



Chapter 5

EIA Process and Methodology

Table of Contents

5.1	Introduction	3
5.2	Requirements of the EIA Regulations	3
5.2.2	Legislation and Guidance	4
5.3	EIA and the Design Process	5
5.4	Determining the Scope of the EIA Report	5
5.5	Approach and Methods	5
5.5.1	Introduction	5
5.5.2	Baseline Conditions	5
5.5.3	Consultation	5
5.5.4	Assessment of Effects	6
5.5.5	Mitigation	6
5.5.6	Monitoring	6
5.5.7	Statement of Significance	6
5.5.8	Consideration of In-Combination and Cumulative Effects	6
5.5.9	Consideration of Transboundary Effects	7
5.5.10	Assumptions, Limitations and Technical Difficulties	7
5.6	References	7



Chapter 5

EIA Process and Methodology

5.1 Introduction

1. This Chapter of the Hollandmey Renewable Energy Development (RED) (hereafter the proposed Development) Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report discusses the need for EIA and sets out the approach to assessment taken. This EIA Report has been prepared for the purposes of The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (as amended) (hereafter 'the EIA Regulations').
2. The proposed Development fits the criteria for Schedule 2 Development under the EIA regulations as it is a "a *generating station, the construction of which (or the operation of which) will require a section 36 consent but which is not Schedule 1 development*". In this regard, the proposed Development is of a type falling within Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations and, therefore, requires to be screened as to whether or not it constitutes EIA development as envisaged by Regulation 7.
3. It was acknowledged at an early stage in the development process that given the nature, location and characteristics of the proposed Development an EIA would be required. It was, therefore, not considered necessary to seek a screening opinion and this EIA Report is submitted voluntarily as set out in Scottish Government Guidance on Energy Consents.
4. Establishing which aspects of the environment and associated issues are relevant for a proposed Development is captured by the EIA scoping process. It is an opportunity for SPR (hereafter the Applicant) to describe the characteristics of the receiving environment, drawing on the baseline data collected, and the characteristics of the proposed Development and thus the potential significant effects. The Applicant will then outline their proposed methodology for collecting further baseline information and assessing likely significant effects. Statutory and non-statutory consultees can provide a scoping response, which includes any additional information that might help define the baseline and comment on whether the potential significant effects identified, and methodology proposed are suitable. This feedback helps determine the final scope of the EIA. If there are some environmental elements where it is expected there would be no significant issues or likely effects resulting from the proposed Development, then these are scoped out and there is no need for further assessment to be undertaken.
5. In terms of this proposed Development, a direct scoping exercise was undertaken with the agreement of the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit. This was considered an appropriate and proportionate approach in light of a detailed pre-application consultation carried out in 2019, in which many key issues that are typically covered in EIA scoping were raised and discussed with stakeholders. The scoping exercise for the proposed Development is detailed in **Chapter 6: Scoping and Consultation**.
6. Following the definition of the scope of the EIA, individual environmental matters are subject to surveys, investigation and assessment. Individual technical chapters are then prepared for presentation in an EIA Report to accompany the application for a proposed Development. The assessment methodologies are based on recognised good practice and guidelines specific to each technical discipline.
7. The EIA Regulations prohibit the Scottish Ministers from granting permission for EIA development unless they have taken the environmental information provided into consideration.
8. This EIA Report has been prepared in order to be taken into consideration by the Scottish Ministers in the determination of an application under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 Act for the proposed Development.

5.2 Requirements of the EIA Regulations

9. The EIA Regulations require a description of the likely significant effects on the following factors:
 - population and human health;
 - biodiversity;
 - land, soil, water, air and climate; and
 - material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape.
10. Regulation 4 sets out what the environmental assessment process comprises and Regulation 5 sets out the content of an EIA Report.
11. The EIA Report must identify, describe and assess the potential direct and indirect significant effects of the proposed Development and the potential interactions between those factors.
12. The description should detail the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short-term, medium-term and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the proposed Development.
13. Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations sets out the information that must be included in the EIA Report, summarised in **Table 5.1**. This also identifies where the corresponding information can be found in the EIA Report.

Table 5.1: EIA Report information

Required Information	Relevant Section in EIA Report
1. Description of the development, including in particular: (a) a description of the location of the development (b) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole development, including, where relevant, requisite demolition works, and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases; (c) a description of the main characteristics of the operational phase of the development for instance, energy demand and energy used, nature and quality of the materials and natural resources (including water, land, soil and biodiversity) used; (d) an estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (water, air and soil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation and quantities and types of waste produced during the construction and operation phases.	A description of the location of the proposed Development is presented in Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution . A description of the proposed Development and all its characteristics during both the construction phase and operation phase is presented in Chapter 3: Proposed Development . The predicted individual emissions and residues of the proposed Development are reported in Chapters 7 to 15 .
2. A description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed Development and its special characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for this choice, taking into account a comparison of the environmental effects.	The reasonable alternatives considered are covered under Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution .
3. A description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (the 'baseline scenario') and an outline of the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the project as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be	This description is included in the baseline section of each EIA assessment in the EIA Report (Chapters 7 to 15), where relevant.

Required Information	Relevant Section in EIA Report
assessment with reasonable effort on the basis of the availability of relevant information and scientific knowledge	
4. A description of the factors specified in item 3 above likely to be significantly affected by the development: population, human health biodiversity, land, soil, water, air, climate, material assets, cultural heritage, including the architectural and archaeological aspects, and landscape.	<p>Effects on population and human health are discussed in relation to: (a) visual/residential amenity impacts (Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment); (b) traffic impacts (Chapter 12: Access, Traffic and Transport); (c) noise impacts (Chapter 13: Noise); (d) socio-economic impacts (Chapter 14: Socio-economics, Recreation and Tourism); and (e) air quality, shadow flicker, telecommunications and aviation and radar impacts (Chapter 15: Other Issues).</p> <p>Effects on biodiversity are discussed in Chapter 8: Ecology and Biodiversity.</p> <p>Effects on land and soil are discussed in: (a) Chapter 10: Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Geology and Soils; and (b) Chapter 15: Other Issues and Chapter 14: Socio-economics, Recreation and Tourism.</p> <p>Effects on water are discussed in Chapter 10: Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Geology and Soils.</p> <p>Effects on air and climate are discussed in Chapter 15: Other Issues.</p> <p>Effects on material assets and cultural heritage are discussed in Chapter 11: Archaeology and Cultural Heritage.</p> <p>Effects on landscape are discussed in Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.</p>
5. A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment, resulting from: (a) the construction and existence of the development, including, where relevant, demolition works; (b) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity, considering as far as possible the sustainable availability of these resources; (c) the emission of pollutants, noise, vibration, light, heat and radiation, the creation of nuisances and the disposal and recovery of waste; (d) the risks to human health, cultural heritage or the environment (for example due to accidents or disasters); (e) the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved development, taking into account any existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources;	<p>Assumptions and limitations in the EIA process are reported as required in the relevant technical chapters.</p> <p>The predicted significant effects of the proposed Development are reported in the Statement of Significance section of each of the technical chapters of the EIA Report (Chapters 7 to 15). Predicted significant effects are the residual effects, those that would still exist after successful implementation of the mitigation measures, that are considered significant in the context of the EIA regulations. The methods used to predict significant effects are explained in this Chapter and each individual chapter as relevant.</p> <p>Effects have been predicted in relation to the proposed Development's construction and permanent use of the land. The operation and nature of these effects and their duration are reported.</p>

Required Information	Relevant Section in EIA Report
(f) the impact of the development on climate and the vulnerability of the development to climate change; and (g) the technologies and the substance used; The description of the likely significant effects should cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development.	
6. A description of the forecasting methods or evidence, used to identify and assess the significant effects on the environment, including details of difficulties (technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge) encountered compiling the required information and the main uncertainties involved.	Assumptions and limitations in the EIA process are reported as required in the relevant technical chapters. A description of the methodology and evidence used to assess significant effects are reported in the technical chapters of the EIA Report (Chapters 7 to 15) and Technical Appendices (Volume 4).
7. A description of the measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce and if possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment and, where appropriate, of any monitoring arrangements. That description should explain the extent, to which significant adverse effects on the environment are avoided, prevented, reduced or offset, and should cover both the construction and operational phases.	The overall approach to mitigation is discussed in this Chapter. Specific mitigation measures are reported in each relevant technical chapter (Chapters 7 to 15) and are summarised in Chapter 16: Schedule of Commitments .
8. A description of the expected significant adverse effects of the development on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the development to risks of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned. Where appropriate, the description should include measures envisaged to prevent or mitigate the significant adverse effects of such events on the environment and details of the preparedness for the proposed response to such emergencies	The proposed Development is not located in an area of natural disasters, such as extreme weather events and the construction of the operation of the proposed Development would be managed within the requirements of a number of health and safety regulations including the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. The issue of peat slide and flood risk are considered in Chapter 10: Hydrology, hydrogeology, geology and Soils .
9. A non-technical summary of the information provided under points 1 to 8	A Non-Technical Summary (NTS) is presented as Volume 1 of this EIA Report.
10. A reference list detailing the sources used for the descriptions and assessments in the EIA report	Reference lists are provided in each chapter (Chapters 7 to 15)

5.2.1 Legislation and Guidance

15. The EIA has been completed in accordance with the latest regulations and advice on best practice, including the following:
- Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (2017);
 - The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (as amended);
 - The Electricity Works (Miscellaneous Temporary Modifications) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020
 - Scottish Government Guidance on Energy Consents;
 - Scottish Government Web Based Guidance Onshore wind turbines (first published in February 2011 and last updated in May 2014);
 - Planning Advice Note (PAN) 1/2013 Environmental Impact Assessment (2013);
 - Scottish Planning Series Planning Circular 1/2017 Guidance on The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017;
 - Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) (2004) Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment; and

- Scottish Natural Heritage (2018) A Handbook on Environmental Impact Assessment: Guidance for Competent Authorities, Consultees and others involved in the Environmental Impact Assessment Process in Scotland (5th Edition).

5.3 EIA and the Design Process

16. The EIA was treated as an iterative process, rather than a one-off, post-design environmental appraisal. This has allowed the findings from the EIA to be fed into the design process. Where potentially adverse environmental effects were identified through preliminary investigations as part of feasibility work, or later in the detailed EIA, consideration was given as to how the design of the proposed Development could be modified to design-out adverse environmental effects (i.e. embedded mitigation), or where this was not possible, to identify appropriate mitigation. This process is explained further in **Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution**; and in the subsequent technical assessment chapters (**Chapters 7 to 15**).

5.4 Determining the Scope of the EIA Report

17. The EIA Report is the Applicant's statement on the proposed Development, its likely significant environmental effects, and the measures proposed to avoid, reduce and where possible mitigate adverse effects.
18. The scope of the EIA Report has been established through direct scoping consultation with various stakeholders. In July 2020, Scoping Topic Information Sheets and a Project Information Sheet were issued to relevant consultees to seek their views on the scope and content of the EIA for the proposed Development. This also provided an opportunity for consultees to provide any initial thoughts on the proposals (including any potential environmental concerns they may have regarding the proposed Development) in order for Applicant to consider these in the final layout and design of the proposed Development. Consultees were also requested to provide any relevant baseline information relating to the Site and the surrounding area that may assist in undertaking the EIA.
19. A direct scoping exercise was undertaken because a prior pre-application consultation exercise was completed in 2019 in relation to the potential for a RED at Hollandmey. The advice received as part of that process covered a lot of the information that would typically be contained in a formal scoping direction, and was been taken into account when preparing the Project Factsheet and EIA Topic Information Sheets provided to consultees. The EIA Topic Information Sheets were produced by technical specialists and outlined the proposed methodology and approach for assessing effects.
20. Direct scoping allowed a more direct, focused and proportionate consultation to take place by building on the information that had already been identified and gathered for the Site. The Applicant has used this approach successfully on other developments and has achieved the purpose of scoping, namely:
- identifying important issues and significant impacts to be addressed by the EIA;
 - identifying the key stakeholders and their concerns and values; and
 - discussing and agreeing appropriate methods of impact assessment including survey methodology where relevant.
21. The scoping consultation undertaken as part of the EIA process is detailed in **Chapter 6: Scoping and Consultation**, of this EIA Report. The responses of all consultees collated during the scoping process, are addressed in this EIA Report and referred to as appropriate in each technical EIA Report chapter.

5.5 Approach and Methods

5.5.1 Introduction

22. The assessments that have been undertaken as part of the EIA have been based upon the Site and relevant study areas. The Site and full application boundary are shown on **Figure 1.2**.
23. Full details of the assessment methodology used in assessing impacts for each technical subject area in this EIA Report are provided in each chapter (**Chapters 7 to 15**). In general terms, assessment criteria have been used to determine the significance of environmental effects. Significance is generally determined through a combination of the sensitivity of a receptor to an effect and the magnitude of the change. This process is outlined as follows:
- identification of baseline conditions within the application boundary and its environs, including the sensitivity of receptors which may be affected by changes in the baseline conditions;
 - consideration of the magnitude of potential changes in the environmental baseline (i.e. the impact);
 - assessment of the significance of effect taking into account sensitivity of receptors and magnitude of effect;
 - identification of appropriate mitigation measures; and
 - assessment of significance of residual effects taking account of any mitigation measures.
24. Where significant environmental impacts are predicted in the EIA process, then the EIA Report provides mitigation measures which would be employed to eliminate or ameliorate the impact to acceptable levels. Mitigation measures can be in the form of changes to operational practice, or changes/additions to the design.
25. The above approach does not apply to all disciplines addressed in the EIA Report, and alternative approaches are described and justified in the relevant EIA Report chapters where applicable. In most cases these differences are based on guidance from technical discipline industry bodies and institutions.

5.5.2 Baseline Conditions

26. A central principle of the EIA is to determine the baseline environmental conditions within the application boundary. These help to determine the sensitivity of receptors and form the benchmark against which predicted changes resultant from the proposed Development are assessed to determine the magnitude of any impact. The baseline conditions have been determined by numerous methods, including desktop studies, site surveys, use of analytical models, consultation and the acquisition of data from third parties.
27. The assessment of each environmental parameter was undertaken in comparison to baseline conditions. This describes both the existing and forecasted, assuming no development, environmental conditions (and in the wider area as pertinent to the particular environmental parameter).
28. The sensitivity of the baseline conditions has been defined according to the relative sensitivity of existing environmental features on or in the vicinity of the application boundary, or by the sensitivity of receptors which would potentially be affected by the proposed Development. Criteria for the determination of sensitivity or importance have been established based on prescribed guidance, legislation, statutory designation and/or professional judgement. The criteria for each environmental parameter are outlined in the EIA Report technical chapters, according to the technical subject area.
29. Relevant windfarms that are under construction, operational and consented are considered part of the baseline for the purposes of this EIA Report, unless specifically stated otherwise within relevant technical chapters.

5.5.3 Consultation

30. Consultation has formed an integral part of the EIA process and both the EIA team and the Applicant have contacted numerous statutory and non-statutory consultees to determine their views on the proposed Development, collected baseline information and refined survey and assessment methodologies. Replies received in response to scoping and any follow up consultation is detailed within the relevant technical chapters of the EIA Report (**Chapters 7 to 15**) and summarised in **Chapter 6: Scoping and Consultation**, and in the technical chapters of the EIA Report.
31. Engagement with the local community was undertaken through a leaflet drop in July 2020 and two Public Information Events (PIE) held over three-week periods in October 2020 and January 2021. Further details on this can be found in **Chapter 2: Site**

Description and Design Evolution and in the Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report submitted as part of the application for consent for the proposed Development.

5.5.4 Assessment of Effects

32. Effects are defined as the consequence of impacts. They are formulated as a function of the receptor/resource value and sensitivity and the predicted magnitude of impact.

33. The assessment of potential effects, using a range of appropriate methodologies specific to each technical discipline, has taken into account the construction and operation of the proposed Development in relation to the Site, offsite area and environs. The Applicant is seeking consent for the proposed Development in perpetuity so there would be no decommissioning. Should a turbine require replacing then the operations involved would be similar to construction. Therefore, it is considered that the construction and operational effects assessed represent a worst-case scenario. Numerical or quantitative methods of assessment are used to predict values that can be compared against published thresholds and indicative criteria contained in relevant guidance and standards.

34. Not all technical subject areas are capable of being assessed numerically or quantitatively, and thus qualitative assessments are used in certain cases. Such assessments rely on previous experience of similar developments, environments and professional judgement and accord with industry guidance where possible.

5.5.4.1 Magnitude of Effects

35. The magnitude of effects on environmental baseline conditions is identified through detailed consideration of the proposed Development, taking due cognisance of any legislative or policy standards or guidelines, and/or the following factors:

- the degree to which the environment would be affected e.g. whether the quality is enhanced or impaired;
- the degree of change to the baseline situation;
- whether the effect is temporary or permanent, indirect or direct, short-term, medium-term or long-term;
- any in-combination effects; and
- potential cumulative effects.

36. In some cases, the likelihood of impact occurrence may also be relevant, and where this is a determining feature of the assessment this has been clearly stated.

5.5.4.2 Sensitivity of Receptor

37. The sensitivity criterion is a composite of sensitivity (e.g. 'High', 'Medium', or 'Low'), which reflects its capacity to accommodate change and recover if affected, and importance (e.g. 'international', 'national', 'regional' or 'authority area') of the receptor. Both functions have been assessed based on prescribed guidance, legislation, statutory designation and/or professional judgement. The sensitivity criterion for each environmental parameter is provided in the relevant technical chapter of the EIA Report.

5.5.5 Mitigation

38. Mitigation is considered as an integral part of the overall design strategy for the proposed Development, including 'embedded' mitigation (e.g. altering and refining the design of the proposed Development to reduce landscape and visual impact, watercourse crossings or avoid sensitive species and habitats) rather than relying solely on 'add-on' measures to prevent, rectify or reduce significant environmental effects. The Applicant adopts an iterative approach whereby mitigation is assessed and considered at all design stages of the proposed Development. The final design of the proposed Development has evolved through the EIA process as demonstrated in **Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution**, systematically being optimised during the EIA process in response to increasing knowledge of the Site and potential environmental effects.

39. Some of the measures described within **Chapters 7 to 15** do not relate only to likely significant adverse effects, but have been included as good practice to reduce the level of adverse effects, or enhance the level of beneficial effects, of the proposed Development. Where relevant, these 'good practice measures' are described in the technical chapters.

40. Where significant environmental effects are predicted in the EIA process, the EIA Report provides measures which would be employed to eliminate or reduce the effect to acceptable levels. Mitigation measures are envisaged through the consideration of alternatives, changes/additions to the design of the proposed Development, project management or operation to prevent, rectify, reduce or, where possible, offset any adverse significant effects.

41. In some cases, environmental mitigation through compensation may be appropriate to provide replacement features or assets (e.g. habitat to replace that which has been disturbed or lost due to the construction of the proposed Development). However, compensation may not initially be effective at remedying effects, as compensation may take time to mature sufficiently to enable the effect of the disturbance or loss to be offset.

42. Where complete avoidance of potential effects is not feasible during refinement of the Site design, additional measures are identified to reduce effects. These include a range of mitigation proposals such as the use of construction methods, avoidance of sensitive habitats, landscaping and Site operation activities. Mitigation measures follow standard techniques and best practice, and are, therefore, considered to be effective for the purposes of assessment.

5.5.6 Monitoring

43. Also incorporated, where appropriate, are monitoring measures to ensure that the proposed Development and any mitigation measures perform as required.

44. The EIA Report sets out details of any post-consent monitoring which is proposed. This includes, where appropriate, proposals to measure the effectiveness of the identified mitigation measures.

5.5.7 Statement of Significance

45. Assessing the significance of effects relies, at least in part, on value judgements including placing weight or value on the environment likely to experience the change. The significance of effects at the assessment stage relates back to the effects deemed to be significant at the scoping stage.

The significance of an effect is derived from an analysis of:

- the sensitivity of the receiving environment or receptor to change, including its capacity to accommodate the kinds of changes the proposed Development may bring about;
- the amount and type of change, often referred to as the impact 'magnitude' which includes the timing, scale, size and duration of the impact;
- the likelihood of the impact occurring, which may range from certainty to a remote possibility;
- comparing the impacts on the environment which would result from the proposed Development with the changes that would occur without the proposed Development, often referred to as the 'do nothing' or 'do minimum' scenario; and
- expressing the significance of the effects of the proposed Development, usually in relative terms, based on the principle that the more sensitive the resource, the more likely the changes and the greater the magnitude of the changes, compared with the 'do nothing' comparison, the greater would be the significance of the effect.

46. As the significance of effects would differ depending on the context and the 'receptors' affected by the proposed Development, there is no general definition of what constitutes significance. In EIA, the term significance reflects both its literal meaning of 'importance' and its statistical meaning where there is an element of quantification. This combination of judgemental/subjective and quantifiable/objective tests has become the standard approach to understanding and applying the test of 'significance'.

47. Significance assumes only incorporated and standard mitigation measures are in place, these being the measures for which delivery and implementation can be secured.

48. The competent authority determining the planning application considers the residual effects (i.e. the post-mitigation effects) as part of the decision-making process.

49. Significant effects are defined in each of the technical chapters. Any effects associated with the proposed Development are considered to be either adverse or beneficial.

5.5.8 Consideration of In-Combination and Cumulative Effects

50. 'In-combination effects' are effects which may or may not interact with each other, but which could affect the same receptor or interest feature (i.e. a habitat or species for which a European Site is designated).

51. In accordance with the EIA Regulations, cumulative effects are effects that result from incremental changes caused by past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions, together with the proposed Development. Likely cumulative effects have been defined as the likely effects that the proposed Development may have in combination with other renewable energy

developments in the local area which are at application stage, consented, under construction or operational (i.e. the incremental effects resulting from the proposed Development if all other developments are assumed to be constructed/operated). Likely cumulative effects on other types of development will also be considered where applicable.

52. The extent to which the potential combined effects through that co-existence is considered, is described as appropriate throughout **Chapters 7 to 15**.

53. The study area for considering cumulative effects varies per technical discipline. In general, most specialisms have considered cumulative effects to approximately 20 km from the application boundary which includes the following windfarms detailed in **Table 5.2**. The cumulative cut-off date is 18 August 2021, three months prior to submission to ensure that the cumulative assessment is as up-to-date as possible.

54. Further information regarding each scheme is provided in **Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**.

Table 5.2: Cumulative windfarms

Windfarm Name	Status	Approximate distance and direction to the proposed Development (nearest proposed turbine)
Lochend	Operational	0.5 km to the east
Slickly	In Planning	2.5 km to the north west
Taigh Na Muir, Dunnet	Operational	3.6 km to the south east
Stroupster	Operational	3.4 km to the north west
Cogle Moss	Approved	11.0 km to the north
Bilbster	Operational	16.5 km to the north
Wathegar	Operational	16.6 km to the north
Wathegar 2	Operational	16.6 km to the north
Achairn	Operational	18.0 km to the north
Camster II	Application	18.0 km to the north
Halsary	Under Construction	19.2 km to the north east
Camster	Operational	19.8 km to the north

5.5.9 Consideration of Transboundary Effects

55. In accordance with the EIA Regulations, the assessment has considered 'transboundary effects'. Regulation 29 of the EIA Regulations refers to development with significant transboundary effects as being "*Development in Scotland likely to have significant effects in a European Economic Area [EEA] State other than the United Kingdom*". The nature of the proposed Development and the location of the Site are such that significant transboundary effects are not predicted for the proposed Development.

5.5.10 Assumptions, Limitations and Technical Difficulties

56. The EIA process is designed to enable informed decision-making based on the best available information about the environmental implications of a proposed Development. However, there will always be some uncertainty inherent in the scale and nature of the predicted environmental effects because of the level of detailed information available at the time of assessment, the potential for minor alterations to the proposed Development following completion of the EIA Report and/or the limitations of the prediction processes.

57. A number of assumptions were made during the EIA process and are described below:

- the developments included within the cumulative assessments are based on sites and their status (operational, consented or in planning) on or before 18 August 2021;
- the principal land uses adjacent to the Site remain unchanged during the course of the proposed Development's lifetime; and

- information provided by third parties, including publicly available information and databases are correct at the time of submission.

58. Specific assumptions may also have been made with regards to the individual technical disciplines, which are described within each chapter.

59. The main limitation has been that while baseline conditions are accurate at the time of surveying, due to the dynamic nature of the environment, these conditions could change during site preparation, construction and operation.

60. Any limitations to the EIA are summarised in each technical chapter, where relevant, together with the means proposed to mitigate these.

61. Figures for land take and habitat loss should be considered as approximate and could vary slightly as a result of the micro-siting process once the final design is developed.

5.6 References

A Handbook on Environmental Impact Assessment: Guidance for Competent Authorities, Consultees and other involved in the Environmental Impact Assessment Process in Scotland (5th Edition): Scottish Natural Heritage: 2018

Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment: IEMA: 2004

Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance: The Highland Council: 2017

Planning Advice Note (PAN) 1/2013 Environmental Impact Assessment: Scottish Government: 2013

Scottish Government Guidance on Energy Consents. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/energy-infrastructure/energy-consents/> [accessed 4 November 2021]

Scottish Planning Series Planning Circular 1/2017: Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2017, Guidance on The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017: Scottish Government: 2017

The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (as amended).

The Electricity Works (Miscellaneous Temporary Modifications) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020.

Web Based Guidance Onshore wind turbines (first published in February 2011 and last updated in May 2014): Scottish Government: 2014

**Hollandmey Renewable Energy Development
Project Team**

ScottishPower Renewables
320 St Vincent Street
Glasgow
G2 5AD

T +44 (0)141 614 0451

Hollandmeyred@ScottishPower.com

