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# **SEI Non-Technical Summary**

# **Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm**

# **Ben Sca Wind Farm Limited**

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Making Sustainability Happen

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SEI NTS Figure 2: Revised Site Layout

(supersedes EIA NTS Figure 2)



# 1.0 Introduction

In April 2024, Ben Sca Wind Farm Limited (the Applicant) submitted an application to the Highland Council (THC) for planning permission under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, to install and operate a wind farm (the Proposed Development) in the northwest of the Isle of Skye within THC's administrative area.

The Proposed Development would be located on land (the site) approximately 2.5km to the southwest of Edinbane, approximately 7km to the east of Dunvegan, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 132800, 848600. The application was accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report which was prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations).

The Proposed Development is a redesign of the consented development (comprising of the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm (Ref: 20/00013/FUL) and Ben Sca Wind Farm Extension (Ref: 21/05767/FUL).

The Supplementary Environmental Information (SEI) Report has been prepared to provide further information to the EIA Report, including amendments to the Proposed Development since the original application was submitted, and to address certain information requests from consultees during the consultation period.

The SEI Report is intended to be read alongside and complement the EIA Report, to ensure that all relevant environmental information is available for consideration by the determining authority, THC. Unless otherwise stated, the information contained in the EIA Report remains valid.

The application layout of the Proposed Development refers to the layout assessed in the EIA Report; and the revised layout of the Proposed Development refers to the layout assessed in this SEI Report.

In each chapter of the SEI Report, details are provided, where relevant, of the statutory or technical consultation responses received during the application consultation period and how these have been addressed, if necessary.

This SEI Non-Technical Summary (SEI NTS) is additional to the original submitted EIA NTS and both documents require to be read together to get the full, up to date summary of the environmental impact assessment of the Proposed Development.

This SEI NTS summarises the findings and content of the SEI Report, which has been prepared by SLR and also specialist subconsultants who prepared the EIA Report.

The submission of the SEI Report will trigger another round of consultation in the planning process, which will provide consultees and the public with the opportunity to make representations on its content to THC. These comments, along with the information presented in the EIA Report and SEI Report, will be used to inform the decision on the application.



# 2.0 Benefits of the Proposed Development

# 2.1 Proposed Community Shared Revenue

The Applicant continues to engage with the local Community Trusts to formalise the intention to work together towards implementing a shared revenue scheme for the Proposed Development, alongside the proposed Balmeanach Wind Farm (should it gain consent). A Shared Ownership Agreement of Intent has already been signed by the three local community development trusts (Dunvegan Community Trust, Edinbane and Communities Trust and Struan Community Council) and the Applicant in relation to the consented development (Ben Sca and Extension Wind Farm).

# 2.2 Proposed Community Benefit

In addition to the shared revenue opportunity, should the Proposed Development gain consent, a Community Benefit Fund would be made available to the community of interest. It is estimated that, the Community Benefit Fund alone, would accrue benefits to the local economy of up to £8.16 million based on a 40 year operational life of the wind farm.

# 2.3 Habitat Management and Enhancement

**SEI Technical Appendix 5.3: Outline Habitat Management Plan** provides an updated and consolidated Habitat Management Plan to the outline Habitat Management Plan submitted with the application.

The total peatland restoration and enhancement area for the Proposed Development has been increased to 128.6ha, which includes:

- 57.33ha of forest to bog peatland restoration; and
- 71.27ha of blanket bog gully blocking and micro-erosion stabilisation.

The areas of peatland restoration and enhancement proposed exceed the requirements of the current NatureScot guidance by providing peatland restoration of 10 times the amount of peatland loss (116.9ha) and an additional 11% enhancement (11.7ha).

Additionally, 22.74ha of wet heath will be restored to provide further enhancement.

The proposed peatland restoration areas would be additional to those proposed for the Balmeanach Wind Farm, and are situated next to each other, which would provide further enhancement benefits due to the connectivity of habitat.

The combined peatland restoration areas (for Balmeanach and Ben Sca Redesign together) deliver 1:10 peatland restoration along with 13% to 18% of enhancement, which would exceed the requirements of NatureScot's guidance.

Within 30 years, it is anticipated that hydrological conditions will have been created which are suitable for the development and maintenance of bog/ wet heath habitats. As result, these habitats will be largely self-sustaining, therefore making a significant contribution to the ongoing restoration of this habitat type.

The peatland restoration areas located away from the proposed turbines will provide additional enhanced foraging habitat for eagles and further mitigation and monitoring measures for supporting the eagle population in this area is discussed within the ornithology section (5.2).

# **3.0** Design Amendments to Proposed Development

# 3.1 Overview of Revised Layout

The design amendments, which form the basis of the assessment presented in the SEI, are proposed in response to consultee comments on the Proposed Development and are as follows:

- removal of Turbine 1 (T1)<sup>1</sup> and associated foundation and crane hardstanding to reduce predicted collision risk of white-tailed eagles; and
- updates to the Outline Habitat Management Plan which aims to provide peatland restoration 10 times the amount of peatland loss and to provide an additional 10% enhancement, as well as improving foraging habitat for eagles outside of the turbine area.

The revised Proposed Development (as shown on NTS SEI Figure 2) would comprise:

- eight variable pitch (three bladed) wind turbines, each with a maximum blade tip height of up to 149.9m and maximum rotor diameter of up to 138m;
- eight turbine foundations (approximately 25m diameter) and eight crane hardstanding areas to aid the installation process and provide storage for blades, towers and nacelle components (approximately 3,350m<sup>2</sup>) at each wind turbine location;
- circa 4.5km of new onsite access track and associated drainage with a typical 5m running width (wider on bends) and two turning heads;
- one onsite substation which would accommodate 33kV equipment to collect electricity from the site. The substation compound would have a typical area of 35m x 30m and would include a control and metering building;
- underground cabling along access tracks to connect the turbine locations, and the onsite electrical substation;
- up to three borrow pits (covering approximately 15,600m<sup>2</sup>);
- one permanent construction compound (Compound 1 100m x 50m, 5,000m<sup>2</sup>) and one temporary construction compound (Compound 2 – 3,000m<sup>2</sup>);
- upgrade to site entrance from the A850; and
- clearance of 65.21ha of poor quality conifer forest.

# 3.2 Reason for Design Amendments

The amendments to the design of the Proposed Development are primarily as a result of consultation feedback on the Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm application, received from statutory and technical consultees including THC, NatureScot, RSPB, and SEPA.

In NatureScot's response to the Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm application, they advised that removing Turbine 1 (T1) from the Proposed Development would be likely to significantly reduce the collision risk for white-tailed eagles. RSPB also sought to reduce the potential effect on white tailed eagle through a reduction in the number of turbines. As a result, T1 has

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Turbine numbering has not been amended following the removal of T1 and therefore figures and references to turbines within the SEI do not include Turbine 1, with the eight remaining turbines numbered T2 to T9.



been removed from the Proposed Development which will significantly reduce the predicted collision risk.

NatureScot recommended that a revised Habitat Management Plan (Habitat Management Plan) is submitted which includes additional areas of peatland restoration and enhancement to be in line with NatureScot's guidance. THC requested that consideration is given to increase the Habitat Management Plan ratio in line with NatureScot and THC guidance. RSPB requested a revision to the Habitat Management Plan to include actions to provide foraging habitat away from the proposed turbine array. As a result, the Outline Habitat Management Plan has been updated which aims to include peatland restoration of 10 times the amount of peatland loss and aims to provide of an additional 10% enhancement, as well as improving foraging habitat for eagles outside of the turbine area.

# 4.0 Cumulative Development Update

Since the submission of the application, the cumulative wind farm situation in the study area has changed. The relevant changes to the cumulative baseline are as follows:

- Balmeanach (application revised layout);
- Glen Ullinish II (Redesign) (application revised layout);
- Beinn Mheadhonach Redesign (application); and
- Withdrawal of Waternish (previously at scoping).

# 5.0 Environmental Impacts

# 5.1 Landscape and Visual

**SEI Chapter 3: Landscape and Visual**, has considered the potential changes to landscape and visual effects as a result of the revised layout of the Proposed Development when compared to the application layout. The application layout was predicted to result in significant residual effects on the following receptors:

- Viewpoint 2 (Edinbane Top Road);
- Viewpoint 12 (Minor Road to Greshornish); and
- Edinbane, Kildonan and Flashader settlements, all of which lie within 6km of the Proposed Development.

For the application layout, no significant effects were identified on the landscape character areas or any designated landscapes.

Cumulatively, no additional significant effects were identified for the application layout, with cumulative effects at Kildonan and Flashader reducing to not significant in the context of a consent for Ben Aketil Repowering Wind Farm or Edinbane Repowering Wind Farm (or both).

# 5.1.1 Assessment of Design Amendment Effects

# 5.1.1.1 Landscape Effects

The assessment of the revised layout found that the changes would lead to a reduced adverse change in effects but would not be sufficient to change the overall significance of effect.



The removal of T1 near to Ben Sca's summit and its cairn, would allow a greater appreciation of the hill top within the landscape in the revised layout. The remaining turbines (T2 to T9) would be located at lower elevations away from the summit, making the wind farm appear more enclosed by the land and trees than the application layout.

A reduced adverse change in landscape effects overall is predicted although would not reduce the level of landscape effects originally presented in **EIA Chapter 3** and the conclusion of no significant effects on landscape character and designations remains valid.

# 5.1.1.2 Visual Effects

Removing T1 from the layout reduces the visual impact of the wind farm from a number of viewpoints. Updated visualisations have been prepared as set out in **SEI Volumes 3b-3d**.

From specific viewpoints, for example Viewpoints 1 (A850) and 2 (Edinbane), the removal of T1 reduces the prominence of the wind farm and improves the separation distance between the turbines and the summit of Ben Sca.

For the majority of viewpoints, the overall extent of the wind farm is reduced by the removal of T1 which sat at the end of a single row of turbines and was therefore a prominent turbine.

Overall, it is concluded that the visual change from the application layout to the revised layout of the Proposed Development would be limited but reduces the adverse nature of effect for almost all viewpoints.

The overall visual effect of the revised layout compared to the application layout would be reduced but remain adverse, with no anticipated changes to the levels of effects identified in **EIA Chapter 3.** 

Therefore, the revised layout would also result in significant residual effects on the following receptors:

- Viewpoint 2 (Edinbane Top Road);
- Viewpoint 12 (Minor Road to Greshornish); and
- Edinbane, Kildonan and Flashader settlements, all of which lie within 6km of the Proposed Development.

# 5.1.2 Cumulative Effects

The revised layout would not increase the extent of visibility of the Proposed Development and therefore would not alter the nature of visibility in relation to baseline cumulative wind farms as described in the **EIA Chapter 3**. In relation to all the proposed wind farms within the study area, the revised layout would not be seen where other proposed wind farms are not predicted to be visible. In addition, the amendments to the Proposed Development would result in relatively limited changes to the landscape of the site.

For the majority of viewpoints, the removal of T1 has a minimal effect as views are often distant and turbines appear within a large grouping of turbines. In some cases, the removal of T1 helps to reinforce the perceived gaps between some of the cumulative developments.

The cumulative changes between the application and revised layout of the Proposed Development are limited to the removal of T1, as the removed crane hardstanding and turbine foundation would not be perceived in a cumulative assessment. Any changes linked to the removal of T1 would comprise a reduced adverse change compared with the application layout.



The restricted scale of visual change indicates that no notable cumulative changes would occur for any visual receptors considered in the EIA as a result of the revised layout of the Proposed Development.

Therefore cumulatively, no additional significant effects are identified for the revised layout, with cumulative effects at Kildonan and Flashader remaining not significant in the context of a consent for Ben Aketil Repowering Wind Farm or Edinbane Repowering Wind Farm (or both), as per the application layout.

# 5.1.3 Conclusion of SEI Assessment

The landscape and visual assessment contained within **EIA Chapter 3** remains valid due to the very limited level of perceived additional landscape and visual change, caused by the amendments to the Proposed Development.

# 5.2 Ornithology (Birds)

**SEI Chapter 4: Ornithology** has considered the potential changes to effects on birds as a result of the revised layout of the Proposed Development when compared to the application layout. No significant adverse effects were predicted for any of the species assessed (white-tailed eagle, golden eagle, hen harrier and golden plover) during construction or operation of the application layout.

Collision risk mortality from the application layout was predicted to effect white-tailed eagle, golden eagle and golden plover, but the predicted mortality for these species was not considered to be significant. The population modelling undertaken for the application layout showed that for white-tailed eagle the population will still reach it's carrying capacity within the region.

Cumulatively, collision risk was considered to have a low-level impact at the regional level for white-tailed eagles, however, this was not considered to be significant.

# 5.2.1 Assessment of Design Amendments Effects

# 5.2.1.1 White-tailed Eagle

Based on the prediction of a substantial reduction of collision mortality by 22.6% arising from the revised layout of the Proposed Development when compared to the application layout, the level of effect is reduced although the conclusion of the **EIA Chapter 4** of no significant effects for white-tailed eagle for the Natural Heritage Zone (NHZ) 6 and national populations is unchanged.

# 5.2.1.2 Golden Eagle

The amendments to the Proposed Development have decreased the collision risk for golden eagle by 17.59%. It can be concluded that collision risk would be low for this species in the context of the Proposed Development. On this basis, this is not considered significant at the NHZ level.

# 5.2.1.3 Other Species

Collision risk calculations have also been updated for golden plover, with collision risk reduced by 15.4% for the revised layout. As a result, effects on golden plover remain not significant.



# 5.2.2 Cumulative Effects

Based on the Golden Eagle Terrain (GET) modelling undertaken for Balmeanach and Glen Ullinish II, the amount of good eagle habitat that would be lost to these developments is less than 1% of that available to dispersing eagles within a 20km buffer. This is considered to be not significant in the context of the NHZ.

The predicted cumulative collision rates for eagles in NHZ 6 have decreased from 10.1 to 7.7 for white-tailed eagle and decreased from 1.25 to 1.02 for golden eagle when compared to the numbers reported in **EIA Chapter 4**.

For white-tailed eagle the predicted cumulative collisions are potentially high (although significantly lower than previously predicted), but population modelling indicates that impacts on the NHZ and Skye populations will not be significant if these maximums were reached.

For golden eagle the predicted collisions have decreased when compared to the numbers reported in **EIA Chapter 4** and are not considered to be significant.

# 5.2.3 Mitigation and Monitoring Commitments

Measures to be implemented to mitigate and monitor eagles include:

- Carrion removal (a livestock carcass search project would regularly identify and remove carcasses during the lifetime of the wind farm).
- Collaboration with other renewable energy developers to ensure that a joined-up approach to wider habitat management for eagles is promoted on Skye. This will include funding for an eagle research programme to cover an agreed wider area and consider suitable mitigation strategies.
- A post-construction monitoring programme to be established for the wind farm, including collision monitoring, flight activity surveys and breeding raptor surveys.

# 5.2.4 Conclusion of SEI Assessment

Due to design amendments, the collision rates for eagles and golden plover have decreased. When considered along with the mitigation and proposed habitat enhancement measures, there are no significant effects predicted for ornithology.

# 5.3 Ecology

**SEI Chapter 5: Ecology** has considered the potential changes to effects on ecology as a result of the revised layout of the Proposed Development when compared to the application layout. Beneficial effects were identified in relation to habitats for the application layout. No significant adverse effects were identified in relation to the application layout for any of the fauna assessed (including fish, otters, pine marten, badgers, bats, amphibians and deer) or on designated sites.

# 5.3.1 Assessment of Design Amendments Effects

# 5.3.2 Habitats

The revised layout of the Proposed Development has aimed to reduce effects on peatland but would still result in the direct/indirect loss of up to 11.69ha of blanket bog and 2.23ha of wet and dry heath habitat.

The loss would be compensated for through measures to restore and manage peatland and wet heath habitat across a 128.6ha restoration area with an additional 22.74ha enhancement area, which would be delivered via the Habitat Management Plan as



discussed in **section 2.3**. This restoration and enhancement would provide a beneficial effect on peatland habitats.

# 5.3.3 Fauna

Effects during the construction phase on protected fauna (considered to be reptiles, otter and deer) would not change as a result of the amendments to the design. No significant adverse effects are considered likely to these species as a result of either direct or indirect impacts due to the Proposed Development.

Pre-construction surveys will be undertaken to ensure protection of fauna.

# 5.3.4 Designated Sites

No effects on designated sites were identified for the application layout and this conclusion remains valid for the revised layout.

# 5.3.5 Cumulative Effects

No significant negative cumulative effects are predicted in combination with the Balmeanach Wind Farm, and a significant positive cumulative effect on habitats is predicted due to the connectivity of the proposed peatland restoration areas.

The updated cumulative baseline does not change the cumulative assessment in relation to fauna (including fish, otters, pine marten, badgers, bats, amphibians and deer) presented in **EIA Chapter 4**. The mitigation measures that are presented in the EIA Report would ensure there are no effects beyond the site.

# 5.3.6 Conclusion of SEI Assessment

There are no significant adverse effects predicted for ecology.

The area of proposed peatland restoration has increased from 64.73ha to 128.6ha, which is substantially greater than that proposed in the EIA Report providing a beneficial effect.

Additional to this, enhancement is proposed in the form of 22.74ha of wet heath restoration.

The areas of peatland restoration and enhancement meet the current NatureScot guidance by providing 1:10 restoration (116.9ha) and an additional 11% enhancement (11.7ha).

It should also be noted that the proposed peatland restoration areas would be additional to those proposed for the Balmeanach Wind Farm, and are situated next to each other, which would provide further enhancement benefits due to the connectivity of habitat.

# 5.4 Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Soils

**SEI Chapter 6: Hydrology, Hydrogeology ad Soils** has considered the potential changes to effects on hydrology and peat as a result of the revised layout of the Proposed Development when compared to the application layout.

For the application layout, following adherence to good practice measures, the potential effects on all hydrological receptors were predicted to be negligible and therefore not significant during construction, operation and cumulatively. No potential flood risk was identified for the application layout and there were no private or licensed water abstractions within or at risk from the site.

For the application layout, the effects on peat generated from the proposed excavations were limited without significant environmental impact. No surplus peat would be generated, and peat would be used to reinstate track verges, turbine bases, crane hardstandings and



restoration of onsite borrow pits, as well as a small amount used in the peat restoration areas.

The site-specific Peat Landslide Hazard Risk Assessment for the application layout confirmed that there are very few areas of peat instability risk across the site and concluded that, with the employment of appropriate mitigation measures, all of the areas of peat instability could be considered as an insignificant risk.

# 5.4.1 Assessment of Design Amendment Effects

# 5.4.1.1 Water Environment

The amendments to the site layout do not change the findings of **EIA Chapter 6** which were not significant. Best practice and mitigation detailed within **EIA Chapter 6** remains applicable and can be used to mitigate potential adverse effects on the local hydrology and hydrogeology.

# 5.4.1.2 Peat Landslide Hazard Risk Assessment

Review of the revised layout indicates that there has been no change to the level of peat stability risk or the conclusions and recommendations within **EIA TA6.2**. No update of the Peat Landslide Hazard Risk Assessment is therefore required and no increase in peat slide risk has been identified. Predicted effects remain not significant.

# 5.4.1.3 Peat Management Plan

As a result of the amendments to the site layout, the peat excavation volumes have decreased compared with those presented in **EIA TA6.2** and effects remain not significant. The recommendations on excavation and re-use of soils and peat detailed within **EIA TA6.1** remain applicable and will be updated in a final PMP.

# 5.4.2 Cumulative Effects

The updated cumulative baseline does not change the cumulative assessment in relation to hydrology and soils presented in the **EIA Chapter 6**.

The mitigation measures that are presented in the EIA Report would ensure there are no likely effects beyond site.

It is therefore considered that no cumulative effects on hydrology and soils are anticipated as a result of the revised layout of the Proposed Development.

# 5.4.3 Conclusion of SEI Assessment

The amendments to the site layout do not change the findings of **EIA Chapter 6** and the best practice measures detailed in the EIA Report remain wholly applicable and relevant to the proposed revised design layout.

The design amendments do not result in any change to the significance of effects as presented in **EIA Chapter 6**, which were not significant.

# 5.5 Cultural Heritage

**SEI Chapter 7: Cultural Heritage** has considered the potential changes to effects on cultural heritage as a result of the revised layout of the Proposed Development when compared to the application layout.



The application layout had the potential for a direct impact during construction on two undated cultural heritage assets of low significance without mitigation. Two further undated cultural heritage assets of low significance would possibly be impacted but appropriate mitigation would be implemented, with fencing installed around the assets during construction, and no significant adverse effects were identified.

It was agreed with Historic Environment Scotland and THC that indirect impacts through setting change during operation could be scoped out of assessment for the application layout as there were no potential significant effects identified on the setting of any asset for the consented development and the predicted visibility of the application layout remained comparable.

No cumulative effects were identified for cultural heritage and archaeology for the application layout.

# 5.5.1 Assessment of Design Amendment Effects

The changes to the layout of the Proposed Development do not affect the proximity of the onsite cultural heritage assets to the proposed infrastructure and potential for effects during construction.

The mitigation outlined within **EIA Chapter 7** is still recommended to ensure protection during construction. No significant effects are predicted.

No setting impacts during operation have been identified for the revised layout and the conclusions of **EIA Chapter 7** remain valid.

# 5.5.2 Cumulative Effects

No cumulative effects have been identified for the revised layout and the conclusions of **EIA Chapter 7** remain valid.

# 5.5.3 Conclusion of SEI Assessment

No significant effects have been identified in EIA terms for the revised layout, which remains consistent with the conclusions of **EIA Chapter 7**. The revised layout would result in no changes to the previously predicted direct, indirect, setting and cumulative impacts outlined.

# 5.6 Socio-Economics and Land Use

**SEI Chapter 8: Socio-Economics and Land Use**, has considered the potential changes to effects on socio-economics and land use as a result of the revised layout of the Proposed Development when compared to the application layout.

Whilst the local economy would benefit from the construction of the application layout and significant beneficial effects are identified for individual businesses, effects were not predicted to be significant for local employment and the local area of influence as a whole. No significant adverse effects on tourism and land use (including recreation and shooting) were identified.

During operation whilst the size of the local economy is predicted to increase by around 0.02% and between 10 and 13 jobs could be created for the application layout, this was not considered to be significant. For the application layout, improved access to paths would be beneficial, although no significant effects on tourism and land use were identified.

No significant cumulative effects on socio-economics and land use were predicted for the application layout.



# 5.6.1 Assessment of Design Amendment Effects

The amendments to the Proposed Development would not result in any changes to the significance of effects presented within **EIA Chapter 8**. All of the information contained within the chapter and associated technical appendix remain valid in terms of existing conditions, assessment methodology and significance of effects.

As with the application layout whilst the local economy would benefit from the construction of the revised layout and significant beneficial effects are identified for individual businesses, effects are not predicted to be significant for local employment and the local area of influence as a whole. No significant adverse effects on tourism and land use (including recreation and shooting) are identified.

During operation whilst the size of the local economy is predicted to increase by around 0.02% and between 10 and 13 jobs could be created for the revised layout, this is not considered to be significant. For the revised layout, improved access to paths would be beneficial, although no significant effects on tourism and land use were identified.

# 5.6.2 Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects on socio-economics and land use are predicted to be no different to that assessed in **EIA Chapter 8** and remain not significant. The Skye Developers Forum, consisting of representatives from companies with operational, consented and in development projects on Skye, was inaugurated in 2022 to address potential cumulative construction issues such as accommodation and transport and meets regularly to discuss issues which may affect each development and in combination.

# 5.6.3 Conclusion of SEI Assessment

There are no changes to the significance of effects presented in **EIA Chapter 8** as a result of the amendments that have been made to the Proposed Development and no significant effects on socio-economics or land use are identified.

# 5.7 Other Considerations

**SEI Chapter 9: Other Considerations**, has considered the potential changes to effects in relation to the following topics as a result of the revised layout of the Proposed Development when compared to the application layout:

- shadow flicker;
- climate and carbon balance;
- aviation;
- traffic and transport;
- noise;
- risk of accidents and other disasters;
- population and human health;
- air quality;
- telecommunications and other infrastructure;
- television reception; and
- waste and environmental management.



Due to the nature of the amendments to improve the Proposed Development layout by removal of T1 and associated foundation and crane hardstanding, it was not considered necessary to reassess the effects on 'risk of accident and other disasters', 'population and human health', 'air quality', 'telecommunications and other infrastructure', 'television reception' and 'waste and environmental management'. The predicted effects on these areas remain unchanged from those set out in **EIA Chapter 9**, which predicted no significant effects.

Shadow flicker, climate and carbon balance, aviation, traffic and transport and noise are considered in more detail below.

# 5.7.1 Shadow Flicker

The removal of T1 would not result in any change to the assessment of shadow flicker as presented in the EIA Report, which concluded that no shadow flicker effects would be experienced. The nearest residential receptor is to the north of the site, closest to T9 and the location of this turbine has not changed as a result of the proposed amendments to the layout.

# 5.7.2 Climate and Carbon Balance

The overall anticipated carbon payback time for the amended Proposed Development (compared to a fossil fuel mix of electricity generation) is 1.7 years. This is slightly less than, although comparable to, the 1.8 year anticipated carbon payback time as assessed and presented in the EIA Report for the application layout.

The potential  $CO_2$  emissions savings are also similar for the revised layout of the Proposed Development (54,649 tonnes of  $CO_2$  per year over a fossil fuel mix of electricity), compared to the figures presented in the EIA Report for the application layout.

# 5.7.3 Aviation

The removal of T1 would not fundamentally affect the position conveyed by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and National Air Traffic Service (NATS). It is accepted by the Applicant that planning conditions relating to aviation and infra-red lighting for the Proposed Development will be employed, should it be consented.

An agreement is being entered into between NATS (En-Route) Plc, NATS (Services) Ltd (NATS) and the Applicant for the design and implementation of an identified and defined mitigation solution in relation to the Proposed Development which would ensure that no unacceptable impact on the radar would result.

# 5.7.4 Traffic and Transport

**SEI Technical Appendix 9.1: Transport Statement Update** has considered the potential changes to effects on traffic and transport as a result of the revised layout of the Proposed Development when compared to the application layout.

For the application layout, no significant adverse effects were identified during construction, operation or cumulatively, as long as appropriate measures outlined in the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) are employed.

# 5.7.4.1 Assessment of Design Amendments Effects

The revised layout is expected to reduce vehicle movements on the road network when compared to the application layout. This is because the revised layout requires less material to construct, and therefore requires fewer deliveries, when compared to the application layout. The removal of T1 also results in fewer Abnormal Load movements for the revised



layout. The assessment presented in **EIA Technical Appendix 9.1** therefore remains valid, which concluded that the Proposed Development would lead to a not significant adverse effect on traffic and transport.

# 5.7.4.2 Cumulative Effects

No significant cumulative adverse effects are identified on the A850 due to potential increases in traffic and the measures outlined in the CTMP will ensure that this is managed.

It is reiterated that in the event that construction of the Proposed Development and any of the identified cumulative wind farm schemes occur concurrently, this would not lead to any additional environmental effect in transportation terms, beyond that already assessed, provided that:

- abnormal load movements are programmed in conjunction with Police Scotland and the Roads Authorities (THC and TS) so as not to occur on the same day; and
- days of specific high density vehicle movement (e.g. concrete pour days) are
  programmed so as not to occur on the same day (to be enforced through inclusion as
  a factor within the CTMP, and to be agreed with Police Scotland and the Roads
  Authority accordingly).

# 5.7.4.3 Conclusion of SEI Assessment (Traffic and Transport)

The revised layout of the Proposed Development would result in fewer vehicle movements than were estimated for the application layout. No change to the significance of effects is predicted as presented in **EIA Technical Appendix 9.1**, which were not significant. The consultation responses provided by both roads authorities to the EIA Report remain valid and suitable traffic management and control measures would be implemented through planning conditions.

# 5.7.5 Noise

**SEI Technical Appendix 9.3: Noise Assessment** has considered the potential changes to effects on noise as a result of the revised layout of the Proposed Development when compared to the application layout.

For the application layout no significant construction, operational or cumulative effects were identified. The application layout of the Proposed Development would operate within the consented noise limits and would therefore be acceptable.

# 5.7.5.1 Assessment of Design Amendments Effects

The revised layout would not introduce any amendment to the methods employed to construct the wind farm that would materially change the construction noise assessments previously undertaken. Therefore, an additional construction noise assessment has not been undertaken, and effects remain not significant.

The predicted noise levels for the revised layout of the Proposed Development are lower than for the application layout. For all receptors, noise levels due to the operation of the Proposed Development are predicted to not exceed site specific noise limits agreed with the Highland Council and would therefore be acceptable and not significant.

# 5.7.5.2 Cumulative Effects

As set out in **EIA Chapter 9**, the Proposed Development would operate within the combined consented noise limits of the two consented developments it would replace: Ben Sca Wind Farm and Ben Sca Wind Farm Extension. Therefore, the Proposed Development will not



alter the impacts previously assessed and any alterations in the cumulative situation since the planning consents is the responsibility of the subsequent applicants to include in their cumulative noise impact assessment. Therefore, no cumulative effects are identified.

# 5.7.5.3 Conclusion of SEI Assessment (Noise)

The revised layout would reduce noise operational impacts at nearby NSRs compared to the application layout and would also result in no significant adverse effects.

# 5.7.6 Conclusion of SEI Assessment

The SEI design amendments would not result in any change to the significance of effects as presented in **EIA Chapter 9** and do not materially alter the Proposed Development's expected carbon saving potential.

# 6.0 Summary of Residual Effects

None of the effects identified in the EIA Report have changed in their level of significance as a result of the revised layout. The revised layout has resulted in improvements although these do not alter the conclusions of the EIA Report.

Торіс	Mitigation	Residual Effects
Landscape and Visual	Design	Significant visual effects at 2 viewpoints: Viewpoint 2 (Edinbane Top Road) and Viewpoint 12 (Minor Road to Greshornish); and 3 settlements: Edinbane, and Kildonan and Flashader, all of which lie within 6km of the Proposed Development.
		Cumulative effects remain the same as individual effects except at Kildonan and Flashader which would be not significant in the context of a consent for Ben Aketil Repowering Wind Farm or Edinbane Repowering Wind Farm (or both).
Ornithology	Design, Updated Habitat Management Plan, Pre-construction Surveys, CEMP, BPP, EnvCoW, Post consent Monitoring	None. Reduction in predicted collision risk for all species including eagles but no change in significance.
Ecology	Design, Pre- construction Surveys, CEMP, updated Habitat Management Plan, Post consent monitoring	None. No change in significance. The area of proposed peatland restoration has increased from 64.73ha to 128.6ha which is substantially greater than that proposed in the EIA providing a beneficial but not significant effect.
Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Geology and Soils	Design, CEMP, Water Quality Monitoring, Peat Management Plan, SuDS	None. No change in significance.
Cultural Heritage and Archaeology	Design, Fencing off Features, Targeted Watching Brief	None. No change in significance.
Socio-Economics and Land Use	Design	None. No change in significance.
Traffic and Transport	CEMP, CTMP, AMP	None. Reduction in overall HGV movements and peak traffic numbers but no change in significance.
Noise	Design, CEMP, Mitigation Strategy	None. Reduction in noise levels for all receptors but no exceedance of noise limits agreed with the Highland Council and no change in significance.
Carbon Savings	Design	Displacement of approximately 2.2 million tonnes of $CO_2$ over the wind farm lifetime when compared to the amount of $CO_2$ fossil fuels would have produced to generate the same amount of electricity.



# 6.1 Other Notable Effects

The following additional positive effects are identified for the revised layout:

- Production of an average of approximately 128,000MWh of electricity annually; which equates to the power consumed by approximately 39,500 average UK households.
- In addition to the value of the investment in the local economy through the operation of the wind farm, additional long term social and economic benefits would arise from community benefit payments (£8.16 million over 40 years) and the opportunity for community investment in the wind farm.
- The Proposed Development would provide 63.27ha of additional peatland restoration in comparison to the application layout.
- Potential for enhanced access for walking and cycling on site, with the possibility for circular routes remains.

# 7.0 Next Steps and Further Information

THC will consider the SEI Report, alongside the findings of the EIA Report, as part of the determination of the planning application. THC will consult a number of consultees, including NatureScot and SEPA.

A copy of this SEI NTS will be made available for download from the Applicant website at: <a href="http://www.benscawindfarm.co.uk">www.benscawindfarm.co.uk</a>.

Paper copies of this SEI Report NTS are available free of charge from:

info@wind2.co.uk

07570 948886

Wind2 Limited,

2 Walker Street,

Edinburgh,

EH3 7LB

Paper copies of the SEI Report may be purchased by arrangement from the above address for £2,500 per copy, or £15 per disk/USB memory stick copy. The price of the paper copy reflects the cost of producing all of the Landscape and Visual photomontages at the recommended size. As such, a USB memory stick version is recommended.

Hard copies of the SEI Report and the EIA Report can be viewed at Portree Community Library, Viewfield Rd, Portree IV51 9ET.



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