle. As such, any habitat loss and displacement impact on golden eagle would be negligible.

No significant cumulative negative effects are predicted on hen harrier and golden plover during construction or operation.

Based on the available evidence, it is likely that any disturbance/displacement impacts on golden eagles and white-tailed eagles during the operation of the wind farm would be local in nature, not affecting a breeding territory and therefore is not significant.

4.3.4 Further Survey and Monitoring

Despite no significant effects being predicted, it is acknowledged that raptor flight activity and the potential for displacement from the Proposed Development to other adjacent areas and the potential for collision is important in this area of Skye and a monitoring programme is therefore proposed that addresses the species that may be affected by the Proposed Development.

Post consent monitoring (schedule to be agreed with consultees) may include:

- collision monitoring, flight activity surveys and breeding raptor surveys coordinated with the adjacent consented wind farms of Ben Sca and Extension and Glen Ullinish;
- reducing carrion availability by removing fallen stock/deer; and
- collaboration with the Highland Raptor Study Group to facilitate a research programme aimed at furthering understanding of white-tailed eagle and golden eagle population prospects in the light of an increasing number of renewable energy projects on the Isle of Skye.

4.4 Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Soils (EIA Report Chapter 10)

4.4.1 Baseline Studies

There are no statutory designated sites within the site and the Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Geological Conservation Review (GCR) areas to the south east of the site are not water dependent.

The majority of the site lies within peatland habitat and considered nationally important carbon rich soils.

Three main catchments drain the site: the River Ose draining to the southwest; the Red Burn draining northwards; and the Abhainn Coishleader also draining northwards. All three watercourses have been classified by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) with an overall status of 'Good'.

Baseline surveys relating to the water environment, peat and soil depth were undertaken in October 2020, November 2022 and February 2023.

4.4.2 Predicted Effects

An extensive programme of peat probing has been completed and this has been used to inform the site design. Areas of deepest peat (greater than 1.5m) would be avoided. Peat would be managed on site through a Peat Management Plan. Good construction practice and methodologies would be implemented to prevent peat instability.

The Proposed Development infrastructure has been carefully designed to avoid crossing watercourses and would be accessed via the existing Ben Aketil access track and consented Ben Sca access track; so no new watercourse crossings are required.

Whilst much of the site drains into Loch Caroy, part of the Inner Hebrides and the Minches Special Area of Conservation (SAC), any potential effects would not be discernible.

Water quality monitoring before and during the construction phase would be undertaken for the surface water catchments that drain from the site to ensure that none of the tributaries of the main channels are carrying pollutants or suspended solids.

It is confirmed that the igneous bedrock beneath the site is a low productivity aquifer and is unlikely to contain significant quantities of groundwater. An assessment of potential Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTEs) has been completed. It has been shown that the areas are not sustained by groundwater but by rainfall and surface runoff. Measures are proposed to safeguard existing water flow paths and maintain existing water quality. Good practice measures would be applied in relation to pollution risk, sediment management and management of surface runoff rates and volumes. A Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) would be adopted to limit the rate of run off from the site. Following adherence to good practice measures, the potential effect on receptors of high sensitivity would be negligible and therefore not significant.

One Drinking Water Protected Area (DWPA) is present within the study area but is not connected to the same drainage catchment as the site.

No potential flood risk was identified to the Proposed Development.

There are no private or licensed water abstractions within or at risk from the site.

4.5 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology (EIA Report Chapter 11)

4.5.1 Baseline Studies

Two study areas were assessed: a 1km radius from the site boundary to inform the predictive modelling of archaeological potential and a 10km radius from the site boundary comprising land beyond the site within which the proposed turbines might theoretically be visible from, or within views of, nationally important designated assets.

Field surveys were conducted on site in August 2021 and October 2022 to confirm the presence/absence of any known/potential archaeological remains. During the field surveys, nine undated cultural heritage assets within the site were identified of low significance. 14 undated cultural heritage assets are located within 1km of the site. Historic mapping from 1880 does not identify any assets within the site. A review of a historic map from 1965 shows two previously unidentified possible assets. Within the south of the site, historic land use data identified areas of medieval and post-medieval settlement and agriculture. Modern-era land use within the site comprises a mixture of rough grazing to the south of the site and modern plantation to the north.

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: 30 scheduled monuments, one Inventoried Garden and Designed Landscape, and three Category A Listed Buildings. Nine scheduled monuments were taken forward for assessment.

There are no prehistoric cultural heritage assets within the site and three assets within 1km. This suggests that there is a low potential for any unknown cultural heritage assets of these dates within the site. There are no Romano-British cultural heritage assets within the site or 1km suggesting there is very low potential for unknown assets of this period here.

There are no cultural heritage assets attributed to the early medieval or medieval periods within the site or 1km, as such there is a low potential for unknown assets of this period to be present on site although undated field boundaries found during October of 2022 may indicate agricultural heritage assets from these periods.

There is one post-medieval heritage asset within the site boundary and a further 22 post-medieval structures within 1km of the site, suggesting there is moderate potential for unknown assets of this period within the site. Structures are well mapped and it is therefore unlikely that there are any

unrecorded structures of this period within the site and any assets not recorded are likely to be agricultural in nature.

4.5.2 Predicted Effects

The Proposed Development has the potential for a direct impact on five of the undated cultural heritage assets of low significance which are located adjacent to but no closer than 10m to the proposed infrastructure. The impact would not be significant and appropriate mitigation would be implemented, including fencing off and avoidance of the assets and a targeted watching brief of the groundworks that may impact unrecorded archaeology.

With regard to operational effects on designated assets, a very low adverse effect has been identified with respect to the nine Scheduled Monuments. A low adverse cumulative impact (not significant) was identified with respect to the Dun Arkaig Scheduled Monument.

4.6 Site Access, Traffic and Transport (EIA Report Chapter 12)

4.6.1 Baseline Studies

Baseline traffic flows have been obtained using Automatic Traffic Counters (ATC) for two locations, one located on the A850 east of the site access and the second along the A87, 1km from the junction with the A850. Traffic surveys includes data of directional and two way flows in the average weekday (07:00 to 19:00).

An equal number of vehicles travel both southbound and northbound during an average weekday on the A87, with Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) making up 2% of the total traffic. There are two distinct peak traffic flows from 08:00 – 09:00 and 16:30 – 17:30 with data suggesting there is a commuter flow of traffic that head south during the morning and north during the evening.

The A850 shows similar levels of total traffic both eastbound and westbound with HGVs making up 1% of the total traffic. There are no distinct peak period of traffic in either direction.

The Isle of Skye experiences significant fluctuations in traffic associated with visitor numbers, in particular during the summer months.

A total of 11 personal injury accidents were recorded along the A850 within the period considered. No fatal accidents were recorded within the study area.

4.6.2 Assessment

An assessment has been undertaken to consider effects from increased traffic flows during construction of the Proposed Development.

The assessment is detailed against two assumptions:

- Scenario 1: all construction materials assumed to be sourced from offsite locations (i.e. outside of the application site boundary), including all aggregate required for concrete and track construction, thus ensuring that the estimated level of trip generation has been considered as a maximum worst case; and
- Scenario 2: where it is assumed that a proportion of aggregate for track formations and subbases is assumed to be sourced from the four onsite borrow pits (subject to further geotechnical investigation) with all higher grade aggregate (20-40% of the aggregate required on site would be required to be a higher quality and grade, which the material from the borrow pits may not provide) assumed to be sourced offsite.

The trips generated by the operational activities onsite would be no greater than those expected and accounted for in the background variations to the existing traffic flows. As such negligible traffic flows would be indistinguishable from normal daily traffic flows and therefore assessment of operational effects were scoped out of the assessment.

4.6.3 Predicted Effects

All construction vehicles would enter the site from the east having travelled the length of the A850 from the junction with the A87.

Over the 18 month construction programme planned to commence in 2025, the main construction works would be undertaken during months 3 to 10. The total number of two-way HGV trips predicted to arise during the construction phase of the Proposed Development has been calculated based on the estimated material quantities and is predicted to peak at 141 two-way trips per day for Scenario 1 and 80 two-way trips per day for Scenario 2.

Although HGV trips would be increased for both scenarios, the total traffic levels are predicted to be within the IEMA thresholds of a 30% increase to the baseline flows and therefore not considered to be significant. Both the A850 and the A87 have previously been used for the transportation of materials associated with other wind farm developments nearby and it has been demonstrated that both have suitable theoretical capacity to accommodate additional traffic without significant impacts. Deliveries of large components such as those required for the substation and turbines would be moved under suitable traffic management procedures, including the provision of banksmen at the site access junction and appropriate warning signage, as set out in a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP).

Light vehicle trip generation would see a maximum of 64 two-way trips each day during the peak months for each Scenario. It is assumed that the majority of light vehicles would travel to site via the A87 and the A850, however a small number may travel along the A863 from more local locations.

The increase in vehicle numbers resulting from the Proposed Development traffic generation are considered to be minor and not significant.

Assuming that a proportion of aggregate could be won on site from the proposed borrow pit areas (subject to further geotechnical investigation) the assessed Scenario 2 would result in a lesser effect on the road network by reducing the amount of HGV movements required to build the wind farm.

4.7 Noise (EIA Report Chapter 13)

4.7.1 Baseline Studies

Onshore wind turbine developments generally occur in rural locations where background noise levels can be low and therefore wind turbines can be audible. Noise limits are set in accordance with the guidance documents ETSU-R-97⁷ and the Institute of Acoustics Good Practice Guidance (IOA GPG)⁸ to protect the amenity of noise sensitive receptors, such as residents living close to wind turbines, and establishes noise limits in relation to existing background noise levels. The noise limit applies to the combined cumulative noise levels from all wind farms within the study area.

⁷ The Working Group on Noise from Wind Farms (1996). ETSU-R-97, The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms.

⁸ Institute of Acoustics (2013). A Good Practice Guide to the Application of ETSU-R-97 for the Assessment and Rating of Wind Turbine Noise.

Noise sensitive receptors are properties which are potentially sensitive to noise and, as such, require protection from nearby noise sources. Three noise sensitive receptors were identified for the Proposed Development, with the closest (9 Balmeanach) at 2.1km from the nearest proposed turbine.

Construction noise effects were scoped out of the assessment. Several safeguards exist to control and minimise the effects of construction noise.

4.7.2 Predicted Effects

Predictions for a candidate turbine (Nordex N133 4.8MW turbine) have been undertaken to produce a model of the noise generated during operation and includes the effect of noise in combination with all existing or proposed wind farms within 5km that may affect the noise sensitive receptors.

For all receptors, cumulative noise levels due to the operation of the Proposed Development together with operational or consented wind farms within the area are predicted to be on or below the ETSU-R-97 noise limit during the daytime and night-time across all wind speeds.

The assessment shows that the predicted wind turbine noise levels for the Proposed Development meet the site-specific noise limits under all conditions and at all locations for both daytime and night-time periods.

THC requested through scoping that a mitigation scheme was to be provided that could be implemented should noise levels from the Proposed Development be subsequently found to exceed the consented limits. A mitigation scheme has been proposed to demonstrate that a reduction in noise is possible through implementing turbine noise control modes during both the daytime and night-time periods. The scheme of mitigation would only be implemented if consented limits were found to be breached.

4.8 Socio-economics and Land Use (EIA Report Chapter 14)

4.8.1 Baseline Studies

Although the largest administrative area in Scotland by geographical area, the Highland's population makes up less than 5% of Scotland's population and the proportion of working age residents (16-64) is lower than the Scotland average and UK average.

THC area has a higher than average proportion of its workforce in skilled trades, caring and leisure and other service occupations compared with Scotland and the UK as a whole. It also has a lower than average proportion of its workforce in professional occupations. Skilled trades occupations are likely to include skills and services that would be required for wind farm construction and operation.

The Isle of Skye is a distinctive community within THC area with a high tourism profile due to its iconic landscape quality (particularly the Cuillin mountain range to the south east of the site and the Trotternish ridge to the north east of the site), accessibility, cultural references in story and song, and range of accommodation and other tourism services. The site and immediate area within which the Proposed Development would be located is relatively quiet in terms of recreational and tourism activity, although the A850 to the north introduces visitors who are passing through the area, in particular tourists visiting Dunvegan or undertaking a road tour of the island. Communities in the vicinity of the Proposed Development include the crofting township of Balmeanach which lies immediately south of the site, Edinbane 3km to the north, and Struan which lies 7km to the south, there are a number of scattered tourism-based businesses located around the site principally along the A850.

The land use within the site is primarily used for grazing of sheep and deer. There are two Core Paths in the vicinity of the site boundary but no formal recreational routes within the site itself.

A two-tiered study area was used for the assessment as follows:

- Wider Study Area (WSA): a WSA that is intended to encompass the area within which significant effects on employment and the local economy, including the tourism economy, could occur. The WSA is required for certain receptor groups because the majority of the business and labour market effects that could occur would be experienced by population and business centres located across a wide area. The WSA area is primarily set at the area of THC administrative area but effects are also considered within the rest of Scotland and the UK where relevant; and
- Local Area of Influence (LAI): The LAI forms the focus for assessment of both direct and indirect effects on those land use and tourism receptors that are likely to experience effects at a more local level. The LAI is defined by the application site together with an area extending to 5km from the site boundary. Given the importance of the coastal area as a tourism asset, the LAI extends to 10km for receptors that are within line of sight (to be identified through the ZTV).

4.8.2 Predicted Effects

The assessment on socio-economics and land use sets out the likely socio-economic effects (investment, employment, additional Gross Value Added (GVA)⁹ and contribution to the labour market) as well as recreation and tourism effects, associated with the Proposed Development.

With respect to employment, 17 new jobs are predicted to be generated in the local area during the construction phase of the Proposed Development. Any effect on local employment is considered to be negligible and not significant.

A net additional total of £1.8 million of GVA is predicted to be generated by the Proposed Development in the local area during the development, construction, and commissioning phase which would increase the size of the local economy by around 0.02%. The effect on the value of the local economy is considered to be negligible and not significant.

The Applicant is committed to employing good practice measures with regard to maximising local procurement such as those set out in the Renewables UK Good Practice Guidance 2014¹⁰. The Applicant would also build on recent UK best practice in innovative local procurement including the implementation of a Local Contractor Policy, where additional weight is given in the tendering process to primary contractors that show a clear commitment to increasing local content in their supply chains. An auditing process would also be conducted so that the amount of local content sourced during the construction phase is recorded and fed back to the local business community.

As part of its Local Contractor Policy, the Applicant intends to establish a presence on Skye long before construction starts so that local suppliers are aware of opportunities. A number of 'Meet the Supplier' events would be organised well in advance of the main tender process commencing to ensure that local businesses are aware of opportunities to bid for contracts.

The construction period is expected to last approximately 18 months and would benefit the local economy through expenditure on purchases of accommodation, food, drink, fuel, etc. that are needed to sustain the construction workforce. These beneficial effects would be experienced mainly by businesses within the tourism sector, or those that are partly dependent on tourism for their income e.g. the retail sector.

Anecdotal evidence arising from other wind farm construction projects shows that local businesses such as accommodation providers generally welcome the enhanced level of occupancy that is achieved due to construction contractors using their accommodation during periods of the year that are

⁹ Gross value added (GVA) measures the contribution to an economy of an individual producer, industry, sector or region.

¹⁰ Renewables UK Good Practice Guidance 2014: Local Supply Chain Opportunities in Onshore Wind.

traditionally considered 'low season'. However, on Skye, peak season occupancy rates are generally high, and consequently the use of holiday accommodation by construction workers may lead to temporary displacement of tourism visitors.

For accommodation businesses it is unlikely that displacement of tourism visitors would result in an adverse effect to the individual business, as occupancy rates would be maintained at a high level. Indeed, the overall effect of the 18 month construction period is likely to result in increased occupancy during the period of construction activity. The benefits of increased business during the low season, although temporary, can allow businesses to invest in improvements that would not otherwise be affordable, leading to a long term enhancement. Within the LAI, local businesses including accommodation and food and drink businesses may experience significant beneficial impacts during construction due to use by construction workers.

Any adverse impact arising from the displacement of tourism visitors is more likely to be experienced elsewhere in the tourism economy due to a reduction in expenditure on goods and services at other businesses such as visitor attractions, recreational businesses (such as cycle hire) and food and drink establishments. This adverse effect would be partially offset by construction workers spending on certain goods and services, such as food and drink.

In order to manage the effects of construction worker accommodation on the local tourism economy (including with other wind farm developments), the outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) includes provision for an Accommodation Strategy to be agreed with THC prior to construction commencing to ensure that sufficient accommodation capacity would be available at peak times to avoid displacement of tourism visitors. The impact on the tourism economy is expected to be low and would be not significant.

The number of recreational users of the site is considered to be low due to the lack of facilities, other than use of the existing Ben Aketil access track for walking and cycling. Once built the Ben Sca Wind Farm access track is also likely to be used for recreational purposes. Whilst use of the access track would need to be managed for safety reasons, it is intended to keep the existing Ben Aketil access track open as much as possible throughout the construction period. Measures for ensuring public safety during construction will be set out in the CEMP. The impact of excluding the public from the site for a short term temporary period is therefore considered be low and the level of effect would be negligible and not significant.

Any loss of shooting opportunity over the site would be managed to ensure that commercial shooting could continue elsewhere on the estate during the construction period. The adverse impact would be short term and the level of effect would be minor and not significant.

It is expected that there could be between 8 and 10 indirect jobs created in the operational and maintenance supply chain for the project located within the WSA. In terms of the local direct and indirect jobs creation, the overall total number of full time equivalent jobs that could be created in THC area is between 11 and 14. Given that there are around 128,000 jobs located in the WSA, this stimulus to local job creation is judged to be negligible and not significant.

In addition to the value of the investment in the local economy through the operation of the wind farm, the Proposed Development would give rise to additional long term social and economic benefits arising from community benefit payments and the opportunity for community investment in the wind farm as discussed in Section 3.0.

4.9 Other Considerations (EIA Report Chapter 15)

4.9.1 Shadow Flicker

Shadow flicker may occur under certain combinations of geographical position and time of day, when the sun passes behind the rotors of a wind turbine and casts a shadow over neighbouring properties. As the blades rotate, the shadow flicks on and off, an effect known as shadow flicker. The effect can only occur inside buildings, where the flicker appears through a window opening.

The nearest residential receptor, 9 Balmeanach, is located approximately 2.1km from the nearest proposed turbine. This distance is considerably more than 11 times the rotor diameter of the turbine which would be 1,518m. Even in the case of potential 50m micro-siting being taken into account, the property would be located much further than 11 times the rotor diameter. It is therefore considered that no shadow flicker effects from the Proposed Development would be experienced by residential receptors.

4.9.2 Climate and Carbon Balance

Wind farms in upland areas tend to be sited on peatlands which hold stocks of carbon and so have the potential to release carbon into the atmosphere in the form of CO₂ if disturbed. The Proposed Development is located predominantly in an area of Class 1 Priority Peatland Habitat however through extensive survey peat depths have been mapped and recorded across the site and the site design process has avoided areas of deeper peat.

With respect to turbines, emissions from material production are the dominant source of CO₂. Emissions arising from construction (including transportation of components, quarrying, building foundations, access tracks and hardstandings) and commissioning are also included in the calculations.

The calculations of total CO₂ emission savings and payback time for the Proposed Development indicates the overall payback period of a wind farm with 10 turbines with an average (expected) installed capacity of 4.5MW each would be approximately 2.0 years, when compared to the fossil fuel mix of electricity generation.

Electricity sources over the lifetime of the windfarm (assumed to be 40 years for the purpose of the carbon calculator) are approximately:

- 167,475 tonnes of CO₂ per year over coal-fired electricity (6.7 million tonnes assuming a 40 year lifetime for the purposes of the carbon calculator);
- 32,322 tonnes of CO₂ per year over grid-mix of electricity (1.3 million tonnes assuming a 40 year lifetime for the purposes of the carbon calculator); or
- 72,205 tonnes of CO₂ per year over a fossil fuel mix of electricity (2.9 million tonnes assuming a 40 year lifetime for the purposes of the carbon calculator).

4.9.3 Risk of Accident or Disasters

The vulnerability of the Proposed Development to major accidents and natural disasters, such as flooding, sea level rise, or earthquakes, is considered to be low. The vegetation and openness of the site does present a potential fire risk. The outline CEMP contains measures for reducing the risk of fires during the construction of the Proposed Development.

In addition, the nature of the proposals and remoteness of the site means there would be negligible risks of population and human health, biodiversity, land, soil, water, air and climate; and material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape.

4.9.4 Public Safety and Access

Site security and access during the construction period would be governed under Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated legislation. No public access would be permitted along any new access track to the site during construction.

An Access Management Plan (AMP) accompanied by a proposed paths plan which shows the informal recreational routes throughout the site and local area including the potential for a link path from the Proposed Development to the Edinbane Wind Farm access tracks. Appropriate warning signs would be installed concerning restricted areas such as the substation compound, switchgear and metering systems. All onsite electrical cables would be buried underground with relevant signage.

5.0 Summary of Significant Effects

Topic	Mitigation	Residual Significant Effects
Landscape and Visual	Design	Significant visual effects at four viewpoints: Viewpoint 2 (Edinbane Top Road); Viewpoint 4 (residents at Roag); Viewpoint 6 (Lonmore); and Viewpoint 12 (Greshornish), all of which lie within 7.5km of the Proposed Development.
Ecology	Design, Pre-Construction Surveys, CEMP, HMP	None
Ornithology	Design, Pre-Construction Surveys, HMP, Post consent monitoring	None
Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Soils	Design, CEMP, Water Quality Monitoring, Peat Management Plan	None
Cultural Heritage and Archaeology	Design, Fencing off Features, Targeted Watching Brief	None
Site Access, Traffic and Transport	CEMP, CTMP, AMP	None
Noise	Design, CEMP, Mitigation Strategy	None
Socio-economics and Land Use	Design	Local businesses including accommodation and food and drink businesses may experience significant beneficial impacts during construction due to use by construction workers.
Carbon Savings	Design	Displacement of approximately 2.9 million tonnes of CO ₂ over the wind farm lifetime when compared to the amount of CO ₂ fossil fuels would have produced to generate the same amount of electricity.
Other Notable Effects (not necessarily reported as significant in the EIA Report)	-	<p>Production of an average of approximately 167,140MWh of electricity annually; which equates to the power consumed by approximately 47,600 average UK households.</p> <p>In addition to the value of the investment in the local economy through the operation of the wind farm, additional long term social and economic benefits would arise from community benefit payments and the opportunity for community investment in the wind farm.</p>

6.0 Next Steps and Further Information

THC will consider the planning application and the findings of the EIA. Before making a decision on the application, THC will consult a number of consultees including NatureScot and SEPA and will consider all representations received from other parties including members of the public.

A copy of the NTS will be made available for download from the applicant website at: www.balmeanachwindfarm.co.uk.

A hard copy of the EIA Report can be viewed at The Highland Council Offices, Tigh na Sgìre, Park Lane, Portree, IV51 9ER during their opening hours.

Hard copies of this NTS are available free of charge from:

info@wind2.co.uk

07570 948886

Wind2 Limited,
2 Walker Street,
Edinburgh,
EH3 7LB

Hard copies of the EIA Report may be purchased by arrangement from the above address for £2,000 per copy, or free for a DVD/USB. The price of the hard copy reflects the cost of producing all of the Landscape and Visual photographs at the recommended size. As such, a DVD/USB version is recommended.

FIGURES

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130000

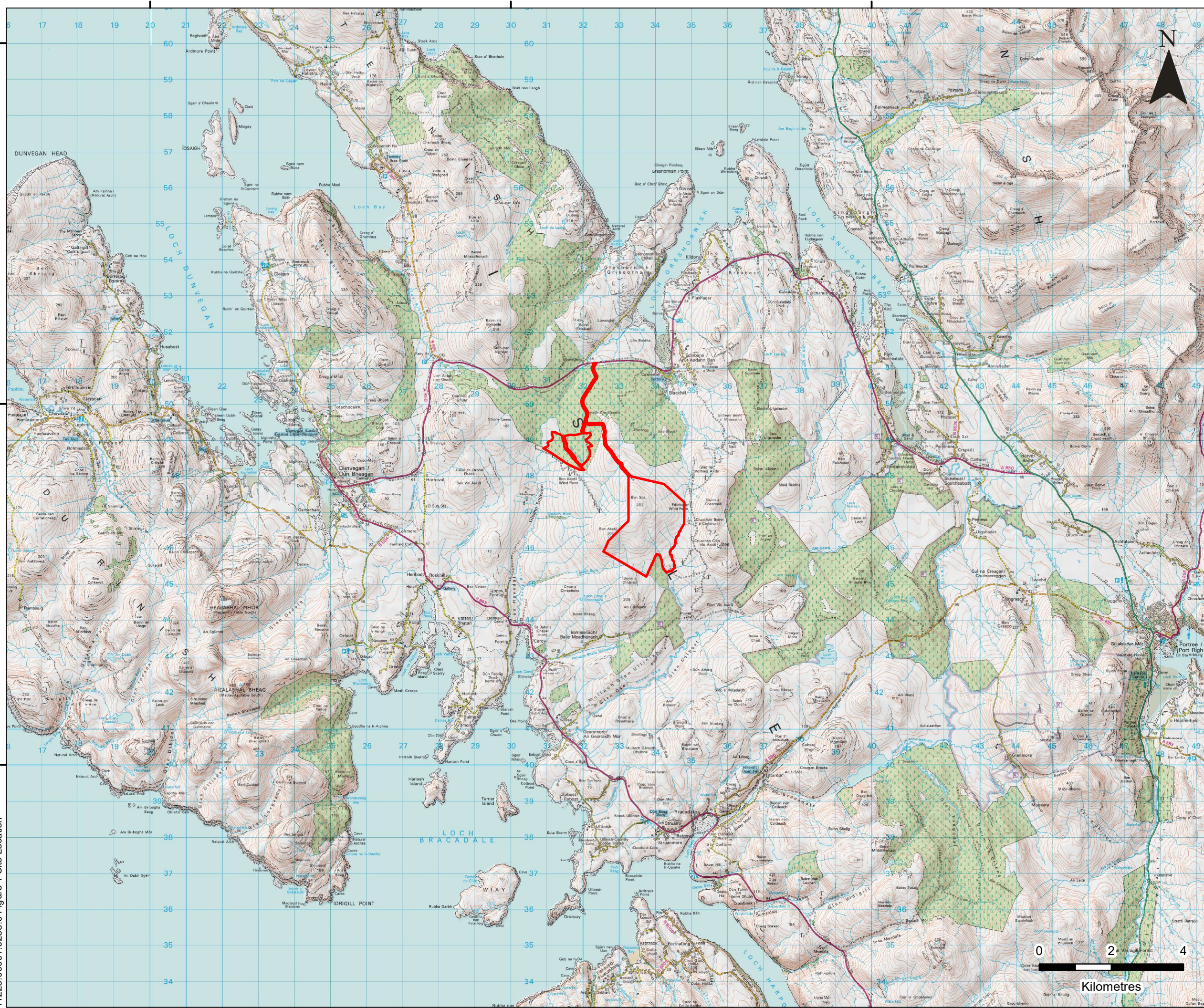
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11223.00001.0258.0 Figure 1 Site Location



LEGEND

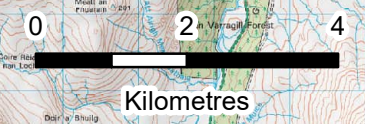
 Application Site Boundary



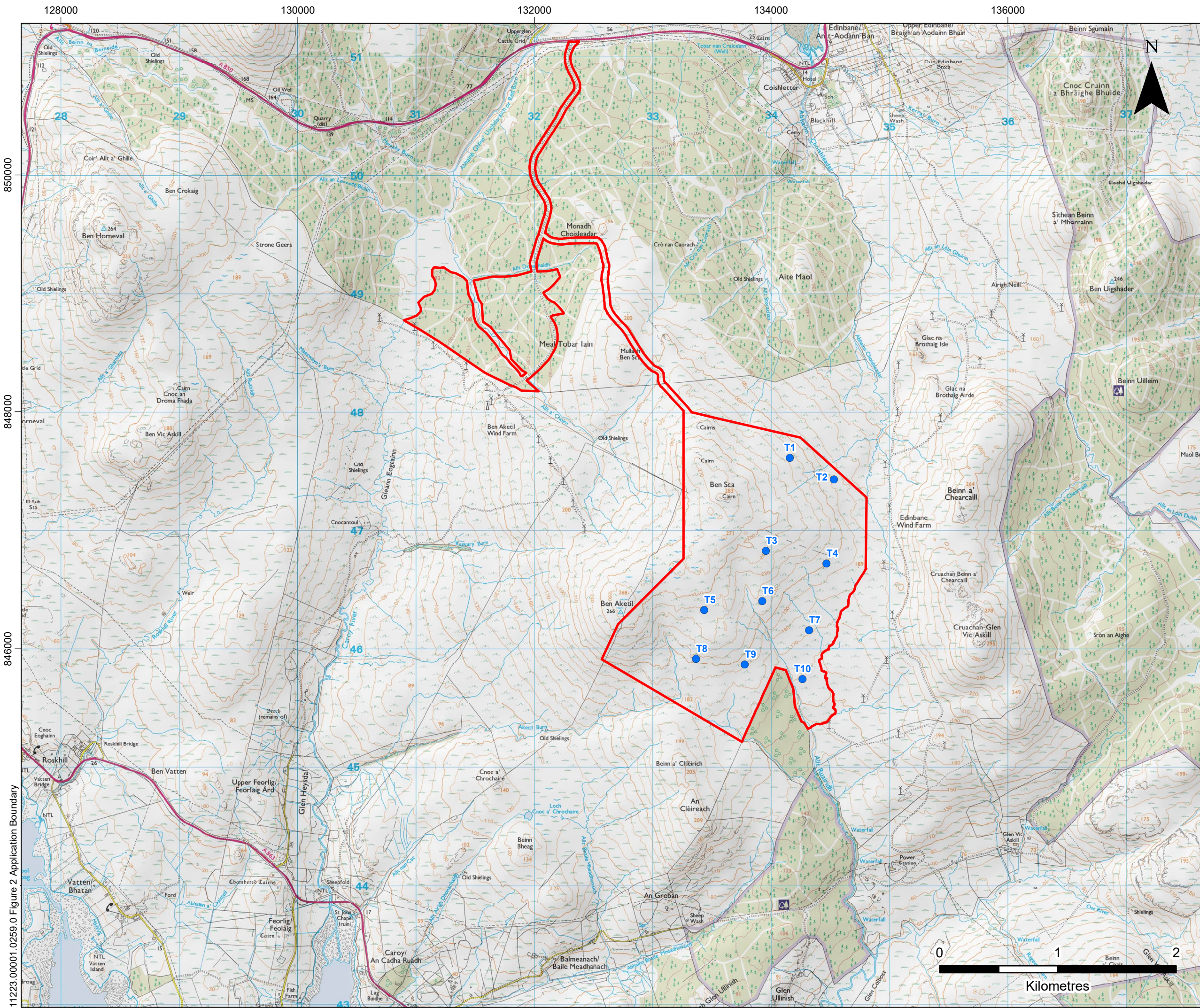
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BALMEANACH WIND FARM - EIA
 NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY
 SITE LOCATION
FIGURE 1

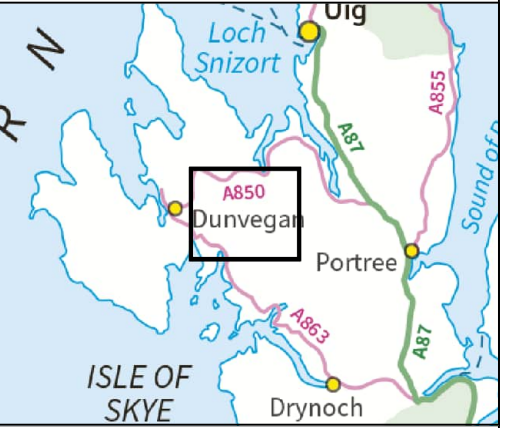


Scale 1:100,000 @ A3 Date JULY 2023



LEGEND

- Application Site Boundary
- Proposed Turbine Location



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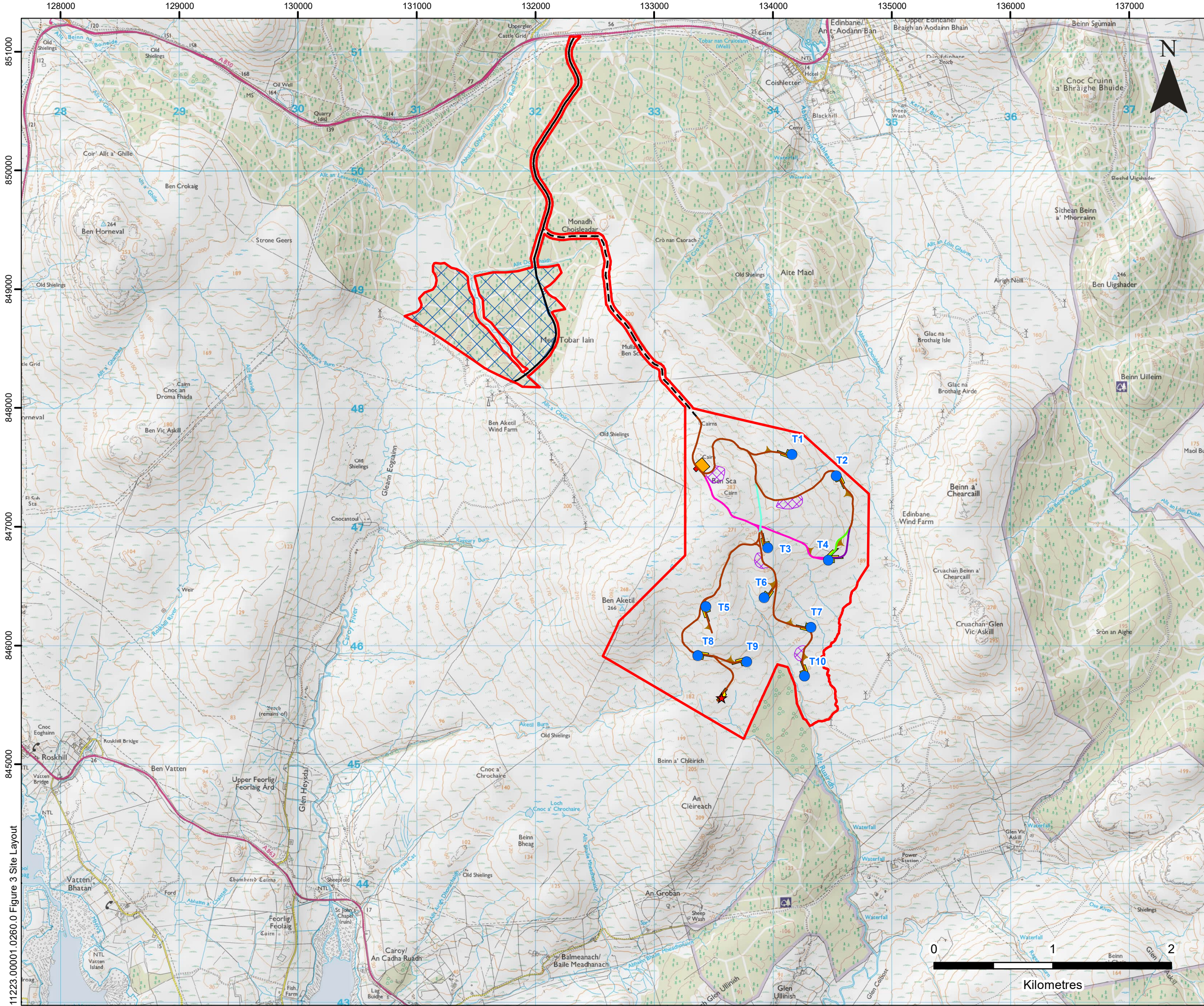
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BALMEANACH WIND FARM - EIA
NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY
APPLICATION BOUNDARY
FIGURE 2

Scale 1:30,000 @ A3 Date JULY 2023

11223.00001.0259.0 Figure 2 Application Boundary

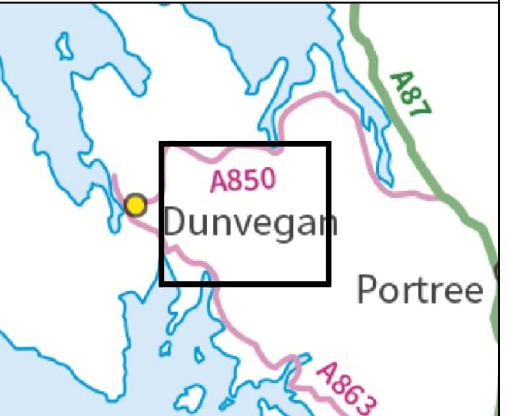


LEGEND

- Application Site Boundary
- Proposed Turbine Location
- ★ Proposed Permanent Met Mast
- Proposed Crane Hardstanding
- Proposed Construction Compound
- Proposed Substation
- Proposed Turning Head
- Potential Borrow Pit
- Proposed Habitat Management Area
- Existing Access Track
- Consented Access Track

Proposed Track Alignment

- Proposed
- Proposed Option A
- Proposed Option A1
- Proposed Option A2
- Proposed Option B



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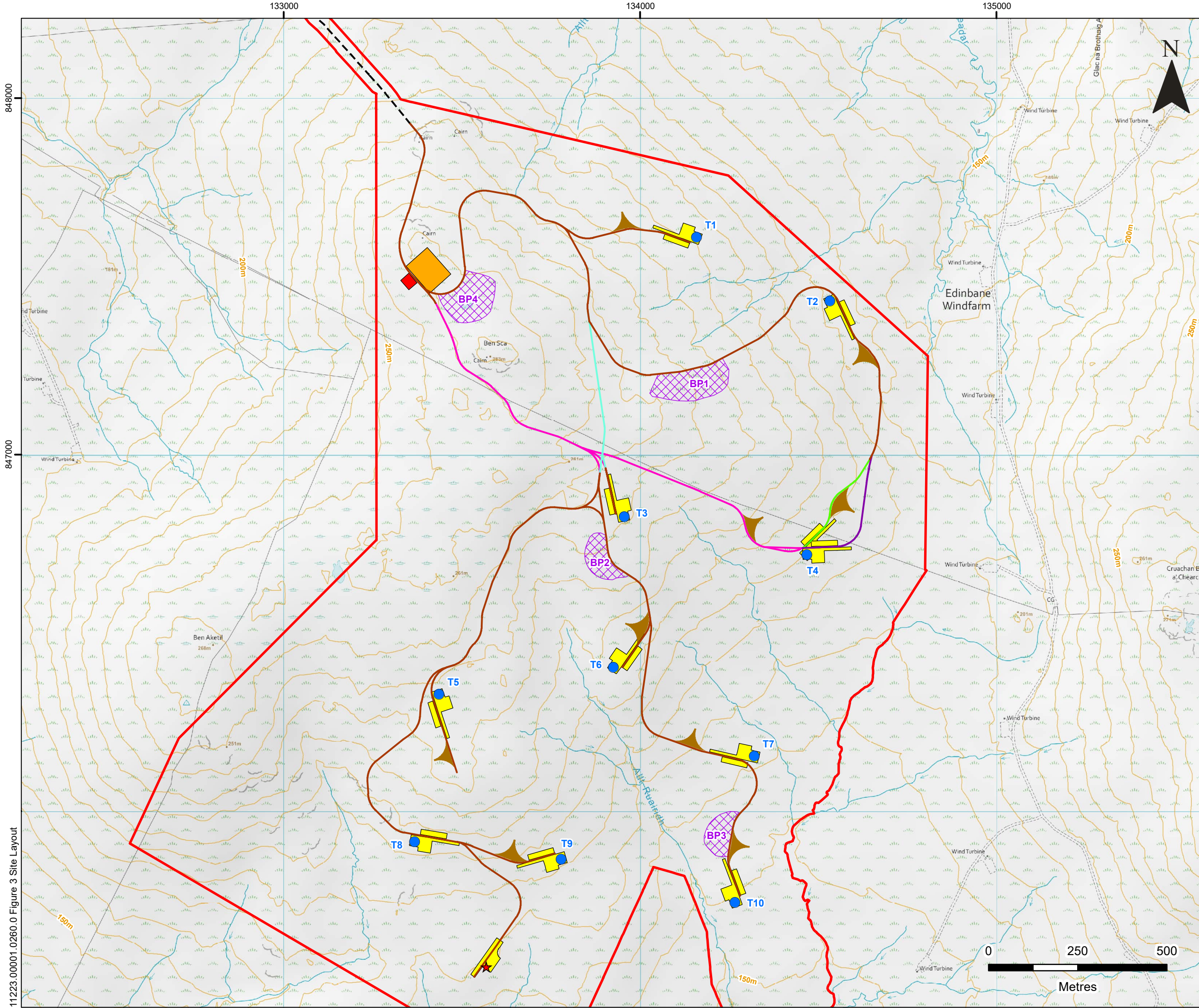
BALMEANACH WIND FARM - EIA
NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

SITE LAYOUT

FIGURE 3a

Scale 1:30,000 @ A3 Date JULY 2023

11223.00001.0260.0 Figure 3 Site Layout

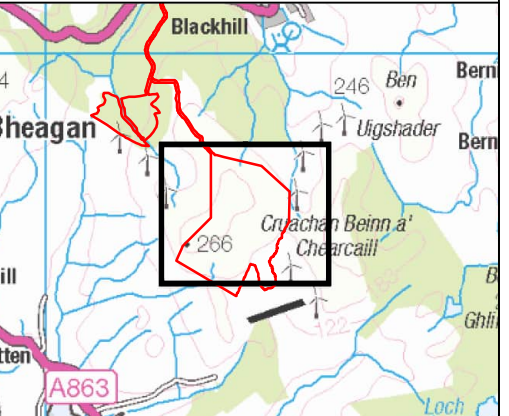


LEGEND

- Application Site Boundary
- Proposed Turbine Location
- ★ Proposed Permanent Met Mast
- Proposed Crane Hardstanding
- Proposed Construction Compound
- Proposed Substation
- Proposed Turning Head
- Potential Borrow Pit
- Consented Access Track

Proposed Track Alignment

- Proposed
- Proposed Option A
- Proposed Option A1
- Proposed Option A2
- Proposed Option B



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BALMEANACH WIND FARM - EIA
NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

SITE LAYOUT

FIGURE 3b

Scale 1:10,000 @ A3 Date JULY 2023

11223.00001.0260.0 Figure 3 Site Layout

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