



Hare Hill Windfarm

Repowering and

Extension

**Environmental Impact Assessment
Report**

Volume 1

Chapter 1: Introduction

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
DGC	Dumfries and Galloway Council
EAC	East Ayrshire Council
ECU	Energy Consents Unit
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIA Report	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
EU	European Union
GW	Gigawatts
km	Kilometres
m	metres
MW	Megawatts
NTS	Non-Technical Summary
SCCP	Scottish Climate Change Plan
SPR (Applicant)	ScottishPower Renewables (UK) Limited
UK	United Kingdom

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

1. The Applicant is applying for consent to Scottish Ministers under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 (as amended), seeking consent and deemed planning permission to construct and operate the proposed Development. This EIA Report has been prepared in support of this application for consent.
2. This Chapter introduces the proposed Development and the need for the development, as well as providing an overview of the purpose of the EIA Report, its structure and technical experts who prepared it. It also identifies where copies of this EIA Report can be viewed and obtained if required.
3. This Chapter of the EIA Report is supported by the following figures provided in Volume 2b: EIA Report Figures:
 - **Figure 1.1: Site Location Plan.**
 - **Figure 1.2: Application Boundary.**
4. The proposed Development will comprise two phases:
 - Hare Hill Repowering and Extension Phase 1 (HHR1); and
 - Hare Hill Repowering and Extension Phase 2 (HHR2).
5. HHR1 consists of 15 wind turbines, plus associated infrastructure, and HHR2 consists of 8 wind turbines plus associated infrastructure. HHR1 is anticipated to start construction in 2029, while HHR2 is anticipated to start construction in 2036.
6. The 20 existing turbines which comprise the original Hare Hill (HH) Windfarm are to be decommissioned before the commencement of the construction phase of HHR1.
7. The 35 existing turbines which comprise Hare Hill Extension (HHE) Windfarm are to be decommissioned before the commencement of the construction phase of HHR2.

1.2. Key Terms

8. To ensure clarity in the EIA, the following terms and descriptions presented in **Table 1.1** are used.

Table 1.1 Key terms and descriptions

Term	Description
access track to the turbine area	The proposed access track leading from the A76 public road to the turbine area within the Site.
application boundary	The red line planning boundary of the proposed Development site as shown on the site location plan (Figure 1.1). The application boundary encompasses the proposed wind turbines and associated infrastructure as part of the proposed Development.
proposed Development	The proposed Development refers to all components of the Hare Hill Windfarm Repowering and Extension. The proposed Development, up to 23 wind turbines, 7 with a maximum tip height of 200 m, 9 with a maximum tip height of 180 m and 7 with a maximum tip height of 150 m, with associated ancillary infrastructure.
Site	The Site refers to the area defined by the application boundary within which the proposed Development lies.
Study Area	The Site plus any additional area over which desk based or field assessments have been extended. The study area varies depending on the nature of the potential effects for each environmental parameter, as informed by professional guidance and best practice regarding EIA. The study area is therefore explained within the approach and method section of the relevant chapters (Chapters 6 to 14)

1.3. The Applicant

9. Hare Hill Windfarm Repowering & Extension is being proposed by the Applicant.
10. The Applicant is part of the ScottishPower group of companies operating in the UK under the Iberdrola Group, one of the world's largest integrated utility companies and a world leader in wind energy. The ScottishPower group of companies only produces 100% green electricity – focusing on wind energy, smart grids and driving the change to a cleaner, electric future. ScottishPower has committed to investing over £18m every working day to make this happen, and to speed up the transition to cleaner electric transport, improving air quality and over time, driving down bills to deliver a better future, quicker for everyone. The Applicant is at the forefront of the development of the renewables industry through pioneering ideas, forward thinking and outstanding innovation. Its ambitious growth plans include expansion of its existing onshore wind portfolio, investment in new large-scale solar deployment and innovative grid storage systems including batteries. The Applicant now has over 40 operational windfarm sites producing over 3,000 megawatts (MW), including Whitelee, the largest onshore windfarm in the UK and their offshore windfarm East Anglia ONE.
11. The Applicant manages all its sites through its world leading Control Centre at Whitelee Windfarm, near Glasgow.
12. The Applicant is already well established in the west of Scotland and currently owns and operates 6 onshore windfarms between the East Ayrshire and Dumfries & Galloway regions (Hare Hill, Hare Hill Extension, Kilgallioch, Harestanes, Ewe Hill and Wether Hill).

1.4. Background and Description

1.4.1. Site Description

13. The proposed Development is situated approximately 1.5 km south east of the village of New Cumnock and 4.5 km west of Kirkconnel. The application boundary falls within both the East Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway administrative areas. The Site location is shown in **Figure 1.1** and the application boundary covers the area shown on **Figure 1.2**. Further context of the Site is provided by **Figures 5.1**
14. The centre of the Site is at NS 65411 08094. The access would be from the A76 public road. The Site lies to the north east of the Afton Reservoir and Blackcraig Hill, south east of New Cumnock and west of Kirkconnel. There are a number of burns and small watercourses across the Site. The Site is made up of undulating hills of upland heath and moorland with areas of commercial forestry.

1.4.2. The Proposed Development

15. European Union (EU) Directive 2018/2001 on *The Promotion of the Use of Energy from Renewable Sources*, 11 December 2018 defines repowering as “renewing power plants that produce renewable energy, including the full or partial replacement of installations or operation systems and equipment for the purposes of replacing capacity or increasing the efficiency or capacity of the installation”
16. The proposed Development comprises up to 23 wind turbines, 7 with a maximum tip height of 200 m, 9 with a maximum tip height of 180 m and 7 with a maximum tip height of 150 m, with associated ancillary infrastructure including crane hard standings, a substation and networks of connecting tracks. Additionally, the proposed Development would include two areas for habitat improvement with one located onsite and one offsite (location to be determined). Full details of these can be found in **Technical Appendix 7.4: Draft Habitat Management Plan**.
17. The proposed Development layout is provided in **Figure 5.1**.
18. It is expected that each wind turbine would have a rated capacity of around the following:
 - 200 m to tip – 6.2 MW;
 - 180 m to tip – 6 MW; or
 - 150 m to tip – 4.5 MW.
19. This would give the proposed Development the anticipated capacity of around 130 MWs.
20. The proposed Development will be split across two distinct phases relative to the differing life cycles between the current Hare Hill and the Hare Hill extension projects.
21. The proposed Development is described in further detail in **Chapter 5: Development Description**.

1.4.3. Need for Development

22. The UK and Scotland's current climate change ambitions are amongst the highest in Europe. The Scottish Government declared a climate emergency in May 2019.
23. The UK government set a net zero CO₂ emissions target by 2050 under the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019. In Scotland, the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019, which amended the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, sets out a legally binding net zero target by 2045, with interim targets in 2020, 2030 and 2040 alongside annual targets. The Scottish Climate Change Plan (2020) (SCCP) includes a target of 50% of Scotland's energy needs across heat, transport and electricity demand to be met by renewable energy in 2032. The SCCP acknowledges that the goal for 100% of Scotland's electricity to be generated by renewables by 2020 has been met; however, if Scotland is to continue to decarbonise its energy usage and meet the 2032 target, then there will be increasing demand for electricity from renewable sources, in line with the 20GW in the Onshore Wind Policy Statement 2022, and it is therefore important to accelerate growth in the renewable energy sector.
24. The Applicant is leading the UK in the operation and development of renewable technologies, fully supporting the fight against climate change and therefore proposes to develop Hare Hill Windfarm Repowering and Extension in the Dumfries and Galloway Council (DGC) and East Ayrshire Council (EAC) administrative area. This would be a fully integrated renewable energy solution in direct response to meeting national and international climate change targets. The proposed Development would be able to provide clean power to people's homes when they need it most and would provide a state of the art development for this area of the DGC and EAC. As well as contributing to targets for Renewable Energy, the proposed Development would provide opportunities for community investment and create further economic benefits including employment opportunities in the local area.
25. The Applicant has to date contributed more than £72 million in benefit funds to support initiatives and projects for those communities local to their onshore windfarm sites, with over £32 million of this going directly to DGC & EAC communities. Further information on the need for and benefits of the proposed Development are provided in **Chapter 14: Other Issues** and the **Planning and Renewable Energy Statement** which accompanies the application.

1.5. Purpose of the EIA Report

26. EIA is a process for identifying the likely consequences on the existing biological, physical and human environment arising from development progression.
27. The process is undertaken to ensure that the environmental effects of certain types of development proposal are fully investigated, understood and taken account of in the design, consenting and authorisation process.
28. This EIA Report has been prepared in accordance with the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations).
29. Under the terms of the EIA Regulations, the proposed Development falls under Schedule 2 as "*the carrying out of development (other than development which is Schedule 1*

development) to provide (l) a generating station" In this regard, the proposed Development is of a type falling within Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations, meaning that an EIA will be required if it is deemed that the development is likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size and location. There are also provisions under the EIA Regulations that facilitate the definition of the scope of the EIA, in consultation with Stakeholders. Such provisions are not, however, mandatory. Considering comments received in the scoping responses and after subsequent design iterations, further consultation was arranged with key consultees to address concerns and agree on an appropriate assessment scope. This was further followed for disciplines regarding the phased nature of the development. This EIA Report considers all consultation responses.

30. This EIA Report is presented to the Scottish Ministers via the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) in the determination of the application for consent under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 and for deemed planning permission in terms of Section 57 of The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended for the proposed Development. Its purpose is to present the proposed Development and its predicted environmental effects in a concise, objective and non-promotional manner in order to provide the Scottish Ministers, Local Authorities consultation bodies, interested bodies and the general public with sufficient information to assess its likely environmental effects. This EIA Report presents the findings of the EIA process by describing the proposed Development, and the current conditions at the Site and likely significant impacts which may result from the proposed Development. Where appropriate, mitigation is proposed, and any residual impacts are reported. Regulation 3 of the EIA Regulations prohibits Scottish Ministers from making a decision on an EIA development unless they have first taken the environmental information provided in the EIA Report into consideration.

1.6. Structure of the EIA Report

31. The EIA Report is presented in four volumes as follows:

- Volume 1: EIA Report- presents the complete findings of the EIA and is the main document accompanying the application for consent;
- The EIA Report written text is structured as follows:
 - i. Chapter 1: Introduction;
 - ii. Chapter 2: Legal and Policy Context;
 - iii. Chapter 3: EIA Process and Methodology;
 - iv. Chapter 4: Site Selection and Design Evolution;
 - v. Chapter 5: Development Description;
 - vi. Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Assessment;
 - vii. Chapter 7: Ecology and Biodiversity Assessment;
 - viii. Chapter 8: Ornithology Assessment;
 - ix. Chapter 9: Hydrology, Geology and Hydrogeology Assessment;

- x. Chapter 10: Cultural Heritage Assessment;
- xi. Chapter 11: Access, Traffic and Transport;
- xii. Chapter 12: Aviation and Existing Infrastructure;
- xiii. Chapter 13: Noise;
- xiv. Chapter 14: Other Issues; and
- xv. Chapter 15: Summary of Residual Effects.

- Volume 2a: EIA Report Figures - contains all relevant Figures referred to throughout, excluding Visualisations relevant to **Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Assessment & Chapter 10: Cultural Heritage & Archaeology**
- Volume 2b: EIA Report Figures - contains all relevant Visualisations from **Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Assessment & Chapter 10: Cultural Heritage & Archaeology**;
- Volume 3: EIA Report Technical Appendices - referenced in each EIA Chapter. They are numbered sequentially for each Chapter that they are mentioned in.
- Volume 4: Non-Technical Summary (NTS) - describes in non-technical language the proposed Development and the likely effects it may have on people in the local area and the receiving environment. It also describes the measures that the Applicant proposes to use to avoid or reduce any potential negative effects that have been identified, including how environmental issues would be managed during and after construction.

1.7. EIA Project Team and Competency

- 32. The proposed Development has been designed and assessed by the Applicant in association with their lead consultants, Natural Power. Natural Power has been appointed to coordinate the proposed Development EIA and produce this EIA Report and associated documentation in conjunction with a number of technical specialist consultants outlined in **Table 1.2**.
- 33. Natural Power has been providing expertise to the renewable energy industry since the company was formed in 1995 and is one of the UK's leading renewable energy consultants, employing over 500 people. As well as development and EIA services, Natural Power also provide expert advice and due diligence consultancy, site construction management, and site operation and maintenance.

Table 1.2 EIA Team

Environmental Discipline	Consultant
Ecology and Biodiversity	Natural Power
Traffic and Transport	Natural Power
Hydrology, Geology and Hydrogeology	Natural Power
Landscape and Visual	MVGLA
Noise	Hoare Lea

Environmental Discipline	Consultant
Cultural Heritage	CFA Archaeology
Ornithology	WSP
Aviation and Radar	Cyrrus
Forestry	DGA
Archaeology and Cultural Heritage	CFA
Design and Infrastructure and aggregates assessment	KiLOH
Socio-Economic and Tourism	BiGGAR Economics

34. Natural Power confirms on behalf of the Applicant that the specialist organisations that have carried out the EIA have the skills and relevant competency, expertise and qualifications to undertake an EIA for the proposed Development. The management of the EIA process and production of the EIA Report has been overseen by a Natural Power competent expert. The relevant expertise and qualifications of the experts are detailed at the beginning of each technical chapter.

1.8. Availability of the EIA Report

1.8.1. Statutory Requirements

35. When the Section 36 application for the proposed Development is lodged with the ECU, the Applicant will advertise the application in the following ways:

- On the Applicant's project website; (https://www.scottishpowerrenewables.com/pages/hare_hill_windfarm_repowering.aspx)
- In the Edinburgh Gazette;
- In the Cumnock Chronicle; and
- In the Galloway Gazette.

36. The EIA Report can also be viewed at the Scottish Government ECU website: <https://www.energyconsents.scot>. The ECU will also invite formal representations on the application, which it will be taken into account before reaching a decision on the application.

37. Subject to confirmation with EAC and DGC, it is envisaged that the EIA Report will, on submission of the Section 36 application, be available for viewing to the public at a suitable location in the vicinity of the Site, as well as at the EAC Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock, KA3 7BU and the DGC Offices, Main Reception, Kirkbank House, English Street, Dumfries, DG1 2HS. The EIA Report and associated documentation will be available to view for several weeks, the length of which is to be confirmed with the ECU.

1.8.2. Voluntary Publicity

38. In addition to the statutory requirements for publicising an EIA Report, the Applicant has advised the following local Community Councils & Organisations of the EIA Report being available:

- Auchinleck Community Council;
- Cronberry, Logan and Lugar Community Council;
- Cumnock Community Council;
- Dalmellington Community Council;
- Drongan, Rankinston and Stair Community Council;
- Kirkconnel Community Council;
- Netherthird Community Council;
- New Cumnock Community Council;
- Patna Community Council;
- Sanquhar Community Council;
- New Cumnock Development Trust; and
- Electronic copies of all application documents will be made available for download from the project website: [Hare Hill Windfarm Repowering - ScottishPower Renewables - scottishpowerrenewables.com](https://www.harehillrepowering.com)

39. They will also be available on the ECU Website: <https://www.energyconsents.scot/>

40. Copies of the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) and EIA Report (including figures and appendices) may be obtained from:

Hare Hill Repowering & Extension Project Team
ScottishPower Renewables
9th Floor ScottishPower Headquarters
320 St Vincent Street
Glasgow
G2 5AD

Email: harehillrepower@scottishpower.com

41. The NTS is available free of charge, and a limited number of hard copies of the EIA Report are available for £1,000 per copy. The price of the hard copy reflects the costs of producing all of the Volumes as well as the Landscape and Visual photography and photomontages at the recommended size and quality in order to view them properly.

42. Alternatively, a USB memory stick containing PDF files of the EIA Report are available for £15 per USB. Specific sections of the EIA Report are also available on request at a proportionate cost. These PDF files can also be downloaded for free from the Hare Hill Windfarm Repowering and Extension website detailed above.

43. In the interests of sustainability and in keeping with the renewable energy agenda, the paperless (USB) version is recommended.

1.8.3. Representations to the Application

44. Any representations on the application may be submitted via www.energyconsents.scot, using the relevant Project Name and/or ECU reference number. Please note that you must be in possession of a working email address to submit a representation virtually.

45. Representations can also be sent by post to:

Scottish Government
Energy Consents Unit
4th Floor
5 Atlantic Quay
150 Broomielaw
Glasgow
G2 8LU

References

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