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Introduction

- 1.1 In August 2023, Balmeanach Wind Farm Limited¹ (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 in the north west of the Isle of Skye within THC's administrative area (the Proposed Development).
- 1.2 The Proposed Development would be located on land (the site) approximately 3km to the south of Edinbane, approximately 8km to the east of Dunvegan and approximately 7km to the north of Struan², centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 133900, 846750³. The site would be accessed from the A850, via the existing Ben Aketil Wind Farm access track and then either via the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm access track, or proposed Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm⁴ access track.
- 1.3 The application (Ref: 23/04194/FUL) comprised of up to 10 turbines, up to 149.9m to blade tip height and associated infrastructure. 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).

Supplementary Environmental Information (SEI)

Purpose of SEI

- 1.4 This SEI Report has been prepared to provide further information to the EIA Report (as submitted in August 2023), including amendments to the Proposed Development since the application was submitted, and to address certain information requests from consultees and the determining authority (THC) during the consultation period.
- 1.5 Regulation 26 of the EIA Regulations gives local planning authorities the powers to request supplementary information. Although a formal request under Regulation 26 has not been issued by THC, the scope of this SEI has been determined in consultation with THC. The SEI also incorporates information being provided voluntarily in relation to the amendments to the Proposed Development and in response to consultee comments.
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 In summary, this SEI Report for the Proposed Development is intended to provide additional information relating to the EIA Report, explain the amendments to the Proposed Development (and where necessary reassess effects) and address the key points raised by consultees during the consultation process for the application.
- 1.8 The information contained in this SEI Report is considered to be substantive information for the purposes of the EIA Regulations. It will therefore be published as additional

¹ The Applicant is Balmeanach Wind Farm Limited, which is a subsidiary of EDP Renewables (EDPR). Balmeanach Wind Farm is being developed by Wind2 Limited (Wind2) on behalf of EDPR.

² Measurements taken from main development area including turbine array

³ Centre point of proposed turbine array

⁴ Ben Sca Wind Farm (Ref: 20/00013/FUL) and Ben Sca Wind Farm Extension (Ref: 21/05767/FUL) granted planning permission in December 2020 and April 2022, respectively. Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm (Ref: 24/01404/FUL) is under consideration.

information in terms of Regulations 21 and 27 of the EIA Regulations and publicly advertised as the same.

Scope of SEI

- 1.9 The SEI addresses the following key points that have been raised by consultees and the determining authority, THC:
- THC has noted that the application for the Proposed Development should ensure that access can be achieved to the site, either via the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm track (to be referred to in this SEI as the 'proposed link') or via the proposed Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm track. The proposed link track is located fully within the application boundary and in the scenario where the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm does not get built, the proposed link track would be constructed as part of the Proposed Development. It is noted that the Ben Sca Redesign track route would be located outwith the application boundary for the Balmeanach Wind Farm, however, in the event that Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm is approved, this track would be constructed under that consent and then used to access the Balmeanach Wind Farm (without any new works being undertaken on that route). Only one of the tracks to access the site would be built. An appropriate and full assessment is included in this SEI Report considering the use of both track options.
 - THC has requested an update to the cumulative assessments presented in the EIA Report which includes a full in combination cumulative assessment of the effects that may result if the Balmeanach Wind Farm and Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farm were both consented, built and operational for their 40 year lifetime.
 - NatureScot and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) have both requested consideration of removal of turbines to reduce the effects on golden and white-tailed eagles.
 - Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has requested changes to the proposed onsite access tracks and wind farm infrastructure to reduce the effects on peat.
 - NatureScot and THC have requested revision to the Outline Habitat Management Plan (HMP) to increase the amount of peatland restoration and enhancement that can be achieved on site as well as consideration of opportunities for wider habitat enhancement measures for golden eagle and white-tailed eagles.
- 1.10 In each chapter of this SEI, details are provided where relevant, on the consultation responses received during the application consultation period and how these have been addressed, if necessary.
- 1.11 The key design amendments which have been made to the Proposed Development as a result of the consultation and further discussion with consultees includes:
- removal of Turbine 1 (T1) and associated track and infrastructure;
 - amendment to track and wind farm infrastructure in line with SEPA comments/agreements;
 - amendment to substation location to be relocated within the footprint of Borrow Pit 3; and
 - addition of proposed link track to be part of the Proposed Development in the event that the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm does not get built;

- addition of the permanent construction compound (Compound 1) to the south of the A850 to ensure that the proposed link track would be able to be built to the site (in the absence of the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm); and
- update to the Outline HMP.

1.12 It is anticipated that the description of the Proposed Development would therefore need to be amended to reflect the revised design layout as follows: *Balmeanach Wind Farm - Erection and Operation of a Wind Farm for a period of 40 years, comprising of up to 9 Wind Turbines with a maximum blade tip height 149.9m, access tracks, borrow pits, substation, control building, and ancillary infrastructure*”.

1.13 The following Figures have been updated as a result of the revised design layout and supersede the EIA Figure versions:

- **SEI Figure 1.2:** Application Boundary

Statement of Expertise

1.14 In the context of the EIA Regulations, **Table 1-1** outlines the relevant expertise and / or qualifications of the experts who have contributed to this SEI Report. The SEI team is led by SLR with assistance from specialist consultants as required. **Table 1-1** demonstrates the relevant competency for each technical discipline covered in this SEI Report.

Table 1-1: SEI Team Competency

Discipline	Specialist Assessor	Qualifications	Years of Experience
EIA and Planning	SLR - Fiona Scott - Michael Fenny	BSc (Hons) CEnv MEnvSc MA(Hons), MSc, MRTPI	20+ 15+
Landscape and Visual	SLR - Simon Myers - Mark Jones	MLPM (Hons), AMLI BA, Dip LA, CMLI	20+ 30+
Ecology	SLR - Duncan Watson - Sara Toule - Kirstie Hazelwood	BSc (Hons) MSc CEnv MCIEEM BSc (Hons), MRes, ACIEEM BMus (Hons), MSc, PhD, ACIEEM	20+ 15+ 10+
Ornithology	SLR - Mike Austin	MCIEEM	30+
Hydrology and Soils	SLR - Gordon Robb - Katy Rainford - Alan Huntridge - Ruari Watson	BSc (Hons), MSc, MBA, FCIWEM BSc (Hons) FGS MCIWEM BSc (Hons) MSc BSc (Hons)	25+ 8 15+ 10+
Cultural Heritage and Archaeology	SLR - Beth Gray - Gwynnaeth McCullogh	MA (Hons), ACIfA BSc (Hons)	9 5

Discipline	Specialist Assessor	Qualifications	Years of Experience
Traffic and Transport	SLR - Iain Lamb	B.Eng (Hons)	25+
Noise	Bow Acoustics - Richard Carter	CEng, BEng (Hons), MIOA	15+
Carbon Emissions	SLR - Ruari Watson	BSc (Hons)	10+
GIS	SLR Anne Altringham	BSc, MSc	10+

Approach to the SEI

- 1.15 All of the EIA Report chapters have been reviewed to identify the need to update or replace content in light of the amendments to the Proposed Development as described in **paragraph 1.11** and in full in **Chapter 3** of this SEI Report and / or information gathered since the EIA Report was completed. Where a chapter or assessment does not need updated, supplemented or replaced, no changes have been made (this will be explained in the relevant SEI Chapter) as it is not the intention of this SEI to repeat information contained in the EIA Report that remains valid. As a consequence, whilst the structure and chapter numbering of the SEI reflects that of the EIA Report, the format and level of content in the SEI chapters does vary.
- 1.16 Where Technical Appendices and Figures from the EIA Report have been updated, the original numbering has also been retained (but are prefixed with 'SEI'). Where new Technical Appendices and Figures have been added, their numbering follows on from those in the EIA Report (and are prefixed with 'SEI'). Technical Appendices and Figures from the EIA Report that are not updated as part of this SEI remain valid, and this is clearly stated in the introductory text for each SEI chapter.
- 1.17 This SEI comprises five volumes:
- **Volume 1: Non-Technical Summary (NTS):**
 - The SEI NTS provides a brief, easy to understand overview of the SEI. It is not designed to replace the original EIA Report NTS in its entirety. The EIA Report NTS should be read in conjunction with the SEI NTS.
 - **Volume 2: SEI Chapters:**
 - **SEI Chapter 1: Introduction** (this Chapter), provides a brief introduction to the purpose of the SEI, the reasons for submitting SEI in relation to the Proposed Development, the format of the SEI, and how the SEI is being advertised and consulted on;
 - **SEI Chapter 2: Site Design**, considers any implications of the proposed amendments to the design strategy of the Proposed Development;
 - **SEI Chapter 3: Description of Development**, includes further details of the proposed amendments to the Proposed Development;

- **SEI Chapter 4: Policy Context**, considers any relevant policy documents that have become available / been adopted, since the submission of the application in August 2023;
- **SEI Chapter 5: Environmental Impact Assessment**, discusses any changes to the approach to assessment since the submission of the application in August 2023 (including an update to the cumulative dataset);
- **SEI Chapter 6: Scoping and Consultation**, outlines consultation responses following the submission of the Balmeanach Wind Farm application in August 2023, and provides a summary of the issues and how they are being addressed;
- **SEI Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual**, considers any changes to assessment findings presented in **Chapter 7** of the EIA Report.
- **SEI Chapter 8: Ecology**, considers any changes to assessment findings presented in **Chapter 8** of the EIA Report;
- **SEI Chapter 9: Ornithology**, considers any changes to assessment findings presented in **Chapter 9** of the EIA Report;
- **SEI Chapter 10: Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Soils**, considers any changes to assessment findings presented in **Chapter 10** of the EIA Report;
- **SEI Chapter 11: Cultural Heritage**, considers any changes to assessment findings presented in **Chapter 11** of the EIA Report;
- **SEI Chapter 12: Traffic and Transport**, considers any changes to assessment findings presented in **Chapter 12** of the EIA Report;
- **SEI Chapter 13: Noise**, considers any changes to assessment findings presented in **Chapter 13** of the EIA Report;
- **SEI Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use**, considers any changes to assessment findings presented in **Chapter 14** of the EIA Report;
- **SEI Chapter 15: Other Considerations**, considers any changes to assessment findings presented in **Chapter 15** of the EIA Report; and
- **SEI Chapter 16: Schedule of Commitments**, considers and updates the summary of proposed mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures proposed in the EIA Report, to take account of the amendments to the Proposed Development.
- **Volume 3: Updated Figures and Visualisations:**
 - All figures within **Volumes 3a and 3f** of the EIA Report have been updated due to the removal of one turbine and changes to the infrastructure and the addition of the proposed link track and permanent construction compound to be part of the Proposed Development, in the event that the consented Ben Sca Wind Farm does not get built. Figures are prefixed 'SEI' and with the same number as those included in the EIA Report, meaning that the original EIA Report Figures have been superseded.
 - All visualisations from **Volume 3b, 3c, 3d and 3e** of the EIA Report have been updated. The original EIA Report visualisations are superseded. Figures are prefixed 'SEI' and with the same number as those included in the EIA Report. The original EIA Report visualisations are superseded.
- **Volume 4: Updated Technical Appendices (TAs):**

- **SEI TA3.4 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA)**
(update to Figures 7.4.10 and 7.4.11 only)
- **SEI TA8.5: Outline Habitat Management Plan Update (OHMP)**
- **SEI TA10.2 Peat Management Plan (PMP)**
(update to Annex 10.2A only)
- **SEI TA15.1: Carbon Calculator Update**
- Confidential Appendix:
 - **Confidential SEI TA9.3: Collision Risk Assessment Update (CRA)**
- **Volume 5: Combined Assessment of Balmeanach and Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farms.**
 - This is a new appendix report which considers the full in combination effects of the proposed Balmeanach and Ben Sca Redesign Wind Farms, should both be consented. This appendix is submitted with both the Balmeanach and Ben Sca Redesign SEI applications.

1.18 Overall, each SEI chapter seeks to:

- provide a revised assessment, where required, taking into account the amendments that have been made to the Proposed Development, and the updated cumulative wind farm situation; and
- provide new or additional information, where required, to address consultation responses, or to supplement what was previously provided within the EIA Report.

1.19 The approach to EIA as set out in **Chapter 5** of the EIA Report describes the methodology used to conduct the EIA in accordance with legislation, policy and accepted good practice. This approach has also been adopted for the preparation of the SEI, as appropriate.

1.20 Although not all consultation responses to the Balmeanach Wind Farm application have resulted in the production of additional information, an overview of the consultee comments on the application is provided in each SEI topic chapter where relevant, as well as details on how the issues have been addressed.

1.21 For completeness, a summary of changes to the significance of effects (if there are any) as presented in the EIA Report, is provided at the end of each SEI topic chapter.

1.22 Unless otherwise stated, the overall scope of the EIA and SEI remains as stated in **Chapter 1** of the EIA Report and **Chapter 1** of the SEI Report.

Supporting Documents

1.23 The original Design and Access Statement (DAS) remains unchanged, however should be read in conjunction with **Chapter 2** of this SEI Report.

1.24 The original Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report remains unchanged.

1.25 The conclusions of the original Planning Statement are unchanged, however should be read in conjunction with this SEI Report.

Consultation on the SEI

1.26 This SEI will be advertised and a notice published as follows:

- on the project website: www.balmeanachwindfarm.co.uk;
 - in the Edinburgh Gazette; and
 - in the West Highland Free Press.
- 1.27 In addition to the statutory requirements for publicising the SEI Report, the Applicant has advised the following local Community Councils and Community Groups of the SEI Report being available:
- Dunvegan Community Council;
 - Dunvegan Community Trust;
 - Edinbane Community Company;
 - Glendale Community Council;
 - Skeabost & District Community Council;
 - Struan Community Council;
 - Struan Community Development Group; and
 - Struan Community Trust.
- 1.28 A hard copy of the SEI Report can be viewed at Portree Community Library, Viewfield Rd, Portree IV51 9ET.
- 1.29 The SEI documents and the EIA Report will also be available via THC's planning portal at: <https://wam.highland.gov.uk/wam/>.
- 1.30 A copy of the SEI Report volumes will be made available for download from the project website at: www.balmeanachwindfarm.co.uk;
- 1.31 Paper copies of the SEI NTS are available free of charge from:
- info@wind2.co.uk
07570 948886
Wind2 Limited,
2 Walker Street,
Edinburgh,
EH3 7LB
- 1.32 Paper copies of the SEI may be purchased by arrangement from the above address for £3,800 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.
- 1.33 The submission of this SEI will trigger another public consultation period of 30 days, during which members of the public and consultees will have the opportunity to make representations to THC on its content. The 30 day consultation period will run from the date of the final public notice (which will be published as per **paragraph 1.26** and via the project website: www.balmeanachwindfarm.co.uk).

References

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.