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## INTRODUCTION

- 14.1 This Chapter assesses the effects of the Proposed Development on socio-economics and land use, including effects on recreation and the tourism economy during construction and operation of the Proposed Development. The Assessment has been carried out in accordance with best practice, including the draft Advice on Net Benefit 2016 (Scottish Government, 2016).
- 14.2 Socio-economic effects may occur as a result of direct or indirect interaction between the Proposed Development and socio-economic resources including land use, tourism and recreational resources. Direct effects can be both positive and negative.
- 14.3 The majority of the socio-economic impacts during the construction phase of the Proposed Development relate to the creation of employment opportunities for Scottish and Highland based businesses through the construction and operational phases. Once operational, impacts on the local labour market arising from operation and maintenance jobs would be more limited. Potential long term socio-economic benefits to the community would result from the proposed shared ownership scheme and community benefit fund payments. There is also the potential for adverse effects during the operational phase on tourism and recreation assets.
- 14.4 Planning policies of relevance to this assessment are provided in **Technical Appendix 4.1: Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance**.

## SCOPE AND CONSULTATION

### Consultation

- 14.5 The assessment uses desk-based information sources to assess the likely effects, supplemented by consultation with stakeholders where necessary. Information to inform the baseline has been sought from various sources, including The Highland Council (THC); community councils; and VisitScotland.
- 14.6 Consultation with stakeholders has principally been conducted by way of the request for a Scoping Opinion, as described in Chapter 6. This, together with additional communication on socio-economic issues, is summarised in **Table 14-1**.

**Table 14--1: Consultation Responses – Key Issues**

Consultee	Summary of Key Issues	Where Addressed in Chapter
THC Scoping Response	The EIAR should estimate who may be affected by the development, in all or in part, which may require individual households to be identified, local communities or a wider socio-economic grouping such as tourists and tourist related businesses, recreational groups, economically active, etc. The application should include relevant economic information connected with the project, including the potential number of jobs, and economic activity associated with the procurement, construction, operation and decommissioning of the development. Estimations of who may be affected by the development, in all or in part, which may require individual households to be identified, local communities or a wider socioeconomic grouping such as tourists and tourist related businesses,	Baseline conditions and Assessment of effects are within this Chapter, Population and Human Health Effects are addressed in <b>Chapter 15: Other Considerations</b> .

Consultee	Summary of Key Issues	Where Addressed in Chapter
	recreational groups, economically active, etc. should be included. The application should include relevant economic information connected with the project, including the potential number of jobs, and economic activity associated with the procurement, construction, operation and decommissioning of the development. In this regard wind farm development experience in this location should be used to help set the basis of likely impact. This should set out the impact on the regional and local economy, not just the national economy. Any mitigation proposed should also address impacts on the regional and local economy. The study area is acceptable, and THC agree to the matters outlined in section 13.4 of the Scoping Report to be scoped out, effects on demand for healthcare or educational services arising from the construction phase and land use effects during the operational phase (see <b>paragraph 14.8</b> ).	
Mark Crowe THC Access Officer	Confirmed that the Access Management Plan is a requirement due to the wide ranging access rights that the general public have under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. The AMP should deal with current access both across the site and any access being taken close to the site which may be affected including access tracks and roads. As well as managing current access provision THC are also supportive of the neighbouring communities aims of linking access both within and between developments and would welcome any discussion on how the development could meet those aims.	The Access arrangements are addressed in <b>Chapter 12: Site Access, Traffic and Transport</b> and <b>Technical Appendix 14.2: Access Management Plan (AMP)</b>

## Effects Scoped Out

- 14.7 As noted in **Table 14-1** a number of issues were agreed with THC to be scoped out of assessment. These are as follows:
- As the construction phase of the wind farm would be relatively short term (approximately 18 months) it is not expected that construction workers from outside the Wider Study Area (WSA) would have a significant effect on the demand for healthcare or educational services. Effects on demand for such community services are therefore scoped out.
  - Land use effects during the operational phase are scoped out as the operation of the wind farm would have minimal effect on crofting, agricultural or recreational uses.

## APPROACH AND METHODS

- 14.8 This Chapter takes an appropriate and topic specific approach to assessment of the Proposed Development. It provides a worst case assessment for socio-economic effects and presents sufficient information for consultees and the decision makers to comment on and determine the application within the parameters of the Proposed Development.

### Study Area

- 14.9 A two-tiered study area (**Figure 14.1**) has been used for the assessment as set out in the scoping

consultation; the study areas are defined 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 Zone of Visual Influence).

### Information and Data Sources

- 14.10 The assessment uses desk based information sources to assess the likely effects, supplemented by consultation with relevant stakeholders where necessary, and professional judgement based on previous experience. A complete schedule of data sources referred to in undertaking this assessment is contained in the Reference list at the end of this Chapter.

### Field Survey

- 14.11 No specific field survey has been undertaken with regard to socio-economic and land use effects, although information has been gathered where relevant from surveys undertaken in respect of other disciplines, notably landscape and visual (**Chapter 7**).

### Assessment Methods

- 14.12 **Chapter 5: Environmental Impact Assessment** provides an overview of the approach to assessment and explains the parameters being assessed in the EIA. **Chapter 5** also sets out the information on cumulative sites, and the approach to assessing cumulative effects.
- 14.13 There are no published standards or technical guidelines that set out a preferred methodology for assessing the likely socio-economic effects of an onshore wind farm proposal. However, there is a series of commonly used methodologies for such assessment, including recognised approaches to quantifying economic effects both during the construction of a development and following its completion, that have been widely used in other major projects. These have been adopted here and are described below.
- 14.14 The approach to the socio-economic assessment is presented in two parts, addressing both the construction phase aspects of the Proposed Development and the longer term economic effects once the Proposed Development is built and operational.

### *Assessment of Likely Effects on the WSA*

- 14.15 This part of the assessment comprises a quantitative assessment of the likely direct, indirect and

induced effects of the Proposed Development on the WSA (as defined in **paragraph 14.10**) in terms of investment, employment, additional Gross Value Added (GVA)<sup>1</sup> and contribution to the labour market.

- 14.16 The employment effects that are attributable to the Proposed Development are divisible into three components. These are:
- **direct:** the employment and other economic outputs that are directly attributable to the delivery of the Proposed Development. These include any new jobs that are created to manage and supervise the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development and that are filled by employees of Balmeanach Wind Farm Limited or the appointed Contractor (or sub-contracted employees);
  - **indirect:** employment and other outputs created in other companies and organisations that provide services to the Proposed Development (i.e. procurement and other supply chain effects); and
  - **induced:** additional jobs and other economic outputs that are created in the wider economy as a result of the spending of employee incomes and other ripple effects that occur as a result of direct and indirect effects of the Proposed Development.
- 14.17 Construction phase job creation and investment has been assessed through the use of employment estimates provided by the Applicant and the estimated construction elements categories within which these jobs would fall. The assessment addresses the potential effects of the Proposed Development to the labour market and the local supply chain and economic output in terms of GVA. The estimate for construction phase GVA is calculated using the latest regional estimates for the average yield of GVA per worker for the construction and civil engineering sector in THC area, obtained from the Office of National Statistics (ONS).
- 14.18 Information gathered from the baseline data review has been used to develop a quantitative economic model which includes direct, indirect and induced effects of the development.
- 14.19 In the case of operational phase effects, quantitative economic modelling has been undertaken based on information regarding likely creation of permanent jobs using the experience of similar projects and expenditure projections provided by the Applicant. As well as direct job creation (e.g. facility management and maintenance), the assessment models indirect and induced job effects (i.e. supply chain jobs and multiplier effects). Jobs arising from investment of funds from the shared ownership scheme and community benefit fund offer real social and economic benefits to the local community and do have the potential to be significant. However, as the future investment decisions of the local community are currently unknown, this has not been taken into account in this assessment of socio-economic effects. Commentary on potential community benefits is provided in the Planning Statement.
- 14.20 Decommissioning is not separately considered as discussed in Chapter 6: Scoping and Consultation as the future baseline conditions cannot be predicted accurately and both the proposals for refurbishment/decommissioning and the future regulatory context are unknown. It is also considered that decommissioning impacts will be similar if not less than construction and therefore adverse effects and benefits are less during the decommissioning phase.

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<sup>1</sup> Gross value added (GVA) measures the contribution to an economy of an individual producer, industry, sector or region.

## Assessment of the Likely Effects on the LAI

- 14.21 The Proposed Development may have direct and indirect effects on tourism and recreation receptors within the LAI. This part of the socio-economic assessment comprises a qualitative assessment of the effects of the Proposed Development on receptors within the LAI including land use, recreational paths and long distance routes, and tourist attractions.
- 14.22 This Chapter assesses the significance of the likely socio-economic effects of the Proposed Development based on the magnitude of the impacts and the sensitivity of the receptor groups. The following sections set out the criteria for establishing magnitude of impact and sensitivity of the receptors.

## Sensitivity of Receptor

- 14.23 There are no published standards that define receptor sensitivity in relation to socio-economic assessment. As a general rule, the sensitivity of each receptor or receptor group is based on its importance or scale and the ability of the baseline to absorb or be influenced by the identified effects. For example, a receptor (such as a public footpath or a supply chain business) is considered less sensitive if there are alternatives with capacity within the study area. In assigning receptor sensitivity, consideration has been given to the following:
- the importance of the receptor e.g. local, regional, national, international;
  - the availability of comparable alternatives;
  - the ease at which the resource could be replaced;
  - the capacity of the resource to accommodate the identified impacts over a period of time; and
  - the level of usage and nature of users (e.g. sensitive groups such as people with disabilities).
- 14.24 Based upon professional judgement and experience on other development projects, four levels of sensitivity have been used: high; medium; low; and negligible. These are defined in **Table 14-2**.

**Table 14--2: Sensitivity Criteria**

Sensitivity	Description
High	<p>The receptor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has little or no capacity to absorb change without fundamentally altering its present character; or</li> <li>• is of high socio-economic, recreational, or tourism value<sup>2</sup>; or</li> <li>• is of national or international importance; or</li> <li>• is accorded priority in national policy; or</li> <li>• has no alternatives with available capacity within its catchment area; or</li> <li>• is a destination in its own right (as regards tourism and visitor attractions).</li> </ul>
Medium	<p>The receptor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has moderate capacity to absorb change without fundamentally altering its present character; or</li> <li>• has a moderate socio-economic, recreational or tourism value; or</li> <li>• is of regional importance; or</li> <li>• is accorded priority in local policy; or</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Which may include being of high value to a user group of high sensitivity (e.g. mobility impaired users)

Sensitivity	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has some alternatives with available capacity within its catchment area; or</li> <li>• is a destination for people already visiting the area (as regards tourism and visitor attractions); or</li> <li>• forms a cluster of low sensitivity receptors.</li> </ul>
Low	<p>The receptor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is tolerant of change without detriment to its character; or</li> <li>• is of low socio-economic, recreational or tourism value; or</li> <li>• is of local importance; or</li> <li>• is accorded low priority in policy; or</li> <li>• has a choice of alternatives with available capacity within its catchment area; or</li> <li>• is an incidental destination for people already visiting the area (as regards tourism and visitor attractions).</li> </ul>
Negligible	The receptor is resistant to change and is of low socio-economic, recreational or tourism value or there is a wide choice of alternatives with available capacity within its catchment area.

14.25 In considering the sensitivity of a receptor it is important to remember that, in the case of socio-economic assessment, the sensitivity is often subjective and different receptors will have differing sensitivities depending on matters such as the economic profile of the local area, perception of the type of development and attitude to the potential benefits of a development. This assessment is based on the assumption of a worst-case which assumes that there is a negative perception of the Proposed Development, although this may not be the case for all receptors.

### *Magnitude of Impact*

14.26 There are no published standards that define thresholds of magnitude for socio-economic, tourism or recreation impacts. In order to aid clear and robust identification of significant effects, specific and targeted criteria for defining the magnitude of impacts have been developed for this assessment based on experience on other similar projects. The following four levels of magnitude have been adopted using professional judgement: high; medium; low and negligible. These impacts can be beneficial, adverse or neutral. Criteria for each of these levels of magnitude for each receptor group are set out in **Table 14-3**.

**Table 14-3: Magnitude of Impact**

Receptor Group	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
WSA economy	An impact that would dominate over baseline economic conditions by >10 %.	An impact that would be expected to result in a moderate change to baseline economic conditions by >5 %.	An impact that would be expected to result in a perceptible difference from baseline economic conditions by >0.5 %.	An impact that would not be expected to result in a measurable variation from baseline economic conditions.
WSA labour market	An impact that would dominate over baseline labour market conditions and/or would affect a large proportion (>10	An impact that would be expected to result in a moderate change to baseline labour market conditions and/or would affect a	An impact that would be expected to result in a perceptible difference from baseline labour market conditions	An impact that would not be expected to result in a measurable variation from baseline labour market conditions.

Receptor Group	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
	%) of the existing resident workforce.	moderate proportion (>5 %) of the existing resident workforce.	and/or would affect a small proportion (>0.5 %) of the existing resident workforce.	
WSA tourism and visitor economy	An impact that would dominate over baseline tourism and visitor economy conditions.	An impact that would be expected to result in a moderate change to baseline tourism and visitor economy conditions.	An impact that would be expected to result in a perceptible difference to baseline tourism and visitor economy conditions	An impact that would not be expected to result in a measurable variation from baseline tourism and visitor economy conditions
Tourism and recreation assets	An impact that would be expected to cause a major restriction of access to or availability of tourism and visitor assets in the LAI or would result in a major change to existing patterns of use.	An impact that would be expected to have a moderate restriction of access to or availability of tourism and visitor assets in the LAI or would result in a moderate change to existing patterns of use.	An impact that would be expected to have a small restriction of access to or availability of tourism and visitor assets in the LAI or would result in a small change to existing patterns of use.	An impact that would be unlikely to result in a noticeable difference to tourism and visitor assets in the LAI.
Land use	An impact that would lead to a major restriction on the operation of a receptor, e.g. forestry business, or complete closure of receptor.	An impact that would lead to a moderate to major restriction on the operation of the receptor.	An impact that would lead to a minor restriction on the operation of the receptor.	An impact that would lead to a negligible restriction on the use of the receptor.

### Potential Effects

14.27 The level of effect of an impact on socio-economic and land use receptors is initially assessed by combining the magnitude of the impact and the sensitivity of the receptor. The level of effects presented in **Table 14-4** provides a guide to the decision making process.

**Table 14-4: Level of Effects Matrix**

Sensitivity or Value of Resource or Receptor	Magnitude of Impact			
	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
High	Major	Major	Moderate	Minor
Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
Low	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Negligible
Negligible	Minor	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible



- 14.28 Effects may be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse). Where an effect is classified as major, this is considered to represent a 'significant effect' in terms of the EIA Regulations. Where an effect is classified as moderate, this may be considered to represent a 'significant effect' but should always be subject to professional judgement and interpretation, particularly where the sensitivity or impact magnitude levels are not clear or are borderline between categories or the impact is intermittent.
- 14.29 The level of effects matrix shown in **Table 14-4** therefore provides a guide to decision making, but is not a substitute for professional judgement. Impacts and effects can be beneficial, neutral or adverse and these would be specified where applicable. It should be noted that significant effects need not be unacceptable or irreversible.

### *Potential Cumulative Effects*

- 14.30 In relation to economic effects, cumulative effects depend on the extent to which the supply chain and labour market within the WSA have the capacity to meet demand for construction services from a number of similar projects. An assessment has been made as to whether it is considered likely that the cumulative effect indicates a loss of benefit as a result of cumulative projects, or an enhancement of opportunity which would help to develop expertise and capacity in the market. The cumulative effects assessment is able to make a quantitative judgement on potential loss of benefit due to cumulative projects. Enhancement of opportunity is identified only in qualitative terms.
- 14.31 There is potential for cumulative effects to arise with regard to a number of prospective or consented projects at both construction and operational stage. Other projects to be assessed for cumulative effects will take account of the likely timing of construction, and proximity to the Site.

### *Mitigation*

- 14.32 The assessment takes account of any environmental principles that are incorporated into the design of the Proposed Development. These include good practice measures with regard to traffic management, control of noise and dust, signage and provisions for maintaining access for walkers, details of which are set out in **Technical Appendix 3.1: Outline Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Technical Appendix 14.2: Proposed Access Management Plan (PAMP)**. Any additional mitigation measures that would reduce the level of any significant effects are set out and considered prior to assessing residual effects.

### *Residual Effects*

- 14.33 A statement of residual effects, following consideration of any specific mitigation measures, is provided.

### *Statement of Significance*

- 14.34 The assessment approach is to describe the baseline conditions, to identify likely effects from construction and operation of the Proposed Development, consider the sensitivity of receptors, and then to assess the likely significance of any effects. Any adverse effects considered to be 'significant' are further considered with regard to bespoke mitigation measures and residual effects following mitigation are then identified.
- 14.35 Any significant effects that would be direct, indirect, secondary, cumulative, short, medium and

long term, permanent or temporary are examined and their significance assessed. These effects are identified as being positive or negative.

### Assumptions, Limitations and Confidence

- 14.36 Assumptions used in the assessment are stated where relevant and are set out in such a way as to be as transparent, evidence-based and as accurate as possible. No particular limitations were noted with regard to the assessment of socio-economic and land use effects.

### BASELINE CONDITIONS

- 14.37 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 east, and Struan which lies 7km to the south, and there are a number of scattered tourism-based businesses located around the site principally along the A850.

### Population and Employment

- 14.38 The baseline review of population and employment focuses on the WSA (Highland administrative area), although data for Scotland and the UK/Great Britain are provided for comparison as appropriate.

#### *Population*

- 14.39 Although the largest administrative area in Scotland by geographical area, the most recent mid-year estimates show the Highland's population stands at 238,100, less than 5% of Scotland's population of 5,479,900. The proportion of the Highland's population of working age (16-64) at 60.8% is lower than the Scotland average of 63.8% and also lower than the UK average of 62.9% (NOMIS, 2021).

#### *Labour Market and Supply Chain*

- 14.40 The Office of National Statistics (ONS) Annual Population Survey reports that there were 111,600 economically active residents of working age in Highland in 2022 implying an economic activity rate of 74.3%. This is lower than the activity rate for both Scotland as a whole (77.1%) and the UK (78.5%) (NOMIS, 2022).
- 14.41 The unemployment rate in Highland as of 2022 was 2.8%, 0.6% lower than the average for Scotland and 0.8% lower than Great Britain (NOMIS, 2022).
- 14.42 Economic inactivity (i.e. those of working age who are not employed nor seeking work) is higher in Highland at 25.7% than in Scotland as a whole (22.9%) or in Great Britain (21.5%) (NOMIS, 2022).

- 14.43 The level of self-employment in Highland was 10.7% as of 2022, this is higher than the Scottish average (7.6%) and the average for Great Britain (9.3%) (NOMIS, 2022).
- 14.44 Useful insights into the dynamics of the labour market are often revealed by consideration of the occupational structure of those in employment as shown in **Table 14-5** (NOMIS, 2022). 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 Great Britain 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.

**Table 14-5: Employment by Occupation (Jan 2022-Dec 2022)**

	Highland (numbers)	Highland (%)	Scotland (%)	Great Britain (%)
1 Managers, directors and senior officials	9,400	8.8	7.9	10.4
2 Professional	18,900	17.5	25.9	26.2
3 Associate professional & technical	14,700	13.7	14.9	14.8
4 Administrative & secretarial	10,300	9.6	9.3	10
5 Skilled trades	11,200	10.4	8.8	8.7
6 Caring, leisure and other service	15,500	11.6	8.9	8.0
7 Sales and customer service	10,600	9.8	7.7	6.4
8 Process plant & machine operatives	#	#	5.6	5.6
9 Elementary	13,300	12.4	10.5	9.5

Note: # Sample size too small for reliable estimate

- 14.45 The latest (2021) data shows that degree-qualified (or equivalent) residents of working age account for 44.8% of the population of THC area, which is lower than the average for Scotland as a whole (50.0%) but higher than the average for Great Britain (43.6%). The proportion of the working age population with no qualifications is 5.4%, this is lower than the average for Scotland as a whole (7.8%) and for Great Britain (6.6%) (NOMIS, 2022).
- 14.46 According to the ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) for 2022, average weekly gross earnings levels for residents of Highland were £664.30, £24.00 higher than the Scottish average of £640.30, and £22.10 higher than the average for Great Britain of £642.20 (NOMIS, 2022).

Data on an area's business population can be obtained from the ONS UK Business Counts data series (which is sourced from the Interdepartmental Business Register, (NOMIS, 2022)). This data source can be used to identify the structure of the local business base by sector: this is potentially useful in assessing the capacity of the local area to host supply chain activity for infrastructure and other large-scale construction projects such as the Proposed Development. **Table 14-6** provides the latest (2021) data on the structure of the local business base, both in absolute and relative terms.

**Table 14-6: Structure of the Business Population of Highland 2021**

Industry (Source: ONS UK Business Counts (NOMIS b, 2017))	No. of Persons (Highland 2021)	Highland 2021 (%)	Scotland 2021 (%)	Great Britain (2021) (%)
B: Mining and quarrying	400	0.4	1.0	0.1
C: Manufacturing	6,000	5.5	7.1	7.6
D: Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	1,250	1.1	0.7	0.4
E: Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	2,000	1.8	0.8	0.7
F: Construction	8,000	7.3	6.1	4.9
G: Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	17,000	15.6	14.4	14.4
H: Transportation and storage	4,500	4.1	4.2	5.1
I: Accommodation and food service activities	12,000	11.0	7.6	7.5
J: Information and communication	2,250	2.1	3.1	4.5
K: Financial and insurance activities	800	0.7	3.1	3.6
L: Real estate activities	1,500	1.4	1.5	1.8
M: Professional, scientific and technical activities	5,000	4.6	6.5	8.9
N: Administrative and support service activities	6,000	5.5	8.0	8.9
O: Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	6,000	5.5	6.6	4.6
P: Education	9,000	8.3	8.7	8.8
Q: Human health and social work activities	19,000	17.4	15.9	13.7
R: Arts, entertainment and recreation	3,500	3.2	2.5	2.3
S: Other service activities	2,000	1.8	1.8	1.9

14.47 The data in **Table 14-6** shows that accommodation and food services, often associated with tourism, is a particularly important employment sector within THC area.

14.48 Note, persons in agriculture and the self-employed are not included in the NOMIS data set out in **Table 14-6**.

## Tourism Economy

14.49 Visit Scotland: Tourism in Scotland's Regions Highland Factsheet 2019 (Visit Scotland, 2020) shows that sustainable tourism GVA in 2018 for Highland was £320 million and 16,000 people worked in

the sustainable tourism<sup>3</sup> sector. The most recent data (2018) shows these as being the highest figures for any area in Scotland other than the city areas of Glasgow and Edinburgh (Tourism Employment in Scotland: Visit Scotland, 2018).

- 14.50 There was a strong surge in domestic tourism to the Highlands in 2019. Overnight trips reached just under 2.5 million (+45%) and associated expenditure totalled £575 million (+35%). These figures represent 18% of the domestic overnight visits and spending nationally (Visit Scotland, 2020).
- 14.51 Visit Scotland: Scotland Visitor Survey 2021 shows that Highlands and Isle of Skye was the most visited area (37%) nationally. Although none of the five most popular free visitor attractions within Highland according to the 2019 Factsheet were located on Skye, Dunvegan Castle and Gardens was the fifth most popular paid attraction with 176,534 visitors. .
- 14.52 The Highland Factsheet 2019 advises that the most popular activities undertaken as part of a day trip to Highlands are 'going for a meal in a restaurant, café, hotel, pub', 'sightseeing on foot' and a 'long walk hike or ramble'.

### Local Area of Influence

- 14.53 The site is located in the north west of the Isle of Skye, on the Bracadale Estate, on the Balmeanach and Caroy Common Grazings, and partly on the Coishletter Estate within the THC administrative boundary (**Figure 14.2**). The site is characterised by smoothed moorland slopes incised by small watercourses. The land is grazed by sheep and deer. To the south, an area of forestry covers the lower slopes of Beinn a Chleirich, to the east of the crofting township of Balmeanach.
- 14.54 The proposed access to the site would be via the existing Ben Aketil Wind Farm access track from the A850, and then south east via the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm site access track onto the hillside.
- 14.55 The surrounding area is rural in nature, with land predominately used for grazing and forestry. There are several residential properties and crofts located to the south and south west of the site which extend down to the A863 and Loch Caroy; the closest being approximately 2.1km from the nearest proposed turbine (T8).
- 14.56 Beyond, lies the village of Dunvegan approximately 8km to the west, the settlement of Edinbane 3km to the north while Struan lies 7km to the south and the capital of the island Portree, lies approximately 16km to the east.

### Land Use

- 14.57 The land use within the site is primarily used for grazing of sheep and deer.
- 14.58 Land uses within the site are considered to be of local value and their sensitivity is therefore judged to be low.

### Recreation

- 14.59 Features of recreational interest within the LAI are shown on **Figure 14.3**. Formal Recreation

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<sup>3</sup> The definition of 'sustainable tourism' represents the SIC07 industry classifications for tourism used by Scottish Government.

### Facilities

- ‘Formal’ recreation facilities are considered to be those with paid or controlled entry. Formal recreational facilities are predominantly concentrated in the main settlements such as Portree, Uig and Dunvegan. Portree and Uig fall outside of the LAI, with only Dunvegan located within the 10km extended LAI for recreational receptors that are within line of sight, however the ZTV (Figure 14.1) has illustrated that there is no predicted visibility of the Proposed Development from the formal recreational facility in Dunvegan ‘Dunvegan Castle’.

### Informal Recreation

- 14.60 Within the LAI there are a number of designated paths. The following sections describe the various types of paths and trails within the LAI. In addition, in accordance with THC’s Access Officer’s advice, all commonly used access routes, not just public rights of way or core paths are considered.

#### Long Distance Footpaths

- 14.61 There are no long distance trails which pass through the LAI, and no national trails. The Skye Trail, a 128 mile unofficial long distance trail, passes over 15km to the east of the site.

#### Core Paths

- 14.62 There are two Core Paths in the vicinity of the site boundary: one runs parallel to the A850 as it passes the site entrance to the north and another extends from the end of the Balmeanach Road eastwards to the south of the site.
- 14.63 Core Paths are routes identified by THC in accordance with the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, which requires each local authority draw up a plan for a system of paths (Core Paths) that provides “a basic framework of routes sufficient for the purpose of giving the public reasonable access throughout their area.” Core paths aim to satisfy the basic needs of local people and visitors for general access and recreation and provide links to the wider path network throughout the Highland region.
- 14.64 The first Core Paths Plan for Highland was adopted in 2011. THC undertook a consultation for the West Highlands and Islands area and published a draft amended Core Paths Plan that went out to public consultation in July 2019. Since then, the Draft Modified Amended Plan has sat with Scottish Government Planning and Environment Appeals Division (DPEA), to assess a handful of unresolved objections, although none of those are on Skye.
- 14.65 The adopted and Draft Core Paths within the LAI which were identified using THC’s interactive map of Core Paths<sup>4</sup> are shown on **Figure 14.3** and detailed in **Table 14-7**.

**Table 14-7: Core Paths**

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<sup>4</sup> THC (2019) *Interactive map of our core maps*

Core Path No. on Figure 14.3	Core Path Name	Description	Distance from Site (m)
1	Churches Walk	3.0km path located west of the site, southeast of Dunvegan Castle.	5443
2	Edinbane to Greshornish Road End	2.07km path which runs parallel to the A850 opposite the site entrance.	31
3	Edinbane Link Path	0.83km route located north- north east of the site running south to north through the village of Edinbane.	2080
4	Greshornish Forest Path	6.89km path located within the forest to the north of the A850, north of the site.	1382
5	Healaval Forest	4.23km path located within the Healaval Forest to the west of the site and the A850.	3398
6	Tayinloan to Fanks Road End	2.18km path to the north-north east of the site, south of Lyndale point.	4617
7	Loch Caroy to Glen Vic Askill	3.33km route running between south of the site and Balmeanach Road.	1292
8	Vatten to Feorlig	1.30km path to the west of the southern boundary of the site and the A863.	3856
9	Skeabost to Carbost	1.7km track (tar), located east of the application site, running parallel an north of the A850 and north of the Skeabost Country House Hotel.	6183
10	South Cuidrach to Earlish	3.88km path located northeast of the site and west of the A38.	9131
11	Roag Link Path	0.33km path located west of the southern boundary of the site an north-northwest of the Loch na Faolinn sea loch.	5911
12	Harlosh Link Path	0.21km path located south of the application site, within the Harlosh settlement.	5666
13	Ullinish to Unllinish Point	1.18km path, located south of the application site, within the Ullinish settlement.	7939

Core Path No. on Figure 14.3	Core Path Name	Description	Distance from Site (m)
14	Rubba Ban to Ardtrek	0.69km path located south of the application site, within the Portnalong settlement.	9334
15	Ardtrek Coastal Path	0.66km pat located south of the application site, within the Portnalong settlement	9874
16	Orbost to Idrigill	8.09km grass/track/constructed path, located southwest of the application site, running between Idrigill point and the Orabost settlement.	7402
17	Bracadale to Sturan	0.43km track (tar) located south of the application site, running parallel to the A863.	6900
18	Coral Beach	1.76km track (grass/earth) located northwest of the application site, within the Claigan settlement.	9107
19	Stein to Gillen	4.34km track located north-northwest of the application site, south of the Peninsula at Healaval.	8692
20	Tote Road End to Kensaleyre	0.83km track (tar), located east-northeast of the site, parallel to the A87 and southeast of Loch Eyre.	8372
21	Borve Circular Route	3.08km track/tar track, located east-northeast of the site, adjacent to the A87.	8543
22	Carbost to Borve Old Road	1.10km track (tar), located east of the application site, running parallel to the north of the A850.	8442

- 14.66 The Draft Amended Core Paths Plan (THC, 2018) includes two extensions to existing core paths in the Edinbane area: Edinbane Link Path extension and Tayinloan to Fank Road End extension. Another proposed core path in the Edinbane area is a short path from Upper Edinbane to village centre. These proposed core paths within the LAI are shown on **Figure 14.3**.

**Table 14-8: Proposed Core Paths**

Core Path No. on Figure 14.3	Core Path Name	Description	Distance from Site (m)
23	Edinbane Link Path	Extension of Core Path no. 3	2244



Core Path No. on Figure 14.3	Core Path Name	Description	Distance from Site (m)
	extension		
24	Tayinloan to Fank Road End extension	Extension of Core Path no. 6	3618
25	Upper Edinbane to village centre.	Proposed path which leads from Upper Edinbane to village centre.	2103

14.67 The Core Path routes (including proposed Core Paths) are considered to be of local to medium importance and of low to medium sensitivity depending on the level of access provided to the wider path network.

### Rights of Way

14.68 No Rights of Way (RoW) have been identified within the LAI.

### Heritage Paths

14.69 There are no routes in the LAI promoted by the Heritage Paths Project (Heritage Paths, 2023) for their historic interest.

### Tourist Routes

14.70 The A850 is an important tourist route forming part of the circuit of north west Skye for motorists who are viewing the scenery and for more active travellers such as cyclists. The route may also be used by tourists visiting Dunvegan Castle and Gardens, an important visitor attraction in the north west part of the island. The route is considered to be of regional importance and medium sensitivity.

### Access Land

14.71 The lack of any designated or recorded paths in parts of the LAI does not necessarily preclude the public from using other land within the LAI for recreational purposes in accordance with the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, including for walking, cycling and horse riding. From Strava heatmap data<sup>5</sup> it is evident that the existing Ben Aketil and Edinbane Wind Farm access tracks as well as forest rides are regularly used for recreational purposes such as dog walking. A level of use was confirmed during site visits and in anecdotal discussions during public consultation events. The access land in this area is considered to be of local importance and low sensitivity. Additional information on these routes is provided in **Technical Appendix 14.2: Access Management Plan**.

### Road Cycling

14.72 There are no National Cycle Routes within the LAI. However, there are a number of websites

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.strava.com/heatmap#14.36/-6.46941/57.45843/hot/all>

promoting road and track cycling on Skye, including some that provide support travel services.

- 14.73 Due to the lack of formal facilities and promotion, other than the A850 (noted above) these routes are considered to be of local importance and low sensitivity.

### Mountain Biking

- 14.74 There are no formal mountain biking trails within the LAI, although it is evident from the information from the most local Mountain Bike hire website (Skye MTB Adventures) that any accessible moorland or forested area could be used by mountain bikers on an informal basis. Due to the lack of formal facilities and promotion, these routes are considered to be of local importance and low sensitivity.

### Horse Riding

- 14.75 The Isle of Skye Trekking and Therapy Centre is located 5.8km to the north east of the site just outside the LAI. It is a Centre that provides retreats, accommodation and pony trekking. The Centre uses three main routes for its trekking as follows:

- The Old Road;
- The Fanks; and
- The Hill Ride.

- 14.76 All of the named trekking routes are an hour long and are located in the area around and to the north of the trekking centre, although some of the routes may fall marginally into the LAI. The routes are considered to be of local importance and low sensitivity.

### *Tourism*

#### **Tourism Attractions**

- 14.77 Certain recreational activities are of sufficient prominence to draw visitors to the area and are therefore considered to be tourist attractions. However, the LAI does not include any of the 'iconic' landscape features or nationally important recreational destinations that draw tourists to Skye.
- 14.78 The LAI includes only one business that may be considered to be a tourist attraction (although it also sells to residents of Skye as confirmed on its website): a pottery business in Edinbane. The business is considered to be of local importance and low sensitivity.

#### **Accommodation**

- 14.79 Within or close to the LAI there are 47 accommodation businesses, the majority of which are located to the north of the site in Edinbane or around Loch Greshornish. A summary is provided in **Table 14-9**; further details are provided in **Technical Appendix 14.2** and the businesses are shown on **Figure 14.3**.

**Table 14-9: Accommodation Businesses**

Settlement	Hotel	Bed & Breakfast	Self-Catering	Camping / Caravanning
Edinbane	1	7	2	0
Flashader	0	7	3	0
Greshornish	2	1	2	1
Orabost	3	0	1	1
Skinidin	0	0	1	0
Eyre	0	1	1	0
Claigan	0	0	1	0
Roskhill	1	0	0	0
Skeabost	1	1	0	0
Treaslane	1	1	0	0
Ullinish	1	1	0	0
Balmeanach	0	0	1	0
Ose	0	3	0	0
Kensaleyre	0	1	0	0

14.80 None of the individual accommodation businesses identified are considered to be of more than local value and their sensitivity is low. However, due to the popularity of Skye in general as a tourist destination, collectively the accommodation businesses within the LAI are considered to be of regional importance and medium sensitivity.

## Events

14.81 A number of running and cycling events take place on the Isle of Skye each year, some of which may use the A850 and other local roads and tracks. No major event has been identified specific to the LAI. None of the events are considered to be of more than local importance and their sensitivity is low.

## ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

14.82 This section is concerned with the assessment of effects with regard to construction and operational effects within the relevant study areas.

### Construction Effects

14.83 Construction effects are addressed in turn with regard to the WSA and the LAI.

### Assumptions of the Assessment – WSA

- 14.84 During the construction phase of the Proposed Development there would be economic effects resulting from expenditure on items such as site preparation including forestry services, construction and maintenance of access roads, purchase and delivery of materials, plant, equipment, and components. Based on information provided by the developer, construction and installation of the Proposed Development is expected to occur over an 18-month period.
- 14.85 The developer has provided technical information relevant to the project that has enabled estimates of likely pre-development and construction phase costs. Project expenditure is estimated to total over £65 million in 2021 price terms. **Table 14-10** provides a breakdown of this estimated expenditure disaggregated by main category of predicted spend, using a 2021 price base.

**Table 14-10: Indicative Pre-development, Construction and Commissioning Cost Estimates**

Project Component	£million
Development and project management costs	1.4
Turbines and plant	53.9
Electricals and Grid connection	4.1
Balance of plant, Civils, and Miscellaneous	5.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>65.3</b>

- 14.86 Based on experience with similar projects elsewhere in Scotland, an assessment of the predicted spatial location of expenditure for each category of costs has been derived. This spatial breakdown of expenditure is based on the following areas: the WSA; Scotland; other UK; and international.

### Embedded Measures

- 14.87 Procurement of goods and services can have an important effect on the local economy. The potential level of expenditure set out in **Table 14-10** provides an opportunity for the local supply chain within the WSA to benefit from the Proposed Development over the 18 month construction period.
- 14.88 The types of supply chain companies that could benefit from this expenditure is wide ranging, and is likely to include the following:
- traffic management;
  - materials supply;
  - plant hire;
  - vehicle servicing / tyres;
  - forestry services;
  - fencing;
  - fuel;
  - security;

- waste management;
- signing and lighting;
- telecommunications;
- drainage;
- planting and seeding;
- accommodation; and
- food and drink.

- 14.89 The Applicant acknowledges the importance of employing good practice measures in maximising local procurement, taking into consideration resources such as the Renewables UK Good Practice Guidance 2014: ‘Local Supply Chain Opportunities in Onshore Wind’ (RenewablesUK, 2014). The Applicant also recognises the value of building upon recent UK best practices in innovative local procurement, which may include implementing a Local Contractor Policy. In this regard, primary contractors that demonstrate a clear commitment to increasing local content in their supply chains may receive additional consideration in the tendering process.
- 14.90 With the intention of fostering strong relationships with local suppliers and promoting transparency, the Applicant plans to establish a presence on Skye well in advance of the construction of commencement. To ensure local businesses are informed about the contracting opportunities, the Applicant will organise a series of ‘Meet the Supplier’ events prior to the main tender process.
- 14.91 For the purposes of this assessment, it has been assumed that the Applicant would not purchase towers and turbines from Scotland, although as part of its local procurement measures, the Applicant would include Scottish companies in the procurement process should Scottish sources arise.
- 14.92 There is an established supply chain of experience wind farm Tier 1 contractors based in Scotland. These firms have developed their own local supply chains throughout the local area, and work with subcontractors to invest in training and skills development.
- 14.93 In terms of a quantitative assessment of effects, the provision of goods and services by local businesses (within the WSA) has been taken into account in the assessment of employment and GVA estimates reported in the previous section. 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.

### *Potential Effects on the WSA*

#### **Gross Effects During Construction**

- 14.94 Estimates of the expected direct construction phase employment implications of the Proposed

Development have been derived using the information on projected expenditure set out above, as well as assumptions obtained from the following sources:

- employment and GVA multipliers for Scotland, obtained from Input-Output tables for Scotland (1998-2019) published by the Scottish Government;
- employment and GVA multipliers for the UK obtained from Input-Output tables published by the UK Government; and
- ratios of turnover per unit of GVA and GVA per employee have been derived from Scottish and UK Government data.

14.95 Using the sources summarised above, **Table 14-11** sets out estimates of direct gross employment and GVA effects that have been derived for three spatial areas: the WSA; Scotland; and the UK as a whole. These estimates are set out for both the development period as a whole (i.e., 18 months) and on an average per annum basis. The GVA estimates are expressed in 2021 prices.

**Table 14-11: Estimates of Gross Development Phase GVA and Employment Effects**

	GVA £million (2021 prices)	GVA p.a. £million (2021 prices)	Employment (person years)	Employment p.a. (person years)
WSA	1.8	1.2	26	17
Scotland (total, including WSA)	4.3	2.9	62	41
UK (total, including Scotland)	10.7	7.1	152	101

14.96 Assuming the Proposed Development proceeds as intended by the developer, GVA with a gross total of £1.8 million is predicted to be generated by the Proposed Development in the WSA economy during the development, construction, and commissioning phase. This is equivalent to £1.2 million per annum over the construction period.

14.97 The equivalent predicted GVA total for Scotland is £4.3 million (averaging £2.9 million p.a.) and for the UK it is £10.7 million (averaging £7.1 million p.a.).

14.98 In terms of employment, a total of 26 person-years of employment are estimated to be generated in the WSA economy during the 18-month construction period. This amounts to an average 17 person-years per annum during construction.

14.99 The equivalent predicted total for Scotland is 62 person-years (averaging 41 p.a.), and for the UK it is 152 person-years (averaging 101 p.a.).

### Net Effects During Construction

14.100 So far, the focus has been on the gross effects of construction activity at three spatial levels. The next step is to consider and quantify the potential net additional effects by taking into account a number of additionality concepts:

- **Leakage:** is the proportion of Proposed Development outcomes (e.g. jobs, GVA) that benefit individuals or organisations located beyond the relevant area of impact (e.g. the WSA local area). Leakage is generally higher at a local level, although it also varies by the nature of

development type.

- **Displacement:** is an estimate of the economic activity hosted by the site that would be diverted from other businesses in the spatial impact area. This again varies by the nature of development type.
- **Multipliers:** an estimate for further economic activity associated with additional income and/or Proposed Development procurement activity stimulated by Proposed Development activity within the spatial impact area under consideration.

14.101 The specific values assumed for multipliers for Scotland and the UK are sourced for national input-output tables and vary by the Proposed Development expenditure category. Assumptions about leakage are based on local labour market indicators and experience of other wind farm projects located in Scotland. **Table 14-12** summarises the derived estimates for net construction effects on GVA and employment after allowing for additionality factors. As with the gross effects, the net effects are presented in both overall terms and on an average per annum basis.

**Table 14-12: Estimates of Net Additional Construction Phase Effects**

	GVA £million (2021 prices)	GVA p.a. £million (2021 prices)	Employment (person years)	Employment p.a. (person years)
WSA	1.7	1.2	26	17
Scotland (total, including WSA)	5.2	3.5	75	50
UK (total, including Scotland)	12.0	8.0	170	113

14.102 With respect to employment, a total of 26 person-years of net additional temporary employment is predicted to be generated in the WSA economy during the construction phase of the proposed Proposed Development (averaging 17 p.a.). The equivalent total for Scotland is 75 person-years (averaging 50 p.a.), and for the UK it is 170 person-years (averaging 113 p.a.).

14.103 It may be noted that the estimated net employment totals for the WSA are the same as for the gross effects presented above. This is because for the WSA the jobs lost due to leakage and displacement effects are nearly exactly offset by the expected gains attributable to local multiplier effects.

14.104 In 2021 there was an estimated 128,000 jobs located within THC area.<sup>6</sup> The temporary addition of 17 jobs (per annum) to this total would increase the number by 0.02%. The effect on the local employment base is therefore considered to be negligible and so not significant.

14.105 In terms of output, a net additional total of £1.2 million of GVA per annum is predicted to be generated by the Proposed Development in the local WSA economy during the development, construction, and commissioning phase. The equivalent predicted total for Scotland is £3.5 million and for the UK it is £8.0 million.

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<sup>6</sup> Source: ONS Annual Population Survey. Data accessed via NOMIS on 24 April 2023.

14.106 As of 2019, the estimated annual value of output in THC area was around £6.40 billion.<sup>7</sup> Adjustment of this total to 2021 prices produces an adjusted estimate of total of about £6.78 billion. The temporary augmentation of the local economy by £1.2 million would increase the size of the local economy by around 0.02%. The effects on the value of the local economy is therefore considered to be negligible and so not significant.

### Construction Effects on Tourism Economy

14.107 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. These likely effects are included within the quantification of the net employment effects that are reported in **Table 14-10**.

14.108 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 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 displacement of tourism visitors. This could have a temporary adverse effect on the local tourism economy.

14.109 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.

14.110 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, but the net impact may be adverse.

14.111 In order to manage the effects of construction worker accommodation on the local tourism economy, the outline CEMP (**Technical Appendix 3.1**) includes provision for an Accommodation Strategy to be agreed with THC prior to construction commencing. The Accommodation Strategy would include measures for temporary peak season construction worker accommodation to be provided either on site or at a suitable offsite location (such as an existing campsite). The Strategy would include details of measures to ensure that sufficient services infrastructure is available (water, electricity and sewage treatment). This infrastructure could potentially provide longer term benefits for the local area following construction of the wind farm, although its retention would need to be the subject of a planning application at the appropriate time. The Accommodation Strategy would ensure that sufficient accommodation capacity would be available at peak times to

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<sup>7</sup> Source: ONS Regional and local authority GVA estimates



avoid displacement of tourism visitors.

- 14.112 Taking account of the measures proposed to be taken as part of the provision of an Accommodation Strategy, the impact on the tourism economy is expected to be low. As the receptor is considered to be of medium sensitivity, this would give rise to a minor level of effect that would be not significant.

### *Potential Effects on the LAI*

#### **Assumptions of the Assessment – LAI**

- 14.113 The principal potential impact on receptors outwith the site is expected to be caused by delivery vehicles on local roads. The proposed route to the site is described in **Chapter 12: Site Access, Traffic and Transport**, and within the LAI passes the existing access track and bellmouth junction, currently serving the Ben Aketil Wind Farm would provide access directly from the A850, with access then taken along the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm track to the site. Minor upgrades and widening would be required to allow the transportation of longer blades than for previously transported components to the site. It is proposed that a new spur would be created from the Ben Sca access track (**Figure 3.1a-b Chapter 12: Site Access, Traffic and Transport**).
- 14.114 Land uses within the site will be affected throughout the construction period by construction activities. Whilst some parts of the site may not be directly affected for lengthy periods, it is expected that all shooting activities would be suspended during construction, and public access would be controlled as part of the site health and safety plan.

#### **Embedded Mitigation**

- 14.115 The Proposed Development, as described in **Chapter 3**, incorporates good practice measures for limiting adverse effects of the construction works. Given the nature of the tourism economy on Skye, construction of the Proposed Development is expected to result in competition for accommodation between construction workers and tourist visitors, resulting in some displacement of tourism visitors during peak season unless management measures are put in place. An Accommodation Strategy is proposed to be developed as part of the CEMP to minimise competition for accommodation. An outline CEMP is provided in **Technical Appendix 3.1**.
- 14.116 Construction traffic would affect use of the A850 tourist route and use of onsite tracks and forestry roads for recreational users, in particular the existing Ben Aketil Wind Farm access track and the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm access track. Measures are set out in **Chapter 3** and also in **Chapter 12: Site Access, Traffic and Transport** relating to how delivery of goods and services would be managed during construction so as to minimise impacts on sensitive receptors. The proposed management measures would be further developed in the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP; a Framework for which is provided in **Technical Appendix 12.2**) that would be adopted prior to construction commencing.
- 14.117 The Proposed Development would also incorporate measures for enhancing the beneficial effects of construction on the local economy, particularly with regard to adding value to the local supply chain through implementation of a Local Contractor Policy, where additional weight in the tendering process is given to primary contractors that show a clear commitment to increasing local content in their supply chains.

### Land Use

- 14.118 Located to the north west of the site is a commercial forested area, which was planted in 1990. A large proportion of the planted trees are considered to be of poor to very poor quality, due to the soil being unsuitable for tree growth. An area of 38.53ha will be improved as part of a forest to bog restoration project forming the Habitat Management Plan (HMP) for the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and its Extension. A HMP is also proposed for the Proposed Development removing further poor growth trees to increase the area of forest to bog restoration by 77.75ha. The access route would pass through the forested area but commercial forestry is not regarded as a receptor for EIA purposes. The effects of the Proposed Development on felling, habitat restoration and biodiversity net gain are considered in **Chapter 3: Description of the Development, Technical Appendix 3.3: Forestry and Technical Appendix 8.5: Outline Habitat Management Plan (OHMP)**.
- 14.119 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 during construction 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 to be low. As the sensitivity of the receptor is low, the level of effect would be negligible and not significant.
- 14.120 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 magnitude of impact is assessed as medium. As the sensitivity of the receptor is low, the level of effect would be minor and not significant.

### Tourism and Recreation Assets

As recreational receptors of only local value outwith the site have been scoped out of the assessment, there are no formal recreational receptors to be assessed other than informal uses within the site and these are assessed under land use. Tourism receptors within the LAI comprise the A850 tourist route, one pottery business and 41 accommodation businesses. For the purpose of assessing construction effects, only businesses located along the access route to the site are expected to be adversely affected during construction, as a result of construction traffic using the A850. The principal impact on tourism receptors within the LAI would be experienced in the village of Edinbane, although most properties do not have direct access onto the A850.

- 14.121 An assessment of effects on road users and other sensitive receptors has been undertaken in **Chapter 12: Site Access, Traffic and Transport**. The assessment takes account of embedded measures to minimise impacts of construction traffic on other highway users, including tourism users of the highway and nearby properties. A Framework CTMP (**Technical Appendix 12.2**) has been prepared to outline the mitigation measures recommended during the construction stage. The assessment concludes that construction traffic would not have a significant effect on community severance, road safety and vulnerable road users including walkers and cyclists.
- 14.122 The CTMP will also take into account the changes to highway network use during peaks associated with the tourist season, working to minimise the disruption associated with deliveries. For this reason, in the event that planning permission is forthcoming the Framework CTMP would be reviewed once the programme of delivery is known to ensure that the tourist season is taken into account including the seasonal tourist traffic.

- 14.123 As noted above under tourism economy, local businesses including accommodation and food and drink businesses may experience beneficial impacts during construction due to use by construction workers. The level of effect may be high for individual businesses, and as the sensitivity of these receptors is low the effect would be moderate which would be significant (beneficial) for individual businesses although less than significant for the LAI as a whole.

### *Proposed Mitigation*

- 14.124 Allowing for the implementation of embedded mitigation, no significant adverse effects have been identified in respect of socio-economic receptors arising from construction of the wind farm and therefore no mitigation measures are required to reduce or remedy any adverse effect.

### *Residual Construction Effects*

- 14.125 No residual adverse construction effects are expected.

### *Cumulative Effects*

- 14.126 There is potential for cumulative effects to arise in relation to the construction of other prospective or consented projects, specifically the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm and Extension, Glen Ullinish, and Beinn Mheadhonach Wind Farms.
- 14.127 Glen Ullinish II Wind Farm has been scoped with ECU and comprises a much bigger development which, if consented, would replace the consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm. As described in **Chapter 3** there are three further proposed wind farm developments currently at scoping stage in the vicinity of the Proposed Development (Ben Aketil Repowering Wind Farm, Edinbane Repowering Wind Farm and Waternish Wind Farm), should the construction phases overlap with the Proposed Development, cumulative effects could be experienced on local roads used by tourists if construction traffic were to use the same access route proposed for the Proposed Development. **Chapter 12: Site Access, Traffic and Transport** has assessed the potential for cumulative effects on the proposed routes for construction traffic accessing these wind farms and has found that there may be cumulative effects anticipated as a result of the combined construction impacts from the Ben Sca Wind Farm and its Extension however, proposed mitigation results in an insignificant adverse effect.
- 14.128 In terms of economic effects, there are not expected to be any employment and additionality effects. Cumulative effects resulting from accommodation demands would be managed by means of the proposed Accommodation Strategy which would take account of any potential overlap of construction period, particularly within the peak tourist season. No other constructive cumulative effects are expected. A Skye Developers Forum, consisting of representatives from companies with operational, consented and in development projects has recently been inaugurated to address potential cumulative construction issues such as accommodation and transport.

## **Operational Effects**

### *Assumptions of the Assessment – WSA*

- 14.129 If the Proposed Development were permitted and built, when it became operational it would require a small team of personnel to provide servicing, maintenance, repairs and other operational support. Based on experience of similar onshore wind farm projects elsewhere in Scotland, it is

estimated that 3 or 4 permanent direct jobs are likely to be created by the Proposed Development during its operational phase.

### *Potential Effects on the WSA*

14.130 As well as the direct impacts on employment there would also be indirect effects generated throughout the operational phase. Indirect effects arise from the placing of contracts with other businesses – both in the local area and elsewhere in Scotland – supplying services and materials to the Proposed Development during its operational phase. Examples of such supply chain activity would include the procurement of:

- site maintenance;
- waste management and recycling;
- felling and habitat management;
- civil engineering contractors for road maintenance, ditching, crane pad repairs, grass cutting, weed control, road furniture and gate repair etc;
- maintenance of fencing;
- fuel supplies;
- plant and equipment hire;
- crane companies to provide lifting services;
- snow clearing;
- supply of consumable items (e.g. lubricants and oils, spare parts, office supplies, etc.);
- statutory turbine inspections; and
- in addition, local shops, cafes, accommodation providers and hotels often experience an increase in business during the operational phase (e.g. visiting technicians for equipment maintenance and servicing).

14.131 Overall, based on experience with similar projects elsewhere in Scotland it is expected that there could be between 8 and 10 indirect jobs created in the operational and maintenance supply chain for the Proposed Development located within the WSA.

14.132 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.

14.133 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. The potential impact of such payments and profit sharing are discussed further in the following section. While this benefit package is a voluntary contribution by the Applicant, and its benefits are not a material planning consideration, this Chapter includes a qualitative assessment of significance of effect for this package.

### Community Benefit Payment and Community Investment

- 14.134 Balmeanach Wind Farm Limited is committed to offering a package of community benefits to local communities that would include a community benefit payment based on a fixed annual sum per megawatt (MW) of installed capacity, and the opportunity to share in the profits of the Proposed Development through community investment in the project. Based upon a maximum blade tip height of 149.9m, it is anticipated that the installed nominal capacity of each wind turbine would be approximately 4.5MW. The Proposed Development would therefore provide a total installed capacity of approximately 45MW.
- 14.135 The Proposed Development would produce an average of approximately 167,140 Mega Watt hours (MWh) of electricity annually (which corresponds to a capacity factor of 42.4%). This equates to the power consumed by approximately 47,600 average UK households<sup>8</sup>, which would be well above the energy requirements of the 13,143 homes on the Isle of Skye<sup>9</sup>.
- 14.136 Assuming a maximum project scale of 45MW, the Applicant is proposing a community benefit package of up to £225,000 per annum over the 40 year life of the Proposed Development, based on a figure of £5,000 per annum per MW. This would be index linked from the commencement of operation over the 40 years using the Retail Price Index (RPI). As part of this benefit package, it is proposed that a Near Neighbours Electricity Contribution scheme be created. Two options are potentially available with option 1 providing approximately £400 per property per annum be paid direct to the properties within 5km of the Proposed Development. Option 2 could see residents within the same catchment area, capitalise the electricity bill contribution, converting this to a single lump sum of approximately £4,500 to fund or part fund measures to improve the energy efficiency and decarbonisation of their home. This is in recognition of community consultation feedback and in an effort to deliver a direct benefit to those within closest proximity as well as helping to combat fuel poverty.
- 14.137 The proposed opportunity for the local community to invest in the wind farm, and hence share the profits resulting from its operation, supports the Scottish Government's ambition to deliver lasting economic and social benefits to communities from renewable energy development in Scotland. The Applicant has already shared initial information with the community about their opportunity to invest.
- 14.138 The Applicant held initial consultation meetings with Community Councils in August 2022 with eight community groups, including four Community Councils<sup>10</sup>, local to the Proposed Development. A number of public information events were held virtually in October 2022 and in person in November and December 2022. An 'Agreement of Intent' has been developed with the local Community Trusts<sup>11</sup> to formalise the intention to work together towards implementing a shared ownership scheme for the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm. Local Energy Scotland has been providing

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<sup>8</sup> Calculated using the most recent statistics from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) showing the annual UK average domestic household consumption is 3,509kWh (RenewableUK, December 2022)

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> Dunvegan Community Council, Dunvegan Community Trust, Edinbane Community Company, Glendale Community Council, Skeabost and District Community Council, Struan Community Council, Struan Community Development Group and Struan Community Trust.

<sup>11</sup> Dunvegan Community Trust; Edinbane Community Company; and Struan Community Trust

independent advice and support to communities interested in the shared ownership opportunity. It is proposed that the community shared ownership opportunity which is developed for Ben Sca will be adapted as appropriate for the Proposed Development at Balmeanach. Further details of the consultation effort associated with and response from communities is provided in the PAC Report accompanying the application. Discussion relating to the shared ownership offering is also provided in the Planning Statement.

- 14.139 Development income derived from both the community benefits scheme and shared ownership could, depending on the choices made by the communities, have a positive effect on the physical and mental well-being of local residents as well as economic benefits. The long term nature of the income would allow the community to plan ahead, to draw in other sources of match funding to maximise the benefits, and investment projects could be designed to match local priorities.
- 14.140 The choice of investment priorities for the Community Trusts is not yet known, although they are likely to be based on existing community priorities such as those identified in An Atlas of Edinbane and the Skye Local Area Action Plan 2017<sup>12</sup>.
- 14.141 The Atlas of Edinbane is a comprehensive assessment of needs and priorities for the Edinbane community which sets out recommendations for its long term sustainable development. The Skye Local Area Action Plan covers the whole of the Isle of Skye and seeks to address issues of socio-economic importance such as community connectivity and increasing employment opportunities locally.
- 14.142 Based on the information provided in the Skye Local Area Action Plan, the type of projects that might be considered for community investment can be grouped in the following areas:
- improved access to local services for residents and visitors;
  - sustainable development of community assets in particular those that support training and partnership working;
  - supporting the delivery of increased employment opportunities locally through new business start-ups and existing business diversification/ activities;
  - improved access for residents and visitors (physical and knowledge based) to cultural, natural and heritage assets; and
  - increased partnership working between groups (within and across areas, including intergenerational partnerships).
- 14.143 Many of the priority groups identified in the Action Plan are considered to deliver increased employment opportunities, increased partnership working, and improvements to the visitor experience, and there is a general desire to support initiatives that develop training and skills.
- 14.144 Whilst the effects cannot be precisely quantified at this stage due to uncertainty as to the quantum of funding that would be available to the community vehicle and its choice of investment priorities, it is clear that the proposed community investment measures could offer real social and economic benefits to the local community and do have the potential to be significant. However, as the future investment decisions of the local community are currently unknown, this has not been taken into

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<sup>12</sup> [An Atlas of Edinbane | Edinbane Community Company](#)



account in this assessment of socio-economic effects. Commentary on potential community benefits is provided in the Planning Statement.

### Effects on Tourism and Visitor Economy

- 14.145 A review was undertaken of relevant literature published on the impact of wind farms on tourism and the tourism economy. This provides context to the assessment of the effects of the Proposed Development on specific tourism and recreation receptors.
- 14.146 This section provides a summary of the review findings, which is undertaken in the context of the acknowledged importance of tourism to the Scottish economy, and the recognition that the character and visual amenity value of Scotland's landscapes is a key driver of tourism in Scotland. The Visit Scotland Visitor Experience Survey 2015/16<sup>13</sup> confirms the basis of this argument with its ranking of the key factors influencing visitors when choosing Scotland as a holiday location. In this study, over half of visitors rated scenery and the natural environment as the main reason for visiting Scotland: a majority of visitors to Scotland were found to come because of the landscape, scenery and the wider environment, which supports important visitor activities such as walking, cycling wildlife watching and visiting historic sites.
- 14.147 The Visit Scotland Visitor Experience Survey 2021 identifies that the main destination of visitors during 2021 was rural coastlines and Islands, Countryside and Mountains or hills, which again support the top activity, with almost nine in ten visitors enjoying a form of walking during their trip.
- 14.148 A key source of data on the economic impact of wind farms on tourism in Scotland is the 2008 Moffat Report (Moffat Centre, 2008), commissioned by the Scottish Government. This study considered whether there would be any reduction in tourism employment and income for Scotland as a whole as a result of the impact of wind farms on tourism, and concluded that the negative impact of wind farms on tourism at national level is small and any reduction in employment in tourism would be far less than the numbers directly employed in the wind power industry. Even using a worst-case scenario the impact of wind farm applications would be very small, and would be more than balanced by the economic benefits of wind farm development.
- 14.149 The study also found that large single developments are preferable to a number of smaller developments as it is the basic intrusion into the landscape that generates the initial loss, rather than subsequent developments on the same site.
- 14.150 ClimateXChange was asked by the Scottish Government in 2012 to review evidence published since the Moffat Report and to examine what more recent research has to say about the impact of wind farms on tourism in Scotland. The report (ClimateXChange, 2012) concluded that there is no new evidence to contradict the earlier findings that wind farms have little or no adverse impact on tourism in Scotland.
- 14.151 Subsequent studies have reported similar findings. One of the most recent is the report by BIGGAR Economics on Wind Farms and Tourism Trends in Scotland, published in 2021 (BIGGAR Economics, 2021), at which time installed onshore capacity had risen from 1,753.2 megawatts (MW) in 2009 to 7,968.7 MW in 2019. During this time employment in the tourism sector also rose by over 20% in Scotland as a whole.

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<sup>13</sup> JUMP Research on behalf of VisitScotland March 2017: Visitor Experience Survey 2015/16

- 14.152 The BiGGAR study specifically addressed the expectation that any impacts associated with a wind farm development are most likely to be felt strongest in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Development. An analysis of the levels of employment in the sustainable tourism sector in the immediate vicinity of onshore wind farm developments did not find any evidence of these areas being adversely affected. On the contrary, analysis of trends in tourism employment in the locality of wind farms (study areas were based on a 15km radius) found that 11 of the 16 areas of new wind farm case studies had experienced higher growth in tourism employment than for Scotland as a whole. For 12 of the 16 wind farms, trends in tourism employment in the locality outperformed the local authority area in which they were based, this includes three located in Highland.
- 14.153 This evidence was drawn out specifically in relation a number of sample study areas selected by the BiGGAR report for more detailed assessment, of which three were located in THC area. In the Highlands as a whole, tourism-related employment grew by 21.4% in the period 2015 – 2019. In relation to the specific study areas around the three wind farms, the study found that tourism-related employment grew by 33.68% on average during the same period.
- 14.154 The research also re-examined 28 wind farms constructed between 2009 and 2015 that had been analysed in a previous study published in 2017, finding that the localities in which they were based had outperformed Scotland and their local authority areas in the majority of cases. Moreover, the analysis found that in the seven areas which had underperformed their local authority areas in the 2017 study, four had done better than their local authorities in the 2015 to 2019 period. Four of these case studies are located in THC area, with two locations continuing to experience higher growth than the local authority and one outperforming the national average.
- 14.155 Although the BiGGAR study did not suggest that there is any direct relationship between tourism sector growth and wind farm development, it does show that wind farms do not cause a decrease in tourism employment either at a local or a national level.
- 14.156 The overall conclusion of this review is that published national statistics on employment in sustainable tourism demonstrate that there is no relationship between the development of onshore wind farms and tourism employment at the level of the Scottish economy, either at local authority level or in the areas immediately surrounding wind farm development. Therefore, the likely effect of the Proposed Development when operational on the tourism and visitor economy is assessed as negligible and not significant.

### *Assumptions of the Assessment – LAI*

- 14.157 During the operational phase there are expected to be both adverse effects due to visual impacts on tourism receptors, and beneficial effects arising from the legacy of recreational paths and trails within the site. Of the total length of tracks amounting to some 13.5km, there would be a maximum of 9.4km of new access tracks created that would open up the area for informal recreational opportunities e.g. cyclists, mountain bikers, equestrian users, cross country skiing and walking.
- 14.158 The Applicant is committed to working with the community to contribute where possible to facilitate linkages between the Proposed Development tracks and other routes in the area, creating the potential for longer recreational routes including a proposed additional footpath link to adjoin with the existing Edinbane Wind Farm access tracks, thereby creating a new circular trail to and from Edinbane as shown on **Figure 14.2.1 of Technical Appendix 14.2: Access Management Plan**.
- 14.159 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, cycling (including mountain biking) and / or horse riding.

- 14.160 Additionally, in order to supplement these new enhancements, the Applicant would be willing to discuss the provision of interpretive panels, way markers and route maps, as a part of the offered package of community benefit.

### *Embedded Mitigation*

- 14.161 The presence of new wind farm tracks would open up the area for informal recreational opportunities (walking/biking/horse riding). Within the total of up to 13.5km of tracks to be used there would be up to 9.4km of entirely new tracks. An Outline Access Management Plan (**Technical Appendix 14.2**) has been prepared and submitted with the application which sets out detailed proposals for the protection and enhancement of public access.

### *Potential Effects on the LAI*

- 14.162 Visual effects on recreational receptors are assessed in **Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual**, and the findings have been taken into account in the assessment below, although it is important to note that a significant landscape and visual effect does not necessarily result in a significant socio-economic effect.
- 14.163 The landscape and visual assessment finds that visibility of 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 turbine 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.
- 14.164 The Proposed Development would intensify the level of wind energy development in the northern part of the Isle of Skye. However, 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.
- 14.165 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.
- 14.166 Within the socio-economic study area (LAI) no significant visual effects have been identified from Core Paths, walking trails or the A850 Road. With the exception of the A850 route these are not considered to be tourism receptors. With regard to visual effects from the A850 road between Dunvegan and Edinbane the Proposed Development would be conspicuous in the view from this location. However, it would be positioned beyond the ridge of Ben Sca and Ben Aketil and also beyond the consented Ben Sca and Ben Aketil Wind Farms, and the Proposed Development would

be more recessive in comparison. The existing Ben Aketil Wind Farm comprises a prominent element to the right, and Edinbane Wind Farm visible to the left. Consequently, therefore, people moving through the area whether on foot, bicycle or horseback would experience intermittent views of the Proposed Development which would not form a major part of their experience

- 14.167 Studies undertaken in respect of other wind farm projects where users have been asked if the presence of turbines would discourage them from using a route have found that the majority would not be deterred. For example, an independent survey of tourists and day-trippers in the area around the proposed Clashindarroch Wind Farm in Aberdeenshire (Gilmorton Rural Development, 2009) found that 84% of respondents did not feel that the proposed wind farm would have an impact on their willingness to revisit the area. The survey also found that there was no difference in the attitude of walkers to other visitors in relation to their willingness to revisit.
- 14.168 Assessment of the socio-economic effects resulting from the findings of the visual assessment indicate that effects on tourism users of the A850 would be low, resulting in a minor level of effect on this medium sensitivity receptor that is not significant.
- 14.169 Currently the level of recreational use within the site is relatively low key and not formally promoted; the recreational value of the resource is therefore not presented as a tourism attraction. It is considered likely that even with the proposed improvements the level of use would remain low and the impact on the local visitor economy would be negligible.

### *Proposed Mitigation*

- 14.170 No significant effects have been identified in respect of socio-economic receptors arising from operation of the wind farm and therefore no mitigation measures are required to reduce or remedy any adverse effect.

### *Residual Operational Effects*

- 14.171 No residual adverse operational effects are expected.

### *Cumulative Effects*

- 14.172 There is potential for cumulative visual effects to arise with regard to prospective or consented projects as described in **Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual** no significant effects have been identified within the LAI. Cumulative effects on the tourism economy, including specific tourism receptors, are therefore considered unlikely. Cumulative operational effects on employment are not expected due to the low numbers of operational staff involved, and no other operational cumulative effects are expected.

## Summary of Predicted Effects and Statement of Significance

- 14.173 This assessment on socio-economics and land use sets out the likely socio-economic effects (investment, employment, additional Gross Value Added (GVA)<sup>14</sup> and contribution to the labour market) as well as recreation and tourism effects, associated with the Proposed Development. The

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<sup>14</sup> Gross value added (GVA) measures the contribution to an economy of an individual producer, industry, sector or region.

assessment has considered data from a diverse range of sources and takes account of good practice embedded measures to be adopted.

- 14.174 With respect to employment, a total of 26 person years of net additional temporary employment is predicted to be generated in the WSA economy during the construction phase of the Proposed Development (averaging 17 per year). The effect on the local employment base is considered to be negligible and not significant.
- 14.175 A net additional total of £1.8 million of GVA is predicted to be generated by the Proposed Development in the local WSA economy 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.
- 14.176 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. 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.
- 14.177 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 significant 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.
- 14.178 In order to manage the effects of construction worker accommodation on the local tourism economy (including with other wind farm developments), the outline CEMP (**Technical Appendix 3.1**) 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.
- 14.179 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.
- 14.180 It is expected that there could be between 8 and 10 indirect jobs created in the operational and maintenance supply chain for the Proposed Development 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.
- 14.181 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. No specific mitigation has been identified to be required and therefore residual effects of the Proposed Development are effectively the same as the predicted effects.

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